

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARK'S CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kennington, London

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 100619

Headteacher: Miss J Hedman

Reporting inspector: Ms A Coyle
20603

Dates of inspection: 8 - 10 May 2000

Inspection number: 189256

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Harleyford Road Kennington London
Postcode:	SE11 5SL
Telephone number:	0207 735 1467
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev R De Berry
Date of previous inspection:	July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Pupils make good progress overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

The pupils have good attitudes to their work and generally behave well. Relationships between pupils are good and there is racial harmony in the school.

The quality of teaching is mainly good, with a significant amount of very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development within a strongly Christian ethos.

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The curriculum is not planned appropriately for the under-fives from the assessments made when they first enter the school, and the statutory requirements are not met for teaching information technology at Key Stage 2.

Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their initiative.

The school's partnership with parents and the local early years' settings are not fully developed.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mark's CE VA Primary School is situated in Kennington, South East London, within an Education Action Zone. It serves the surrounding catchment area, and the number of pupils on roll has not changed significantly since the school was last inspected in 1996. There are currently 197 girls and boys in the school. Children are admitted at the beginning of the term in which they are five. Attainment on entry varies, but is below average overall. The majority of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and learn English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average, at 31 per cent. The school has 30 per cent of its pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is higher than the national figure, and three pupils have statements for their needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is an effective learning environment in which a high proportion of pupils achieve the expected standards by the end of Year 6 and the quality of teaching is good overall. The headteacher and governors provide sound leadership and management, and ensure that good value for money is maintained.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- The pupils have good attitudes to their work and generally behave well. Relationships between pupils are good and there is racial harmony in the school.
- The quality of teaching is mainly good, with a significant amount of very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development within a strongly Christian ethos.

What could be improved

- The curriculum is not planned appropriately for the under-fives from the assessments made when they first enter the school¹, and the statutory requirements are not met for teaching information technology at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their initiative.
- The school's partnerships with parents and the local early years' settings are not fully developed.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1996. Since then, standards have improved significantly at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in science, and the school has satisfactorily addressed most of the key issues identified. Policies have been written for

¹ ON DESIRABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

In 1996, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), formerly SCAA (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority), produced a set of 'Desirable Learning Outcomes for children's learning on entering compulsory education'. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five in six areas of learning: language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal and social development.

teaching and learning, and the school development plan has been improved to provide a three-year strategic plan. However, the provision for information and communication technology has not been sufficiently developed to cover all the required areas for the oldest pupils in the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	C	A
Mathematics	E	C	B	A
Science	E*	B	A	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen significantly since the last inspection. When compared to the national results, the percentage of pupils in Year 6 achieving the expected Level 4 or above in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. In relation to the situation in similar schools, however, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels for English and mathematics was well above average at the end of Year 6, whilst standards in science were well above average, and within the highest five per cent in the country. The inspection findings support these results and show that currently, pupils make good progress overall and achieve sound standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2². At Key Stage 1, standards are currently average in science, but below average in English and mathematics. The school has set sufficiently challenging targets, especially in writing, which it is on line to achieve.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils usually behave well in lessons, although a few pupils are occasionally disruptive and there have been a large number of fixed-term exclusions in the last academic year.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have good relationships with each other in a racially harmonious environment. However, their personal development is not sufficiently extended.

² ON LEVELS

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels.

By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 5 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels.

Attendance	Good. Pupils are punctual for school, and lessons begin promptly.
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Pupils' good attitudes and the racially harmonious environment are strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is good overall. In the lessons observed 93 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better; 44 per cent was good and 19 per cent was very good. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is particularly good at the end of Key Stage 2, because literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. This enables all pupils to make rapid progress in their learning towards the end of their time at the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A satisfactory range of subjects is covered, but the statutory requirements are not met for information technology at Key Stage 2. The curriculum for the under-fives in the reception class is not clearly focused on the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are sufficiently supported to help them in their learning. Appropriate targets for learning are set and individual education plans are used effectively by teachers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who learn English as an additional language are effectively supported within small groups withdrawn for specialist help, or within the classroom situation, as appropriate.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is fostered appropriately.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for promoting pupils' attendance and behaviour, and it cares well for its pupils.

