

# Antrobus St Mark's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111246
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	395306
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Kevin Johnson

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	90
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Meryl Phillips
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lucy Kirby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Antrobus Northwich CW9 6LB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 288800
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	head@antrobus-st-marks.cheshire.sch.uk

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons taught by four teachers, talked to pupils and reviewed some of their work. Meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body. Also taken into account were 35 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by pupils and members of staff. The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation which included that relating to safeguarding, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation, minutes of governing body meetings, national assessment data and the school's assessments.

## Information about the school

Almost all pupils are White British in this smaller-than-average-sized primary school. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Among the school's achievements is the Inclusion Quality Mark. A breakfast club is provided by the school during term time. There is pre-school nursery provision on site which is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately. Inspection reports for that provision are published on the Ofsted website

The school meets the current floor standard that sets minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.

The headteacher was appointed in 2009.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because more teaching needs to be outstanding to raise pupils' achievement further, especially in writing. There have been good improvements in key aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points that are generally in line with age-related expectations. They make good progress and develop their social, communication and mathematics skills well. Good progress continues throughout the school and pupils achieve well. Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is above average.
- Teaching is good and a small proportion is outstanding. This accounts for pupils' good learning and progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught very well. Lessons are planned well and good relationships in classes make them enjoyable for pupils. Sometimes, however, the more-able pupils are not fully challenged.
- Pupils enjoy trusting relationships with adults in the school and say that they feel safe and well cared for. They behave well in lessons and conduct themselves sensibly around the school. Their positive attitudes contribute well to their good learning. Attendance is above average.
- Leaders and managers drive school improvement well. The cohesive staff team is fully committed to raising the quality of provision and pupils' achievement. Effective management of teaching and performance has brought about good improvement. An engaging curriculum provides well for the broad range of pupils' needs and interests and makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by July 2013, and thereby raise pupils' achievement further by:
  - ensuring that the more-able pupils are always fully challenged, particularly in writing.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attentiveness in lessons and their hard work make a significant contribution to their good learning and progress. They enjoy working in teams or with partners and are especially keen when there is competition involved such as working against the clock to complete mathematical investigations. Pupils are confident in what they do. They have opportunities to assess their own work, contribute ideas and set targets for their own achievement. Pupils are able to develop and apply skills well in lessons, for example, by using computers or writing purposefully across different subjects. Their contributions to lessons are valued and teachers use these and pupils' own experiences to build on their learning. As a result pupils feel secure, self-esteem is high and they are confident in sharing their ideas with the class.

Children make good progress in Reception. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those which they choose themselves. Children show good levels of independence and persevere with tasks when required to do so. Phonics (letters and sounds) are taught well. This gives a boost to children's confidence when they begin to tackle early reading and writing. They behave well and develop very caring attitudes towards others because of the effective ways in which teaching promotes social skills and children's well-being. When they leave Reception all children are working securely within the levels expected for their age, some are more advanced in their development.

Good progress continues throughout the school. Parents and carers are happy with the progress of their children and pupils also feel that they do well in their work. Effective systems for assessing and checking progress have been firmly embedded since the previous inspection. They provide an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing. A slight dip in achievement since the previous inspection, caused by some disruption in staffing, has been successfully reversed. School assessment data, inspection evidence and unvalidated national test results for 2012 indicate that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved at both key stages and that overall attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average. A particularly noteworthy improvement is in mathematics where some pupils were successful in attaining the highest Level 6. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that writing, especially for the more-able pupils, could be further improved.

The quality of learning for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress. The exceptional pastoral care and support they receive ensure that they are fully involved in all class activities and are valued class members. Their learning, based on frequent assessment, is carefully mapped out to make sure that their

step-by-step progress does not falter and that they achieve well from their varying starting points.

Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school is above average. Pupils in Year 6 tackle a range of reading material confidently. Their reading is fluent and, in the main, when not being over-ambitious, they have good understanding of what they read. Their knowledge of literature is good. They name past authors such as Jane Austen, Dickens, and Shakespeare, and their works, and are familiar with the novels of more recent, as well as current, writers.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teachers plan imaginatively and, when possible, link tasks to pupils' own experiences to make lessons meaningful. Care is taken to match tasks to pupils' different abilities, although occasionally some pupils are not fully challenged. This is evident, for example, in writing where some of the more-able pupils fall short of expected targets. Teachers engage pupils in learning well by using a variety of methods and resources, including information and communication technology, to good effect. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, resulting in teachers' confident delivery of lessons and good pace to learning. Teaching assistants are a much valued addition to the teaching team. Their skilful and sensitive management of the pupils in their care is a significant factor in their learning and achievement.

