

St Mark's Church of England Aided Primary School

Talbot Village, Bournemouth, BH10 4JA

Inspection dates		1–2 May 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The great majority of pupils attain above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Most pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers typically have high expectations, teach with pace and use a variety of methods which build effectively on pupils' evident keenness to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Attendance is well above average and pupils greatly enjoy lessons and the wide range of other activities.
- The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders, staff and governors, provides outstanding leadership through her rigorous checking of the quality of teaching and learning. She maintains a relentless and successful focus on further improving the school and pursuing excellence.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and value the quality of education and the excellent level of care and support very highly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable all pupils to achieve to their full potential. Occasionally teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to work away from the teacher and learn independently.
- Sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations of what able pupils in particular can achieve, as shown when they do not give them harder work earlier in lessons.
- Feedback to pupils, including marking, is inconsistent in quality, and does not always clearly indicate the next steps in learning, particularly to help boys improve their progress in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, taught by 15 teachers. Eight of the observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff, pupils, subject leaders, a representative from the local authority and two governors.
- The inspection team took account of 51 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the responses made in 37 staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and scrutinised a variety of documentation, including information on pupils' current progress, the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Rushforth	Additional Inspector
Julie Jane	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are both below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium, mostly those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils from service families, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are both below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.
- The school operates a breakfast club and an after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more of it becomes outstanding, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations in order to increase the achievement of pupils, particularly of those more able, by giving them harder work earlier in lessons
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work and learn away from the teacher's direct control
 - ensuring a more consistent approach to giving feedback to pupils and marking their work, and in particular ensuring that boys get more precise guidance on how to improve their written work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children join Reception with levels of skill and knowledge in line with or above those usually expected for their age. They leave Reception with attainment above age-related expectations.
- Children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Results in last year's Year 1 phonics check were much lower than expected. Following this, the school quickly adapted its strategies for teaching phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) so that pupils now make very good progress in developing reading and writing skills.
- Attainment at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 has consistently been well above the national average, as confirmed by teacher assessments and national test results. Most pupils read fluently. They speak confidently and accurately. Many write with a depth and understanding well above usual expectations. Standards in mathematics are also high, although some more-able girls do not achieve as well in mathematics as they should.
- Some groups make outstanding progress, among them the few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve outstandingly well. They get excellent support from teaching assistants, as inspectors observed both in lessons and in small-group work outside lessons.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, mostly those known to be eligible for free school meals, make outstanding progress in English and mathematics, and attain at a higher level than many other pupils. These pupils make progress at a much faster rate than similar pupils nationally and also outperform many other pupils in the school.
- Some pupils make less rapid progress. Boys achieve less well than girls in writing. The school recognises this and has worked steadily and successfully to reduce the gap between the rate of boys' and girls' progress by adapting resources, the curriculum and teaching methods. Although differences in the quality and range of writing persist, the great majority of pupils are on track to reach or exceed increasingly challenging targets.
- Inspectors saw many examples of good and outstanding learning during the inspection. For example, in Reception, children showed great confidence and purpose in playing and working independently. They clearly explained to inspectors what they were doing and why.
- In a mathematics lesson for older pupils, outstanding teaching inspired pupils to respond eagerly to challenging questioning, before moving on to attempt quite complex practical problems. Pupils made great gains in confidence and understanding.
- Occasionally pupils make slower progress, usually when teachers do not give them enough scope to achieve well. This was observed when pupils spent too much time listening to the teacher and were given quite low-level tasks before they attempted harder and more interesting tasks better suited to their abilities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Inspectors saw good and sometimes outstanding teaching during the inspection, and the qualities were confirmed by the leadership's records of its checking of teaching since the previous inspection.
- Some of the outstanding teaching is recognised beyond the school. Some teachers act as role models in demonstrating excellent practice to colleagues in other local schools. Parents, carers and pupils also believe that teaching is good.
- Most of the teaching shows high expectations of pupils and excellent subject knowledge. Teachers encourage pupils to work individually and in small groups, after teaching the class together and clearly explaining the aims of the lesson. They test pupils' understanding through

skilful questioning. Teachers get pupils to talk at length about their work, for example explaining different ways of solving mathematical problems, and pupils are given the confidence to comment constructively on each other's work.

