



# St Mark's Church of England Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 116342  
**LEA** Southampton LEA  
**Inspection number** 279796  
**Inspection dates** 24 November 2005 to 25 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Olson Davis AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Stafford Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Shirley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		Southampton SO15 5TE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	02380772968
<b>Number on roll</b>	321	<b>Fax number</b>	02380363118
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Wendy Hamilton
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne Steele arnett

<b>Age group</b> 7 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24 November 2005 - 25 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279796
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Mark's Church of England School is a large junior school serving a community that is more disadvantaged than is usually found. It has a high number of pupils with learning difficulties and for whom English is not their first language. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is above the national average. More pupils than usual join and leave the school at other than the normal times. Two-thirds of the staff have joined the school in the last two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school identifies its overall effectiveness as satisfactory and inspectors agree with its assessment. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Recent improvements in standards in English and mathematics point to the schools' capacity to bring about improvement. Nonetheless, standards are below where they should be. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory but some lower attaining boys do not make the progress expected of them. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with examples of good teaching. Effective lessons have good pace, and build on an accurate assessment of pupils' starting points, with opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in lessons where activities are not matched accurately to their abilities. The work is too difficult for some lower attaining pupils, mostly boys. The school makes good use of its many links with other organisations to benefit its pupils and enrich its good curriculum. It places strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development and provides a safe and secure environment. As a result, pupils behave well and feel well cared for and supported. Pupils' personal development and the school's provision for their well-being are good. This view is endorsed by their parents. The headteacher has a good knowledge of the school and has accurately identified what it needs to do to improve. Inspectors agree with her analysis. Past actions and future planning demonstrate her strong determination for the school to do its best for its pupils and their families.

### What the school should do to improve further

\* Raise standards in English and mathematics, especially for lower attaining boys.\*  
Use assessment information to match work to pupils' abilities in lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science and make satisfactory progress. This marks a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Underachievement by pupils has been rigorously addressed by the headteacher, new senior leadership team, and newly-appointed subject leaders but they still have some way to go to ensure that all pupils are making the progress expected of them. Pupils enter the school with average attainment. Standards attained in English and mathematics have been mostly below average since 2001 but improved in 2005 to be average despite the large proportion of pupils in that year group with learning difficulties. Standards in science have been maintained at a broadly average level since the previous inspection. Challenging targets were met in 2005, and now the school has set even more challenging ones for 2006. The school is aware that pupils' achievement can be improved further, especially the achievement of lower attaining boys. The school's analysis of pupils' progress provides persuasive evidence of improving achievement. The large proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and for whom English is an additional language are well supported and make

satisfactory progress. Pupils from a minority ethnic background also make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and join in activities enthusiastically. Attendance is steadily improving but remains below the national average. Pupils show good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The majority of pupils learn to co-operate with each other and to work together sensibly. Pupils behave well as a result of a clear system of rewards and sanctions. The school council gives pupils opportunities to express their views. Members of the council were usefully involved in the interviews for new teaching staff. The 'Green Team' takes good care of the school environment and works hard for its improvement. Such opportunities raise pupils' social awareness and equip them well for the future. Pupils are very aware of healthy ways of living and of ways in which they should keep safe. The school's good work in this area has been recognised by a Healthy Schools Award.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many of the teachers are new to the school and some are relatively inexperienced. Shared practice, particularly within year groups, and strong support for new staff, is helping to establish a stable, enthusiastic and effective team of teachers. Pupils' progress and attainment is carefully checked so that teachers can identify the ability levels within their classes. Where teaching is more successful, teachers take full account of these levels and carefully and appropriately plan the next steps in pupils' learning. In these lessons pupils are well challenged and supported, enabling them all to make good progress. Where teaching and learning are less successful, assessment information is not used as effectively to match learning activities to pupils' abilities. As a result, some lower attaining pupils can find the work too difficult, particularly in mathematics and English. Learning support assistants generally provide good support, especially when they are working on the individual targets set for pupils with learning difficulties and for pupils for whom English is an additional language.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum. Pupils' personal development needs are very well met. Their academic needs are currently being met satisfactorily, indicated by the satisfactory progress they are making. Links between subjects are starting to be identified, which draw on pupils' skills and make their learning more purposeful. The

school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education. Lessons encourage pupils to talk about their emotions and feelings, and to become more confident in their approach to life and learning. Pupils benefit from the very many opportunities for sport and exercise and to learn about healthy living. Many enrichment activities add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. Good use is made of visits and visitors to broaden pupils' experiences and to teach them how to be safe through visits from the police, fire service and school nurse. Regular themed days help to bring learning to life, such as when the school revisited Victorian times. Special weeks, such as the arts week, help to involve parents and the community enriching pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The level of care and concern shown towards pupils and their families is good. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. The school works effectively with other professionals, such as the school nurse and family support worker, to raise pupils' confidence, self-esteem and healthy approaches to life. Systems for identifying concerns about individual pupil's welfare, safety or special educational needs are robust, and appropriate measures for necessary action are in place and pupils at an early stage of learning English are well supported. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and conscientiously observed. Child protection procedures are clear and widely understood. Consequently arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are good. Pupils and their parents are kept well informed of pupils' attainment and progress, and their targets for future learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory but improving. The school is well led by the headteacher who has assembled an able senior leadership team which is tightly focused on improving pupil achievement. Clear induction procedures for the many new staff have quickly led to improved teamwork and a shared purpose concentrating on raising standards. The monitoring of teaching is rigorous and has led to improvements, particularly for new staff. Monitoring has accurately identified the lack of progress by some lower attaining boys but strategies to improve their standards are not yet fully effective. Subject leaders carry out their roles well. Pupils speak very warmly of their head teacher. They would go to her with any concerns or worries. They identify many positive changes which she has introduced which have made school a happier and more enjoyable place. These include improvement to the buildings, more interesting lessons, responsibilities such as house and games captains and 'lots of clubs'. The school's self evaluation is accurate and provides a realistic picture of the school which is used well to build on strengths and determine priorities for development. The views of parents and pupils are sought and used where appropriate to inform future planning. Governors carry out their roles satisfactorily. They are supportive and are beginning to play a more active monitoring

role. The school has done well in raising standards of care and improving pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. There is still some way to go, but the school is well poised to make further improvements.

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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>	3	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	NA	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>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	3	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>	3	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>	2	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>	3	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	3	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	3	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**

We recently visited you to find out how well your school is helping you with your learning. Thank you for being so friendly and willing to talk to us about your school.

Here are some of the many good things that your school does well: \* You enjoy your school and all the many extra opportunities it gives you, such as clubs and visits. \* You behave well and you are learning to be safe and have healthy life styles. \* Those of you who need extra help in your work have someone to turn to. \* Your teachers and other adults take good care of you at school. \* Your teachers help you to learn how to take responsibility. \* Your headteacher and her staff know what they need to do to improve your school and they are already working hard to make it a better school for you.

We have asked the staff and governors to carry on working on those areas they already have been. We have also asked them to concentrate on the following: \* To help some of you to do better in the English and mathematics national tests. \* To plan some lessons better so that the work is just right for you. We hope that you will help your teachers as they try to make your school even better for you.