Where teaching is most effective, lesson introductions are kept to a minimum and expectations are very high. Pupils apply knowledge and improve skills quickly because of the urgency and challenging pace to the work. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher drew on Year 5 and 6 pupils' performance of *Bugsy Malone* as inspiration for lesson planning. Pupils were given limited time to solve a range of well-targeted problems from the proportions of money donated by different groups to the monthly household budget of the show's producer. This gave pupils the opportunity to apply their mathematics skills to 'real-life' situations

Parents and carers comment on how teaching, 'brings the best out of the pupils' and pupils themselves say that they learn a lot in lessons. Teachers use the curriculum flexibly to plan learning across subjects. Regular topic-based homework gives pupils the opportunity to practise and apply their skills in their own time. Pupils are motivated by this approach which adds creativity and enjoyment to their learning and effectively promotes the personal qualities of independence and initiative. The high quality of presentation seen in pupils' homework is testimony to its popularity and pupils' positive attitudes.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils make a good contribution to the friendly, welcoming ethos of the school. They are polite and well-mannered in their dealings with adults and each other, and have genuine regard for their own and others' safety and well-being. A current theme promoted by the active school council is 'happy lunchtimes'. To that end older pupils take on caring roles such as by being buddies, 'phys-kids' and peer mentors to ensure that no pupil feels excluded and that a sense of fair play is always upheld. Pupils say that bullying is extremely rare and that rare incidents of name calling are quickly resolved and friendships restored. They agree that behaviour has improved and that it is good, a view endorsed by parents and carers. Pupils fully understand the many forms that bullying can take and are alert to potential

dangers outside of school, especially those linked to cyber-bullying. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and parents and carers returning the questionnaire were unanimous in their view that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils' cultural awareness is developed well through their contact with a school in a Kenyan township and growing links between St Mark's and a school in central London.

Good behaviour and positive attitudes are evident in lessons and around the school. Pupils show sensible maturity in the way they modify their behaviour to suit different situations, whether to show respect and reverence during assemblies or to enjoy social contact in the dining room. They enjoy school, as witnessed by their above-average attendance and punctuality. Some parents and carers remark that their children, 'can't wait to get to school'. Pupils are justifiably proud of their achievements and prepared well for their move to the next stages of their education.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has been a strong driving force in bringing about improvement since her appointment. Aply supported by the governing body, which has itself increased its effectiveness, the school can demonstrate good improvement in teaching and learning, the curriculum, pupils' behaviour and their achievement. Underperformance has been tackled robustly. Teaching has been managed well. Astute appointments to the teaching staff consolidated by well-planned professional development and vigorous monitoring of teaching performance have resulted in teaching that is consistently good, and an increased capacity for the school to maintain the momentum of improvement.

The governing body knows the school well and, through its vigorous challenge and support, plays a crucial part in its improvement. It monitors academic standards and school developments closely, and makes an effective contribution to the school's accurate self-evaluation. Statutory duties are overseen efficiently, including safeguarding arrangements which fully meet all statutory requirements and give no cause for concern. School leaders very strongly oppose all forms of discrimination and are vigilant over their provision for all pupils in the school, whatever their particular needs, to ensure equality of opportunity.

The well planned curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to follow their interests and develop skills. It is enriched by a good range of activities which contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Some of these are week-long events to promote enterprise, drugs awareness and keeping fit. Good links with a neighbouring high school also benefit the more-gifted and talented pupils through master classes in French and mathematics.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Antrobus St Mark's CofE Primary School, Northwich, CW9 6LB**

Thank you very much for all the help you gave me when I came to inspect your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and listening to some of you read. You told me a great deal about your school and you made me feel very welcome. I was very impressed by your good manners and politeness and good behaviour generally. I also noticed how confident you are and how much you seem to enjoy school. It is no wonder that *Bugsy Malone* was such a 'smash hit'! Well done also on your above average attendance. That is very important, so do keep it up.

St Mark's is a good school. The standards you reach in English and mathematics have improved and are above average. You make good progress and achieve well by the time you leave. This is because your teachers work so hard to make lessons fun, and your headteacher, who manages the school well, sees that you have all that you need to learn as well as you can. All of the grown-ups in school take good care of you which is why you feel safe in school and enjoy your learning.

Your parents and carers, teachers and the governing body are very proud of your school and would like it to be outstanding rather than good. To help that to happen I have asked your teachers to make sure that more of your lessons are outstanding and that those of you who are fast learners are always fully challenged, especially in your writing.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson  
Lead inspector

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