

# St Mark's CofE Primary School

Brantridge Lane, Staplefield, West Sussex, RH17 6EN

**Inspection dates** 24–25 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Satisfactory	3
Quality of teaching		Satisfactory	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Satisfactory	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils are not making as good progress in mathematics and writing as they do in reading.
- The most able do not always do as well as they should because work is not always hard enough for them.
- In some lessons, teachers concentrate too much on the activity which pupils are going to do rather than on what pupils are going to learn from that activity.
- Pupils do not always know how well they are doing or how to improve their learning.
- The headteacher checks the quality of the teaching, but this work has not been effective enough to ensure teaching helps pupils make consistently good progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is driving change and helping staff to understand how to improve their teaching. Current senior leaders have responded to past dips in performance with firm actions so the school has the capacity to continue to improve. As a result, Year 6 pupils' standards improved in 2012.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe, behave well and show respect to each other.
- Reading is well taught; pupils enjoy reading and develop good skills in working out what the text means. They are making good progress in this subject throughout the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons. All were jointly observed by either the headteacher or acting assistant headteacher.
- In addition, the lead inspector made a number of short visits to five reading sessions and listened to two groups of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and with the school's senior leaders. Two meetings were held with representatives from the local authority to discuss the range and impact of support provided for the school.
- The inspector took account of the 32 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, the views of parents and carers who spoke to the inspector during the inspection and three email responses received from parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including information about how well pupils progressed, self-evaluation, school development and improvement documentation, planning, monitoring and assessment information, performance management documentation, minutes of governing body meetings and school policies and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance.

## Inspection team

Wendy Forbes, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mark's is much smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes in almost all year groups except the very small single-age grouped Year 2 class.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs through school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has recently experienced many changes in its staffing organisation, including in the leadership team due to the long-term absence of the permanent assistant headteacher. This senior post is being covered by a part-time acting assistant headteacher and the teaching is being covered by a temporary class teacher.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do so that they can all achieve well
  - making sure that teachers make clear to pupils what they are learning in classroom activities and what they need to do to improve their work
  - making sure that when teachers mark pupils' work, they give pupils a clear idea of how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Increase rates of progress in writing and mathematics, particularly for the most able, by:
  - ensuring that teachers provide activities that more accurately match pupils' different abilities and provide just the right level of challenge
  - ensuring pupils have more opportunities in lessons to practise and extend their knowledge and understanding of basic skills in mathematics so that they can use these skills to solve problems
  - improving the teaching of writing skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that the headteacher:
  - checks teaching regularly to see that all pupils are making good progress
  - encourages teachers to reflect better on how well they are helping their pupils learn.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- In recent time, too few pupils have made rapid enough progress between Years 2 and 6 in mathematics and writing. Progress in reading is much stronger. Too few pupils, especially the more able, have made limited progress because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. In addition, some disruption to learning as a result of staff absence has left a few pupils with gaps in their learning.
- Despite a significant dip in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2011, by 2012 Year 6 pupils' standards had improved. This was due to the focus on improving teaching and on the better use of assessment information to track how well pupils are doing. Most Year 6 pupils made broadly expected progress in both English and mathematics from their starting points at the end of Key Stage 1. School records also indicate that learning dipped for a small number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who are currently at the top end of Key Stage 2. These pupils are now making up any lost ground and benefiting from the strength of teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- Children join the mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class with skills and abilities typical for their age. They are already able to choose different activities independently and play confidently in the outside area. They express themselves clearly and enjoy their learning. The effective teaching of letters and sounds and the promotion of early reading and writing have ensured children make secure progress in learning to recognise, read, and sometimes write, simple words. Children were captivated, for example, by 'alien visitors' Bob and Obb who helped children recognise and sound out a wide range of letters and sounds at the aliens' 'sound picnic'.
- Readers in Year 1 are able to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read simple words. Year 2 pupils read well with many already reading above expectations for the time of the year.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs read with determination and growing confidence because of the support provided by adults who develop their knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds and regularly hear them read.
- The progress of the small number of pupils supported by pupil premium and those with special educational needs is similar to other pupils at the school. Funding has been used effectively to give extra support for these pupils to help them develop their communication and literacy skills. This has led to improvements in their rate of progress, particularly in reading, and is closing the gap between their achievement and that of their fellow pupils.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good in all classes over time.
- In some lessons the pace of learning is slow and work is not well matched to what pupils can do. Too much focus is given to completing a task rather than developing learning. When this happens, pupils lose interest and do not learn as well. The work given to some more able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging, and then pupils sometimes say, 'This is too easy.'
- In the past the teaching of writing and mathematics was less effective than the teaching of reading in meeting the needs of all pupils. The pace at which pupils in Years 3 and 4 are improving is less marked than it is for older and younger pupils.
- Steps have been taken to improve pupils' writing and strengthen mathematical problem solving skills. These have already brought about improvements, particularly in the quality of written work and in achievement in mathematics. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills in solving mathematical problems, or to use them well in other subjects, and the focus on improving pupils' use of punctuation and grammar in writing remain limited.
- Where teaching is effective, the pace of the learning is brisk, easily capturing and sustaining