- Teachers check the quality of pupils' learning during lessons and routinely use that information to show them how to improve their work and understanding.
- Teachers make very good use of teaching assistants, particularly in ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress. Teaching assistants do this through skilful questioning and prompting, and encouraging the pupils to think for themselves.
- Teaching is not yet typically outstanding, because of inconsistencies. When marking pupils' work or giving other forms of feedback, many teachers make constructive comments, showing pupils how they can improve their work further. However, sometimes the marking is less helpful, when pupils are not encouraged to respond to teachers' comments and pupils' targets are not used very precisely to improve their learning.
- Although teachers usually have high expectations, occasionally they do not give pupils enough opportunities to work things out for themselves early in the lesson so that pupils, particularly the more able, do not progress at a faster rate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. It contributes significantly to the good progress made, because pupils are very keen to learn and contribute to lessons. Any disruption to learning is extremely rare and there have been no exclusions in recent times.
- Pupils love coming to school. Attendance is well above average. Pupils talk enthusiastically about lessons and the wide range of other activities such as clubs and visits, including residential visits. Pupils greatly appreciate the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school, and parents and carers confirm this. Pupils have a very good understanding of the various types of bullying that can take place in schools, but insist that these are not issues at St Mark's. Pupils are very proud of their school community. They are extremely polite and welcoming to visitors and work very well with each other in lessons.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility. Peer mediators and the school council have a high profile. Pupils enjoy representing the school at outside events, for example in musical performances.
- Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school and are very well prepared for the next stage of education, both academically and as well-rounded individuals.
- The school has a merited reputation for high-quality care and support, valued by pupils and parents and carers alike.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, well supported by her deputy, provides outstanding leadership. She relentlessly pursues excellence. Having sustained the high quality of education since the previous inspection, the leadership shows no complacency in the drive to improve overall achievement.
- The leadership analyses pupils' performance in detail. Where it has recognised underperformance it has put corrective strategies in place, notably in mathematics and boys' writing. The school curriculum has been adapted with the introduction of topics such as 'space' and 'monster munch' to build on boys' interests, and a wider range of reading materials has been acquired. The success of these strategies is evident in the steady improvement in boys'

progress.

- Improved progress in mathematics has been achieved through careful analysis of learning patterns, adapting teaching methods and developing the confidence of teachers by means of support from expert practitioners.
- The leadership's success in improving performance is also evident in the very effective use of pupil premium funding to provide additional staffing and other resources for the needs of eligible pupils, who attain high standards and make outstanding progress in all areas.
- The senior leadership checks the quality of teaching rigorously. Subject and phase leaders also play an important role in this process. They support colleagues, check the quality of teaching and learning and produce action plans to drive improvement forwards.
- Staff questionnaires confirm that staff are very committed to the leadership's high expectations. They welcome the high-quality professional development and understand the importance of accountability.
- Staff accountability is ensured by the leadership's success in closely linking pay and responsibility allowances to progress.
- The local authority has provided some support for the school since the previous inspection, for example to improve the teaching of phonics. It has great confidence in the school's ability to move the school forwards by relying on the expertise of its own staff.
- The leadership and other staff have a major role in supporting teaching and learning in other schools, using their expertise in subjects such as mathematics.
- Links with other local schools help to develop teachers' expertise, for example through joint checking of written work to ensure consistent standards across schools. The links also directly benefit pupils' learning. For example, Year 6 pupils do joint mathematics projects with their peers in other schools.
- Parents and carers raise considerable funds for the school and are strongly encouraged to support their children's learning at home as well as in school.
- Pupils get excellent opportunities to enrich their school experience. All Key Stage 2 pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. The school has a high reputation for music, sport and drama.
- The school meets all safeguarding requirements. Staff and governors are appropriately trained in the relevant policies and procedures.
- All pupils have equal access to all that the school provides in lessons and other activities, and there is no discrimination.
- There are outstanding opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on values in the school and the wider world, as evident in the excellent displays around the school and in activities such as assemblies.
- The school has improved in several ways since it was inspected in 2009. The record of improvement, high attainment, accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, rapidly improving progress and rigorous planning for the future shows that the school is strongly placed to improve further.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governors have a high profile in the school. Their activities include observing lessons and considering the reports of subject leaders, as well as assisting the leadership in evaluating the school and planning for future improvement. Governors have a keen understanding of the school and how the progress of pupils compares with national expectations. They scrutinise how effectively the school uses pupil premium funding and play a full part in ensuring the accountability of staff, checking the link between pay and performance. Governors are appropriately trained in their responsibilities in key areas such as safeguarding. In addition to supporting the leadership, they also challenge it when appropriate, for example in asking questions about how the school plans to eradicate any pupil underperformance. They also understand the qualities of teaching in the school. Governors have been very successful in carrying out their role of both holding the school to account and helping the leadership to

maintain high standards and build upon existing successes.

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

Unique reference number	113843
Local authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	412412

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anita Hazell
Headteacher	Caroline Burn
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2009
Telephone number	01202 512241
Fax number	01202 532584
Email address	stmarksp@bournemouth.gov.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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