The school has a strong Christian ethos that is promoted well by staff and governors.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is effectively led and managed by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators who all provide good support for colleagues and are dedicated to the pupils they teach.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall, but the governors do not rigorously ensure that statutory requirements are met for information technology.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor standards effectively and take appropriate action to improve results.
The strategic use of resources	The school has made good improvements to its accommodation through a substantial recent building programme, and resources are used effectively.

The headteacher and governors provide sound leadership and management, and ensure that good value for money is maintained.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The majority of parents feel that pupils make pleasing progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A few parents would like the school to provide more extra-curricular activities

The inspectors agree with the above comment made by parents that pupils make pleasing progress. The school has clear plans to develop the provision for extra-curricular activities. For example, it is soon to introduce an art club, a musical 'steel band' and a dance club.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make good progress overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

1. Although children under five enter the school with limited skills in literacy and numeracy, from the time they join the reception class they are taught to build effectively on their knowledge and understanding. Pupils' academic progress is maintained as they move through Key Stage 1, so that, by the time they reach the end of Year 2, all pupils attain Level 2 in science and many achieve the expected level in reading and mathematics. Nevertheless, standards are currently below average in English and mathematics in lessons. The school has identified the need to improve attainment, especially in writing at Key Stage 1, and targets have been appropriately developed in order to raise standards further.
2. The school has improved the standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 since the previous inspection in 1996. Standards have risen significantly at the end of Key Stage 2 over the last two years. When compared to the national results, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above in the 1999 National Curriculum tests was average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. However, when compared with the results of similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels for English and mathematics was well above average at the end of Year 6, whilst standards in science were well above average, and within the highest five per cent in the country.
3. The inspection findings agree that the standards of pupils approaching the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the nationally expected levels. Pupils make notably good progress towards the end of their time at the school. For example, literacy and numeracy skills are well developed across the curriculum by the end of Key Stage 2.

The pupils have good attitudes to their work and generally behave well. Relationships between pupils are good and there is racial harmony in the school.

4. Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They are eager to come to school and are usually punctual for their lessons. Pupils pay good attention to their teachers and follow instructions well. This helps them to make good progress in lessons.
5. There is a consistent approach to discipline across the school and pupils respond well. Behaviour is generally good. Pupils generally co-operate with their teachers in establishing conditions in which they, and others, can work productively without fear of interruption or distraction. They are particularly well behaved in the dining hall; the lunchtime assistants are kind, but firm, and pupils respond well. However, there have been a large number of fixed term exclusions over the last academic year due to the inappropriate behaviour of a few pupils.
6. Relationships within the school are good. Teachers and pupils relate well to one another and the friendly, caring ethos is built on a basis of mutual respect that children pick up very quickly after joining the school. Pupils are supportive of one another and in all lessons are prepared to listen to others' views.

The quality of teaching is mainly good, with a significant amount of very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2.

7. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the quality of teaching, which is now good overall. In the lessons observed 93 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better; 44 per cent was good and 19 per cent was very good. The best teaching is at the end of Key Stage 2, because literacy and numeracy skills are particularly well taught, enabling pupils to make rapid progress in their learning.
8. The quality of teaching for the under-fives is satisfactory. In the best lessons, opportunities are used well to teach and emphasise new ideas. Adults have high expectations of behaviour and challenge the pupils to do their best. However, the teaching is not clearly based on the Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five, and early assessments are not used sufficiently to assist planning.
9. At Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are good because lesson plans identify clearly what the teachers expect pupils to learn. Good use is made of questioning to check that pupils understand what they have been taught. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Specific subject vocabulary is used well and activities motivate pupils effectively. Lessons are structured well and are completed at a steady pace. Appropriate targets have been set to raise standards in writing and teachers are careful to promote pupils' skills accordingly.
10. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good overall; it is sometimes very good in Years 5 and 6 because lessons are well organised and managed skilfully. Good classroom control techniques are used consistently and pupils are given a lot of praise for their work. This has a positive effect on standards of behaviour and attainment, as pupils try hard to gain their teacher's approval. In all classes, relationships between teachers and their pupils are friendly, positive and focused on learning. Learning support assistants are well briefed and deployed carefully to make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. An appropriate amount of homework, in the form of spellings, reading and an occasional piece of topic work, is set for pupils to enable them to extend their learning. The accommodation is used well; classrooms are tidy, well-organised environments with resources clearly accessible.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development within a strong Christian ethos.

