



# St Mark's Church of England Aided Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113843  
**LEA** Bournemouth  
**Inspection number** 279262  
**Inspection dates** 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Tom Shine AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Talbot Village
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Bournemouth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Dorset BH10 4JA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01202 512241
<b>Number on roll</b>	427	<b>Fax number</b>	01202 532584
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs J Andrews
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Caroline Burn

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 4 July 2006 - 5 July 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279262
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Mark's Church of England Voluntary Aided School is a larger-than-average primary school set in a very attractive woodland area in the northern suburbs of Bournemouth. The school has close ties with the Parish Church of St Mark's and the Talbot Village Trust. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. A small number of pupils, some of whom have joined the school in the last few years, are in the early stages of learning English.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is an effective school that gives good value for money. These judgements match the school's own views. The school knows what needs to be done to improve. It has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further. Good teaching enables pupils throughout the school to make good progress. As a result, pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Pupils achieve better in reading than they do in writing. The quality of teaching in the Reception classes is good and enables children to achieve well. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and make good progress. Pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are also supported well and make good progress. The small number of children with medical or behavioural conditions are supported exceptionally well. There is a friendly atmosphere in the school and provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The school's levels of care and support are outstanding. The curriculum is good and is complemented by an exceptionally broad range of out-of-school activities, including breakfast gymnastics and other clubs that are popular and well attended by pupils. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and her deputy have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are determined that the good standards recently attained by pupils when they leave the school are sustained in the future.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing further throughout the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement and standards are good. Children start school with levels of attainment that are wide ranging, but broadly average, overall. They make good progress and achieve well across all the areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. End-of-Year 2 assessments in 2005 showed that standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results were lower than in previous years as this year group contained a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than usual. Current standards are now above average in reading and mathematics but, although they have improved, standards in writing are still broadly average. Pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are achieving well. Those with learning difficulties are supported effectively and make good progress. Pupils in Year 6 are now attaining well-above-average standards in English, mathematics and science. All pupils, including those who are higher attaining, are achieving very well. The school sets challenging targets which the pupils generally meet. Standards in reading are high; the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is very high and has improved significantly since the previous year. However, fewer pupils achieve the higher levels in writing. Standards have improved well since 2005 because of improvements to teaching.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy being at St Mark's and display a real enthusiasm for learning. 'It's a nice place to be!' is a commonly voiced view. As a result of these very positive attitudes towards school, pupils' attendance is above average. They behave well and understand the need to get on well together. Exclusions are used sparingly and only as a last resort. Bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils say they 'always feel safe and happy here.' At playtimes they behave and move around carefully and have regard for the safety of others. They are keen to join the many clubs that give them additional opportunities to exercise regularly and know what foods to eat to stay healthy. Strong community links and good learning in lessons, including those on citizenship, help to develop an understanding of the skills needed in the workplace. As a result of the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils relate to and understand each other. Their general cultural learning is good overall, although pupils' understanding of the wider multicultural aspects of modern British society is limited. Pupils feel valued and respected and are quick to help others should the need arise. In the school council pupils express their views clearly and have succeeded in having several of their recommendations put into practice. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through participation in events linked to the local church and the neighbouring area. The school's support for charities helps pupils to think about others in more need than themselves.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers organise and manage lessons well, ensuring that work is well matched to pupils' individual learning needs. These aspects, coupled with good relationships at all levels, ensure that pupils have good attitudes to their work and progress well in their learning. Pupils say that 'teachers are fun.' In most lessons, teachers know their subjects well and question pupils skilfully. For example, in a good literacy lesson, the teacher's clear explanations ensured pupils were able to present a well-balanced argument. They talked animatedly in groups and gave their answers clearly and confidently. Pupils with learning difficulties are taught well through clearly focused work and receive effective support, including that from teaching assistants. Pupils in the early stages of learning English are supported well, both by teachers and teaching assistants, and make good progress. Teaching in the Reception classes is good. Lessons are well organised and managed, with a wide range of activities that meets the needs of the children well. The teachers ensure that their children are very clear about what is expected of them and remain motivated and engaged in lessons. There are good systems for monitoring pupils' progress and the information they provide is generally used well to plan and review lessons so that they are well matched to pupils' needs. Targets are set at several levels and pupils are normally clear

about what they are. There is a variety of strategies to provide feedback to pupils on their progress, including teachers' marking, which is generally good.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and caters well for the needs of all pupils. However, there is not enough emphasis on making pupils aware of the community beyond their own environment, particularly the multicultural nature of some of the rest of the country. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided with a good range of opportunities that reflect their needs well and provide a good balance of teacher-led and independent activities. Effective planning and provision for personal, social and health education ensure that pupils throughout the school are well aware of the importance of health, fitness and keeping safe. In some classes, pupils are not given enough opportunities to use computer technology to support learning in other subjects but the school is working on this. Outside the school day, the curriculum is enriched through an exceptionally wide range of popular activities, including breakfast gymnastics, while visits to places of interest and visitors to the school enliven pupils' experiences. There is outstanding provision for a wide range of activities in the playground that pupils enjoy during play and lunch times.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. The school is a happy, friendly place where all staff take exceptional care of the pupils. Pupils say that they like being in school and that the very small amount of bullying is dealt with really well. There are very thorough child protection procedures and all staff are fully aware of their roles. Very good use is made of outside agencies to provide support of high quality to help the school fully meet the range of pupils' needs. The school makes excellent provision for a small number of children with medical or behavioural conditions. Exceptionally good procedures in the Foundation Stage enable children to settle into school routines happily. Pupils in Year 6 are very well prepared to move onto their next school through a programme of planned visits. The monitoring of academic performance is very good. The school has very thorough systems to track pupils' progress and identify areas of underachievement in order to improve performance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead and manage the school effectively and are supported well by the staff and governors, who share a clear vision and a commitment towards continuing to raise standards. They are particularly good at including all pupils in the life of the school. Partnerships with other schools and outside bodies are very good and extend pupils' learning experiences well. The school has developed effective systems for monitoring both its

own work and the progress of pupils. For example, it is aware that standards in writing are not as high as those in reading, mathematics or science. In addition, the quality of teaching and planning is regularly monitored and this has helped to raise pupils' achievement. Leaders and managers at all levels continually monitor the quality of provision in order to identify where improvements should be made. This has recently led to a focus on developing problem-solving skills, which has successfully raised achievement in mathematics. The school works closely with parents, regularly seeking and taking account of their views in evaluating its performance. However, a small minority of parents would like the school to seek their views on school matters even more. The governing body supports the school effectively. Governors have good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, are fully involved in all major decisions, and are not afraid to hold it to account. Taken together, leadership and management are making a strong contribution to the school's capacity to improve.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils Thank you very much for all the help you gave us when we came to your school recently. We liked talking to you and to your teachers. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school. These are the things we liked most about your school:

You make a good start to your education in the Reception classes.

You achieve well in reading, mathematics and science.

You are all very friendly and polite.

You told us you feel safe and well supported.

Your headteacher makes sure those of you who need extra help get it.

You enjoy school and attend regularly.

You also behave and get on well with each other and with all members of staff.

You are taught to realise the importance of exercise and healthy eating.

You enjoy the wide range of out-of-school activities and clubs. But to make things even better we have suggested something that we think will help:

We think your teachers could encourage you even more to improve your writing skills. Yours sincerely Tom Shine Lead Inspector