

St Mark's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101874
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	286202
Inspection date	25 June 2007
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Vern Smith
Headteacher	Mr Brian Mellish
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2001
School address	Lower Boston Road Hanwell London W7 2NR
Telephone number	020 8567 6292
Fax number	020 8567 6292

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a culturally and economically diverse area. The school admits pupils from a wide variety of social backgrounds. About half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The numbers joining the school, often from abroad, with little or no English is increasing year-on-year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Mark's is a good school, with some outstanding features. One of the oldest pupils commented, 'St Mark's is a very good school.....the teachers make lessons fun and help you and;quot;feel goodand;quot; to achieve your best work'. A line from the school prayer declares that, 'It takes many hands to build a house but many hearts to build a school' and this axiom underpins all that the school does to make every child feel special and part of a caring community. Parents agree and are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. Several wrote to express their admiration at the commitment shown by staff and believe this is 'a strong community where pupils are interested and respectful of each other'.

Leadership and management are good. Very good leadership by the headteacher is ensuring that every child is welcomed and included in the school's activities whatever their ability or needs. All of the staff are committed to improvement and address their task energetically and with enthusiasm. The impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement is good. The school is well managed and runs smoothly.

Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress overall because teaching and learning are good. Consequently, pupils want to do well and enjoy learning. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps young children make good progress and settle quickly and effortlessly into school life. This good progress continues as they move through the school. Although standards this year are broadly average in Year 2, standards in writing are not high enough. In Year 6 pupils are currently reaching average standards in mathematic, science and English. This represents very good progress from their starting points in Year 3. Teachers have made a good start at raising the levels of challenge for more able pupils by increasing the opportunities for them to work independently on tasks that extend their reasoning and thinking skills. However, this is not consistent across all classes.

Personal development is good. Pupils believe their school is 'really good' at giving them good opportunities to 'get on'. They behave well and respect each other. They enjoy learning because the curriculum is of good quality and teachers provide interesting work for them. For example, opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum have improved since the last inspection and are now good.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils' are extremely well cared for and feel secure and happy. Pupils say there is always someone to go to with worries and problems are readily solved. The school is very good at welcoming the high numbers of new pupils, often from abroad and with very little English. They quickly identify their learning needs and support them effectively so they make good and often very good progress.

The school's track record in rigorously evaluating its performance and the clear shared view of what needs to be done next, means that it has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing at Key Stage 1 by increasing the opportunities for speaking and listening, role play and drama as stimuli for writing.
- Increase the level of challenge by providing more opportunities for pupils to become active and independent learners, especially for the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils achieve well during their time at school. Children typically start school with skills and abilities that are much lower than those normally expected of four-year-olds. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage but some do not reach the expected levels for their age by the time they move into Year 1, because they start with low level skills in English.

Pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining average standards in mathematic, science and English. This represents very good progress overall from their starting points in Year 3 including the quarter who have joined the school since then, almost all from abroad, with little or no English. Inspection evidence confirms that standards reached by pupils in Year 2 are broadly average overall but standards in writing should be higher. This is an improvement on the standards attained over previous years and is a result of strengthening the teaching and learning. Pupils from the minority ethnic groups settle well into school life and achieve well. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive well focused support and also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' are helped to understand their feelings and actions and how they affect others. Their behaviour and relationships are good. Pupils feel valued because they are listened to as respected members of the community. As one parent wrote, 'The school wants the best for all students regardless of gender, race, colour or special needs'. Attendance is average and has improved as a result of working closely with parents to raise the rate of attendance.

Pupils are extremely aware of the importance of healthy eating and staying fit. They participate fully in games, physical education lessons and the good range of clubs the school offers. The pupils contribute well to community decisions through the school council by becoming monitors, house captains, managing recycling activities and growing their own food. The pupils are aware of how important it is to help others both in school and the wider community. They raise money for charities such as the Tsunami appeal, Jeans for Genes day and the Hanwell Homeless Charity. Pupils quickly acquire literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that will equip them well for later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers form good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of what they should achieve. Lessons are usually well planned to meet the needs of the different ability groups within each class. Consequently, pupils of all aptitudes have very positive attitudes to learning and achieve well. However, whilst most activities provide good challenge for those who find learning difficult, there are some missed opportunities for the more able to work independently at challenging activities.

Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own learning and teachers often give them good verbal feedback on what they need to do to improve. Pupils are very clear about the

support they receive from teachers. One said, 'Our teachers want us to do well and always give us lots of help if we need it'. The pupils' self assessment books are a valuable monitoring tool; not least for the pupils themselves as a permanent record of what they have achieved during their time in school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that motivates the pupils and promotes their enjoyment of learning. A particularly good feature is the way in which activities are adapted to meet the needs of the increasing number of pupils who are new to learning English and have recently arrived at the school. However, there are areas for development. For example, teachers in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 are working closely together to improve the range of activities so that pupils quickly become confident writers. The quality and range of the planned activities in the Foundation Stage are good, with a good balance between the work chosen by the teacher and activities selected by the children.

The school ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to participate and enjoy a very good range of enrichment activities and school clubs. Such experiences, together with learning in personal, social and health education, and the emphasis on staying safe and healthy, teach skills that contribute to their future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. The pupils like their teachers and rightly appreciate their efforts to help them feel safe in and out of school. Parents recognise that their children are happy and secure. Rigorous procedures for child protection and all aspects of health and safety are in place. There are very effective methods for keeping track of pupils' progress and these are used to set personal targets for them to aim for. Pupils are aware of these targets and use them to gauge their own progress and understand what they need to do next to improve. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities have clear education plans with achievable, regularly monitored targets. Support for pupils who are very new to using English is very good so they make good, and sometimes very good, progress. In addition, the school caters very well for its most vulnerable pupils ensuring their needs are met through the valuable contribution of the relationships councillor.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall and secure a good quality of education, which results in pupils' outstanding care, guidance and support and good achievement. The headteacher and senior management team work well together to support and guide school development. They have high expectations of what can be achieved, and show a strong determination to ensure that all pupils reach their potential. For example, teaching at Key Stage 1 has been strengthened and assessment information is being used well to identify and address any potential underachievement. Their accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses has been used to write a school development plan that sets out the correct priorities for improvement and provides a useful framework for action and review. The role of subject

leader is being developed so that managers at all levels can measure how effective teaching and learning are at raising standards. Governors are keen for the school to do well and hold the school to account for its work. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection and the drive and enthusiasm of school leaders ensure that it has good capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mark's Primary School, London, W7 2NR

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I was really impressed with your friendliness and good behaviour and your very sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other. I think that you are given a good education which prepares you well for the next stage of your learning.

However, there are some things I think will make your school even better. I have asked your teachers to think about ways of giving you more opportunities to become active and independent learners. I also want you to have more opportunities for speaking and listening, role play and drama. This will help you develop your skills at using English so that you become more confident writers.

The school is very well led by your headteacher and he gets lots of help from all the staff. Together they are working hard to make things even better for you. You can all help by continuing to work hard and to meet the targets set for you. I'm sure that you are ready for this challenge!

I know that you will continue to work hard and I am sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better. I hope that you have great success in the future.

Best wishes,

John Earish, Lead Inspector