11. The school's provision for spiritual development is good. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore the values and beliefs of others. Pupils can relate to the central theme of caring and can offer suggestions about how they can be helpful to others. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect upon why we are here and our place in the world. The school enhances pupils' spiritual awareness throughout many areas of the curriculum. For example, they learn about significant events that have taken place during the last millennium and make resolutions about what they want to achieve in the future. Visitors to the school, such as the local vicar, help pupils to understand the richness and diversity of the world, within a strongly Christian ethos.
12. The school provides good opportunities for raising pupils' awareness of social and moral issues. Adults who work within the school are good role models for pupils and are consistent in their approach to reinforcing an understanding of the

difference between right and wrong. Discussions in lessons are particularly effective in prompting pupils to reflect upon how their actions may affect others and that they have choices about how to behave.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The curriculum is not planned appropriately for the under-fives from the assessments made when they first enter the school, and the statutory requirements are not met for teaching information technology at Key Stage 2.

13. Since the time of the last inspection the school has maintained a broad curriculum. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality and range of learning opportunities are sound. The school pays good regard to the national strategies for both literacy and numeracy and this has had a positive impact upon the standards that pupils achieve in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The quality of specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language is sound. When pupils are withdrawn from their mainstream class lessons for additional help, the work they are given to do is well matched to the targets identified. Great care is taken to ensure that these pupils still have access to the full curriculum and are not excluded from vital parts of class lessons.
14. Children under five in the reception class are integrated well with the older five-year-olds. However, the curriculum is not sufficiently planned for them to experience the six areas of learning as recommended in the Desirable Learning Outcomes. Although useful assessments are made when children first enter the school, these are not used rigorously to assist teachers when planning activities for learning in language, literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development, and personal and social development.
15. Throughout Key Stage 1, the curricular opportunities in information and communication technology are sound. However, the school does not meet the statutory requirements to teach all aspects of the subject at Key Stage 2; control technology, modelling and monitoring are not sufficiently covered in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their initiative.

16. A few pupils undertake small tasks and responsibilities to develop their independence, but there are too few opportunities for the majority to use their initiative and extend their personal development. For example, there is no school library and this restricts the opportunities pupils can be given to conduct their own research and so develop their independence.

The school's partnerships with parents and the local early years' settings are not fully developed.

17. The school is an effective learning environment in which the headteacher and staff seek to work in partnership with parents and the community. However, the school's links with parents and the local early years' settings are not sufficiently extended. The school tries hard to involve parents by providing regular information on a range of topics, but many parents are not actively involved in the school. There are no formal arrangements for sharing information effectively with the local providers of

early years' education so that children can be well prepared for the next stage of their education.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

18. In order to maintain the standards achieved, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
 - (1) improve the quality of the curriculum and its assessment by:
 - making sure that the statutory requirements are fully met to teach all the elements of information and communication technology at Key Stage 2;
 - planning activities that are more closely matched to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for the children under five;
 - using the results of the assessments undertaken when children first enter the school more effectively to focus the teaching and learning of the youngest pupils;
 - (2) extend the provision for pupils to develop their personal skills and use their initiative;
 - (3) strengthen and develop the school's partnership with parents and the local early years' settings.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	44	30	7	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	197
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	61

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	60

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	113

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	16	13	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	9	14
	Girls	10	9	10
	Total	24	18	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83	62	83
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	14	16
	Girls	10	10	13
	Total	20	24	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69	83	100
	National	82	86	87

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	5	19	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	4	5
	Girls	12	14	16
	Total	16	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67	75	88
	National	70	68	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	11	13	14
	Total	14	16	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58	67	75
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	42
Black – African heritage	109
Black – other	6
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	7
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	8	
Black – African heritage	10	
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	459,346
Total expenditure	463,298
Expenditure per pupil	2,452
Balance brought forward from previous year	47,262
Balance carried forward to next year	43,310

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	151
Number of questionnaires returned	68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	24	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	29	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	41	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	44	10	0	1
The teaching is good.	74	25	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	35	4	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	0	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	22	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	57	34	6	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	63	34	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	34	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	34	18	3	9

NB: Not all parents responded to all questions, therefore totals may not add up to 100.

Other issues raised by parents

Sixteen parents attended a meeting held at the school, and three parents wrote to the registered inspector. The majority of comments were positive, but a few parents would like their children to have more opportunities for extra-curricular activities.