

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Textphone 0161 618 8524
T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 0207 421 5642
Direct F 0207 421 6746
Mark.Hogan@ofsted.gov.uk



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Mrs H Bath
Headteacher
St. Mark's Voluntary Aided Ecumenical CoE/Methodist Primary School
St Mark's Road
Worle
Weston-super-Mare
BS22 7PU

Dear Mrs Bath

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Moving through the system

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff, during my visit on 11 March 2009 to look at work on developing the future economic well-being of pupils in your school. I also looked at how well arrangements are made to support pupils during their transition into secondary school.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included:

- two lesson observations
- interviews with staff and pupils
- scrutiny of relevant documentation.

Overall, your work in developing the future economic well-being of pupils in your school is outstanding. Pupils are supported throughout the school. For example, star pupil trophies are presented on a weekly basis. These have a very positive effect on behaviour and the attitudes pupils have to learning. Particularly noteworthy are the family groups which are forums for collecting pupils' idea or opinions. Pupils are very confident and articulate. They have a very good understanding of their role in the community and eagerly help the younger pupils, for example, through the work of peer mediators. Collaboration is very good and pupils work constructively with each other. Pupils have a good awareness of the rights of other children and adults and are willing and able to take on responsibility. Year 6 pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities around the school, for example, in answering telephones. Pupils are learning how to deal with change, to be creative in their thinking and explain the rationale behind their decision-making.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Features of effective practice are:

- The academic progress of all groups of pupils is very good and supports them well in their future educational achievement and employability.
- Pupils make very good progress in their personal development. Year 6 pupils are good role models for the younger pupils. They are polite and courteous and this contributes to the very friendly ethos of the school.
- The teaching observed was good with opportunities for partner discussion and group work enabling pupils to share their ideas. Staff show a good command of areas of learning and subject knowledge. Planning is comprehensive with clear learning objectives which are understood by the pupils. Staff use a range of teaching strategies which take account of different learning styles. This engages pupils and stimulates their enthusiasm for the subject. High standards of behaviour are expected and attained; most pupils work productively acquiring new knowledge and skills and increasing their level of understanding. Pupils are learning how to assess their own work and most know what they have to do to improve.
- The curriculum is well planned with links between subjects. There are planned focus weeks such as multi-cultural and healthy weeks. These allow a more in depth approach to some topics. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for vulnerable pupils is very effective. Carefully chosen intervention programmes are helping to overcome barriers to learning. Senior leaders have ensured there are extra staff to meet the needs of these pupils. There is a wide and interesting range of visits and clubs that extend pupils' horizons.
- The schools involvement in the Forest School programme impacts very positively on pupils' well-being and academic achievement. Targeted groups of pupils complete a six-week programme of activities in the local woods. The pupils from across Key Stage 2 experience a wide range of opportunities for outdoor learning. The activities involve setting challenges so teams have to co-operate and use social skills. Pupils are eager and enthusiastic about the fun opportunities they have to learn through the natural environment.
- Through a well-planned range of charity fundraising activities, work on topics, including Fair Trade, ensures pupils gain a very good understanding of issues such as economic inequality in this country and around the world. Social enterprise opportunities include school council members running their own stalls at the Christmas and summer fairs. Peer mediators and school council members run their own budgets and select resources to be purchased thus providing good opportunities and experiences to gain economic and business understanding. However, opportunities for all pupils to be involved in mini-enterprises, which involve managing a budget, are limited.
- Very good leadership and management ensure that pupils' progress is closely tracked and robust action taken when pupils are underachieving.
- Induction arrangements into the school, between classes, and transition to secondary placements, are carefully thought through and reviewed. This is particularly good in

helping to overcome the difficulties of pupils transferring to several secondary schools. Pupils are well informed and involved in the arrangements and look forward to learning in their new schools. The school provides detailed records informing the new school of both academic achievement and personal development. Processes for inducting pupils with learning needs, disabilities and those who are vulnerable are very good and these well-planned arrangements support them in preparing for secondary school.

Areas for further improvement, which we discussed, include:

- further opportunities to develop pupils' financial capability

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop economic well-being in the school.

As I explained, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector