



# Scarisbrick St Mark's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119410  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280548  
**Inspection dates** 31 October 2005 to 1 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Eric Jackson

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Southport Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Scarisbrick
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Ormskirk, Lancashire
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 880636
<b>Number on roll</b>	83	<b>Fax number</b>	01704 880636
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs S Hunter-Barnet
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Freeman

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 31 October 2005 - 1 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280548
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Mark's is a small Church of England school, and serves a community largely dependent on agriculture. It is housed in an adapted Victorian building. The pupils, apart from those in reception, are taught in mixed age classes. The number of pupils taking free school meals is well below average. Socio-economic circumstances locally are broadly average. There are fewer pupils identified with learning difficulties than average, but there is an above average proportion of pupils with statements of their need. All the pupils are from white British backgrounds. A deputy headteacher from another school is acting headteacher until Easter 2006. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and is working towards Healthy School designation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Pupils receive a satisfactory education that has some good features, but the quality of provision at St Mark's has declined since its last inspection in 2000. Progress has been slower for some pupils in the recent past than it should have been. However, it is now an improving school under the guidance of the acting headteacher. This matches the school's own judgement. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The acting headteacher, staff, governors and the local authority have worked well together since September to put in place necessary changes, although these are at early stages. The school is well set to continue to improve. A parent wrote that since September, 'There is a more energetic outlook.' There is a good atmosphere for learning, and pupils' personal development is good.

Provision for the reception class is satisfactory, and the children make satisfactory progress. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. In Years 3 to 6, pupils currently achieve satisfactorily, although standards in writing, mathematics and science were below average last year for Year 6, mainly for boys.

Teaching is satisfactory, and it is often good, especially for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils say that they enjoy their work and feel well-supported. However, lesson introductions are often too long, and pupils do not know enough about how to improve their work.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards by the end of Year 6, particularly among the boys, in writing, science and mathematics.
- Ensure that the pupils understand fully what they need to do to improve in all areas of learning.
- Make sure that the introductory phase of each lesson is only as long as required to promote learning effectively.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

There are small numbers in each year group, so comparisons with other schools and national averages need to be treated cautiously. However, standards by the end of Year 6 were lower in 2005 national tests than at the last inspection.

Children generally start school in reception with above average skills for their age, especially in language and mathematics. They achieve satisfactorily in their first year: they do well in reading but not as well in mathematics. Progress in their physical development is hampered by the lack of direct access to outside facilities.

Standards are well above average in Years 1 and 2. Pupils do particularly well in reading and science, many with good parental support, although less well in writing. Boys often achieve as well as girls, and sometimes better.

Progress is satisfactory now in Years 3 to 6, but there is a residue for older pupils of slower than expected progress in the past. Standards were high by the end of Year 6 last year in English, but below expectations in mathematics and science. Girls generally achieved well, but too many boys did not. The current Year 6 are on course to achieve above average levels and meet the school's challenging targets.

Provision for looked after children and those with learning difficulties is good. They often make good progress though attaining below average levels. Results for higher attaining Year 6 pupils were much better last year than in previous years. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are generally good across the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

This is a strong aspect of the school. Pupils are well-mannered and polite. They have good attitudes to their work and behave well. In a meeting with the School Council, pupils from reception to Year 6 conducted themselves with confidence and skill, a credit to the school and their parents.

Attendance and punctuality are good, and both children and their parents confirm that they fully enjoy their time at school. Reception children jumping with delight when they found the hidden 'gingerbread man' in the playground exemplified this. Older pupils recognise the efforts the staff make to provide interesting and suitable work for them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory.

Pupils feel safe, and state that bullying is not tolerated. No pupil has been excluded for a number of years. New fencing is to be fitted this month to make the playground more secure, and many parents commented how pleased they were that this has been expedited by the acting headteacher.