pupils' interest. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and are clear about what they want them to learn. A good example of this was seen in a literacy lesson where pupils enthusiastically developed their descriptive diary writing skills about an Amazonian adventure. The teacher's carefully planned activities helped develop pupils understanding of the impact of different words and phrases. As a result, pupils worked creatively and industriously throughout the lesson and were keen to read out their finished work. As one pupil said, 'I used to hate writing but just look at what I've written, it's brilliant!'

- The systematic teaching of reading throughout the school, particularly the focus on early reading, has helped pupils make good gains in learning to read over time.
- Teachers and teaching assistants support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs well in lessons or small groups. They have tasks that are appropriately matched to their needs and engage them in learning. This has had a positive effect, particularly on younger pupils' reading.
- Since the last inspection teachers have been encouraged to make better use of assessment information about their pupils to help them plan the next steps in their teaching. Some teachers are beginning to do that well, matching the work more appropriately to pupils' differing abilities.
- Most marking is supportive. However, it does not always tell pupils the next steps they need to take to improve their work. As a result, the progress of some pupils is slower than might otherwise be expected.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' natural courtesy and positive attitudes to school are strengths. Typically, pupils get on well with each other, feel safe and show respect and kindness to others regardless of age, race and disability. As one pupil told the inspector, 'We love our school. It's small and that means we know each other really well; we look out for each other.' Another pupil, enthusiastic about opportunities to celebrate pupils' efforts in special assemblies said, 'We love Praise assemblies – it's all about saying 'well done' to special people.' Pupils were also proud of their roles as peer mediators, helping to sort out any problems that might occur at break times.
- Most parents and carers who expressed a view feel that behaviour is typically good. Behaviour records show that incidents of unkindness are uncommon. The positive atmosphere for learning in the school is evident. Pupils confirm that lessons are hardly ever disrupted by poor behaviour and that any bullying is rare and effectively dealt with by staff. They are aware of the different forms of bullying. Pupils feel very confident that adults know them well and care for them.
- Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported well by the school's teaching on personal and internet safety.
- The school's effort to work closely with families has paid dividends as attendance levels have improved significantly and are now above average.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are not outstanding because there are a few pupils who do not fully engage in activities provided in their lessons. This is because a few learning activities do not motivate or interest these pupils well enough.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not yet led to securely good teaching and rapid progress in all classes.
- Effective leadership by the headteacher has created an environment where learning is seen as important. She is supported well by the acting assistant headteacher during the absence of the permanent incumbent. They show commitment to the school's continuing improvement and have an accurate awareness of its strengths and improvement areas. The steps they have taken to raise pupils' achievement have already secured improvements in reading and Year 6

standards in 2012, and sustained above average attainment in Year 2, but there is still some way to go.

- The headteacher has improved the way in which teachers are appraised. Performance targets are set and regularly reviewed to let teachers know how well they are performing. However, records show that judgements on teachers' performance and how well teachers are paid are not always as closely linked to pupils' progress as they should be.
  - Although the local authority has recently acted to support the school effectively during its current period of change, its previous involvement with the school has been insufficient. A succession of different advisers has failed to give the school's leaders the stability and quality of support needed.
  - The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, promoting pupils' enjoyment in learning and their positive behaviour. However, the school's curriculum does not fully meet the needs of all the pupils because it does not yet promote good achievement.
  - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through a wide range of visits and visitors and many special events, such as the school's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, residential trips, school performances and extra-curricular clubs which all help to enrich learning. Activities which involve pupils' learning about others' beliefs help to promote tolerance and understanding well.
  - Effective use has been made of the pupil premium funding to overcome some barriers to learning and raise the achievement of identified groups of pupils. This has already led to improvements in their reading, filling in the gaps in their learning.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The impact of the work of the governing body has grown since the last inspection. The training governors have received on how to analyse information on pupils' progress and the focus in the school on improvement have sharpened governors' understanding of the school's performance. The governors are now able, not just to support but, to challenge appropriately and this challenge is starting to have a positive impact on how well the school does. The governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities to keep pupils safe.
-

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126015
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	406340

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	82
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Arnold
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Kennedy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5–6 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01444 400398
<b>Fax number</b>	01444 401244
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-marks.w-sussex.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

