

# St Mark's Church of England Junior School, Salisbury

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126364
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328485
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Liz Kounnou

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	367
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeremy Nettle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gareth Flemington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2006
<b>School address</b>	Somerset Road Salisbury SP1 3BL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01722 333497
<b>Fax number</b>	01722 328978

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the extent to which pupils make consistently good progress from year to year in English and mathematics
- how effectively the school promotes community cohesion.

The evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of information about pupils' progress and attainment, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display, discussions with staff, pupils and governors, and analysis of the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a large school where most pupils are White British, and a small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is significantly below the national average. Fewer pupils have learning difficulties than is typically found. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2009.

The school gained the Healthy School Award in 2007, holds an Active mark from 2008 and has the Football Association Charter Award.

## 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 a good school where pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. An outstanding curriculum ensures they enjoy developing these skills in addition to achieving high standards, particularly in English and science.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the very wide range of curricular activities and their attendance is above average. One pupil wrote in a literacy exercise, 'If you want your child to have fun and a good education, send your child to St Mark's Junior School.' Others say they do loads of experiments in science, and they know they need to use their 'science mind' to work things out. Pupils are very enthusiastic about all the extra sports activities that help them to stay fit and healthy, and are proud to win so many local competitions. Some younger pupils are looking forward to the time when they can join the Mandarin Chinese club for older pupils. Almost half the pupils learn to play musical instruments such as the clarinet and flute among many others, with guitar lessons being the most popular. The excellent levels of trust seen between adults and pupils, added to pupils' excellent behaviour and moral development, greatly enhance the extent to which pupils feel safe. They are very clear about the need for school rules and sanctions, and are very keen to support one another. For example, they take care of anyone sitting on the 'buddy bench' at breaktimes. Pupils say their work in the Community Action Teams is fantastic. They love the passports that record their good deeds in the community. The school council members are well respected by all the pupils because they get things done. The elections for membership are hard fought, with candidates canvassing support from their classmates.

More than half the parents expressed their views of the school. These are varied. A large majority hold positive views, and most praise the new systems for improving communication with parents, such as the newly formed parents' council. They like the open approach of the new headteacher and the use of technology to keep them informed through SMS text messages and the school website. One parent wrote, 'We are proud to be associated with such a lovely school, it is like a family and it has been our good fortune to be part of it.' However, a small minority express concerns about various aspects of the school. There is no overall theme to these concerns, but a number of parents express very strong views and do not feel a part of the school community. Most parents agree that their children do well. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. There has been a long trend of good achievement in the school. These good skills, coupled with the many opportunities for teamwork in lessons, help prepare pupils well for lifelong learning. A much higher proportion of pupils reach the higher Level 5 in English and science than is typical nationally and these pupils make outstanding progress, although they do not do so well in mathematics. Attainment on entry varies. It was previously broadly average, but more recently it has gone up year on year. The school has responded well to this change by increasing the level of challenge in the curriculum in most subjects.

Governors and other school leaders monitor the work of the school regularly, and make accurate assessments of most aspects of its work. Currently, this work tends to focus on actions taken by staff, rather than a sharp analysis of the impact of new initiatives for pupils. This has limited the rate of improvement in mathematics, as the school is not clear what impact the scheme of work for mathematics has had in raising standards in all year groups. The capacity for improvement is nonetheless good, as demonstrated by the good success achieved in the work to redesign the outstanding curriculum, and the swift action taken to improve the partnership

with parents when concerns arose. This work with parents is still at an early stage, but the response is typical of the school's good leadership and management. Parents have noted the work on the curriculum, and some specifically commented that they were pleased with the additional opportunities provided for their children.

A recent audit carried out by school leaders identified that opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of different cultures were broadly satisfactory. The information gained fed into the curricular review. As a result, pupils now have many more opportunities to learn about different communities, both in Great Britain and internationally. Year 6 pupils are thoroughly involved in their project to help design a new children's ward in partnership with the local hospital, and all enjoy the annual international Fairtrade project. In addition, links with schools in France and the Turks and Caicos Islands broaden pupils' horizons.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Some outstanding teaching captures pupils' interests and imagination, and makes sure that they know exactly what they need to do to succeed in lessons. Teaching assistants support pupils well. Those who have learning difficulties do well. One parent made this clear: 'We feel the school has gone above and beyond to support our son'. Teaching in mathematics is more variable, and does not feature a consistently high level of challenge. This means that pupils' progress in mathematics varies from year to year, and in one year group pupils make less than satisfactory progress in the subject. A number of parents noted that their children do not enjoy mathematics as much as other lessons.

The level of care, guidance and support is good. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety meet national requirements, and the level of pastoral care is good. Some parents' views were reflected in the following comment: 'We have been very impressed by the way the school nurtures the needs of the individual children.' The school makes every effort to ensure that pupils succeed at school, and this leads to their good academic achievement and outstanding personal development.

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

- Improve the level of engagement with parents, so that parents from all the different groups represented play a strong part in the school community.
- Ensure that mathematics lessons throughout the school are challenging for pupils of all abilities, and pupils make at least good progress in all year groups.
- Focus monitoring activities more sharply on the impact on learning in order to
- accelerate pupils' progress further.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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



**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mark's Church of England Junior School, Salisbury SP1 3BL

Thank you all for making me so welcome and helping me when I visited your school. St Mark's is a good school, where teaching and learning are good and you make good progress in your work. Standards are above average by Year 6. The staff and governors work well together to help you to succeed at school.

Here are the things that are best about your school:

- You are extremely good at taking lots of exercise to help you keep healthy, and you love all the sports clubs, particularly when you win!
- You behave excellently throughout the day, especially when you are trusted to do things on your own.
- You take great care of one another and trust all the adults to help you, so that you feel very safe at school.
- Your excellent involvement in the Community Action Teams is very popular.
- You have a lot of fun investigating things in lessons and there are plenty of extra things to do before and after school, and even during the school day.
- You do especially well in English and science lessons, and the most able pupils make exceptional progress in these subjects.

There are three things that could be even better. Some of your parents are not happy with the school. I have asked the school to work even harder with all your parents to make sure that everyone feels part of the school community. You are not making as much progress in mathematics as you do in English and science and I have asked the teachers to make mathematics lessons more challenging for you. Lastly, I have asked all the staff and governors to check very carefully all the things they do to improve the school to make sure that the changes help you to learn even more quickly.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Yours faithfully

Liz Kounnou

Lead inspector