The school is working towards Healthy School status, and has achieved some of the steps required. School meals are well planned and prepared to healthy eating menus. Arrangements for exercise and physical activity are adequate, but do not yet meet the target of two hours per week for every pupil. This aspect is satisfactory.

The pupils make a good contribution to the school community, many of the older ones performing helpful tasks such as setting out the hall for assembly. Pupils develop the skills needed to help them in the world of work satisfactorily.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features, based in good relationships between staff and pupils. In an outstanding lesson for Year 1 and 2 pupils, the knowledgeable teacher challenged them very skilfully, ensuring that the pace of their learning of numeracy skills was fast and effective. In this lesson, the introduction was just right, but in some other lessons the opening whole class session lasts too long. The staff are skilled in helping children with difficult behaviour to settle to their work. Older pupils are generally clear about what they need to do to improve but many others are not helped sufficiently to understand for themselves what they need to do next in the various aspects of their learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, building adequately on pupils' previous learning. The staff have compiled useful 'maps' to help them cover the required curriculum on a two-year cycle for mixed age classes. While these cover subject content effectively, they do not yet show how common skills such as speaking and listening or investigation are to be developed across the different areas of learning. The pupils enjoy most subjects, although older children find religious education not sufficiently stimulating. Good information is sent to parents about what is to be taught each term. Provision to learn safe practices is good, and for leading a healthy lifestyle satisfactory. A good range of activities is offered outside lessons, including by support staff at lunchtimes.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The pupils are well cared for by all the staff. The pupils say that there is always someone to turn to when they have a problem. Guidance and support are satisfactory for academic learning. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support. Most pupils, however, are not involved sufficiently in understanding their own learning. This is a school priority for further development.

### Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

Leadership is satisfactory, as is management. Leadership is improving well, and the acting headteacher has given clear direction for the school's further development. Other key staff, the chair of governors and the local authority are very supportive of her recent initiatives to improve the quality of education. The school's key positions are filled by new appointees, but they have brought determined enthusiasm to their

tasks, giving the school good capacity to improve. It is to the staff's credit that the school has continued to be orderly and run smoothly from day-to-day.

In the recent past, clear evidence that some pupils did not make sufficient progress in some year groups was not used appropriately to put matters right, nor to hold teachers accountable. The school's view of itself is now becoming more accurate. Various pieces of data and information are being used more effectively to follow pupils' progress and take action to ensure it is good enough. Parents feel that the pace and dynamism of recent developments are impressive. The staff have welcomed the acting headteacher's determination to improve standards and the quality of pupils' learning. Staff morale is high, and the pupils' progress across the school is at least satisfactory, and in some cases good.

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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?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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	2	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	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	3	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	3	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>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	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	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	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

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2 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for your warm welcome to me when I visited your school. I was impressed by your polite and friendly approach, including the girls from Class 4 who explained to me how the school building has changed by walking me round it!

Everyone seems to be pleased with the changes happening, and with the work Mrs Freeman is doing with the staff to improve what they do for you. You said that you enjoyed your time at school, and feel safe there. Your parents agreed, and I agree with them. This enjoyment was clear when the lights to celebrate Diwali were switched on in reception, and the children's eyes shone!

Your school helps you to learn satisfactorily, and the staff make sure that you learn everything you should. Some of your lessons are exciting, but some of them take too long before you can get on with the planned tasks and activities. Many of you do very well in reading, but some of you could do better in other things. You are good at talking and listening, though. When I met your School Councillors, they showed me how well your school gives you confidence in yourself.

I have asked your teachers and other staff to help you reach the highest levels you can in all you do, especially in writing, mathematics and science. You can help by trying your hardest, as many of you do already. It is also important that you know what you need to do to improve, so I have also asked the staff to help you more in this. Because you have to spend too long in some lessons working as a whole class, I have asked your teachers to let you know what you need to do, and to let you get on with it as soon as possible.

With best wishes for your future,

yours sincerely

Eric Jackson.

Annex B