

St Mark's CofE Primary School, Morwenstow

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111992
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337806
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Alexander Baxter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maria Baston
Headteacher	Janette Creber
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and four teachers were observed. The inspectors also attended two assemblies, observed break and lunchtime activities and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The provision and planning for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities were evaluated. In addition, 36 parent/carer questionnaires, 44 pupil questionnaires and 11 staff questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the school's use of assessment, by exploring the pupils' ownership of targets and the specific impact of shared 'next steps learning' to maximise pupils' progress
- the impact of efforts to lift boys' achievement in English, and the achievement of more able pupils by the end of Year 2 in writing
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in improving pupils' social development and their contributions to the United Kingdom community, the promotion of equal opportunity and in strengthening safeguarding procedures.

Information about the school

This is a small village primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above that normally expected. Pupils are mostly taught in mixed-age classes, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are taught in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Among others, the school holds Healthy Schools, Activemark and Artsmark Gold awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Mark's is an outstanding school. It has a welcoming and caring family ethos, which fully reflects the headteacher's inspirational leadership and the excellent partnerships with parents, the local and wider communities. These promote the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning evident in all parts of the school. All pupils eagerly give of their best and genuinely care about each other and the adults who look after them. A team approach underpins leadership and management and involves staff and governors working closely together to undertake high quality monitoring and self-evaluation of the impact of provision on pupils' learning. Consequently, decision-making is based on accurate information and ensures that the right priorities are identified. The school's track record of sustaining and building upon pupils' academic and personal achievement clearly shows excellent capacity to promote continued improvement. It is notably illustrated by the way that the use of assessment has been transformed from the key area for development in the previous inspection report into the significant feature in boosting pupils' exemplary achievements.

Other main findings include:

- Pupils make excellent progress and reach above average levels of attainment because the teachers help them to become very good at learning for themselves. For example, pupils are fully involved in identifying their targets for improvement and are encouraged and become skilled at discussing 'next steps in learning' and targets with each other.
- Teachers are skilled in presenting an optimum level of challenge, precisely matched to the pupils' differing needs. In the development of pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills, especially for boys, for example, the teachers' precise use of vocabulary is a key factor enabling all pupils, including those in Year 2, to make equally impressive progress.
- Through a concerted effort to broaden opportunities and to establish links with pupils in more culturally diverse areas, the curriculum, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their contributions to the local and wider communities are outstanding.
- Leaders and managers have taken very effective action to improve the way the school secures equal opportunity and the pupils' safety, and eliminates discrimination. These are now significant strengths within the school's excellent care, guidance and support and are apparent in the pupils' confident demeanour and equal and full participation in the day-to-day life of the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well and make good progress. Nevertheless, at times, there is too much adult-led learning, constraining

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the benefits of children choosing learning activities for themselves and building on their own interests.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the children's progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing more opportunities for children to choose activities and new learning for themselves.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Visits to classrooms and, on several occasions, observations of learning within the school's extensive, very well equipped outdoor facilities, confirm that pupils achieve extremely well. This was evident, for example, in Years 5 and 6 science lessons, where pupils drew well reasoned conclusions from their tests to identify suitable floor covering materials. Similarly following their visit to the school pond, Year 1 pupils talked descriptively about the tadpoles and newts they had seen. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who join the school partway through the year or in different year groups, and pupils of above average ability all make excellent progress. Pupils also greatly enjoy their work and because they have a clear picture of how well they are doing and how to improve, pupils sustain their effort and enthusiasm very well indeed.

The cumulative influence of consistently good and better teaching accompanied by the pupils' determined and very effective personal contributions underpin their outstanding achievement. Over time, from generally expected skills on entry, pupils' attainment has been mostly above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Years 2 and 6. However, variation in children's skills on entry within the small cohorts, especially in communication, language and literacy, is reflected in their different levels of attainment. This is evident in Year 2 where standards are broadly average, and in Year 6, where there is an able group of pupils. In Year 6, standards are well above average in speaking and listening, reading, mathematical reasoning and in scientific enquiry. Skills are above average in writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). These levels of pupils' attainment represent excellent achievement in relation to their starting points and needs.

The teachers' development of pupils as committed, independent and self-evaluative learners underpins excellent learning. In a history lesson in the Years 2, 3 and 4 class, pupils showed significant understanding and empathy. An impressive breadth of vocabulary was also evident during their 'hot seating activity,' which involved questioning each other as pupils took turns in role playing the part of a Second World War evacuee. Such ownership of learning by the pupils, supported by the teachers' intention that pupils should understand and use technical terms across the range of subjects, is accelerating their progress. Across the school, a significant number of pupils also excel in sports, singing and playing musical instruments, including, notably, violins in Year 1.

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Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and excellent relationships with each other in a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable way. On occasion, so much so that exemplary learning often continues into morning play and lunchtimes. This was seen, as pupils played ball games and talked with understanding about healthy eating during meals and when preparing seed beds during gardening activity. Pupils are very quick to say that they feel safe and talk appreciatively about how their ideas are valued and acted upon by all the adults in the school. Members of the school council recounted, for example, how 'Table of the Week', hot chocolate drinks on cold days, and the talent show have all been re-introduced following their well-argued requests. In keeping with the school's caring ethos, the pupils' behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. In combination with their excellent attitudes these qualities also contribute extremely well to their academic learning and progress and equip pupils very successfully for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The consistently high quality of the teachers' very well planned and implemented

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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teaching and the staff's exemplary pastoral support and educational guidance fully live up to the school's mission statement of 'Love learning, love life, be proud of St Mark's family, the community and remember that everyone is special'. Teachers and their very capable assistants make every effort to get to know each child as a unique individual and promote excellent links with parents and outside agencies to help them meet their specific needs. As a result, pupils are included equally, are kept safe and as appropriate, benefit from additional support as the need arises. This is reflected by the fact that almost three quarters of those pupils initially receiving additional support improve to an extent that it is no longer needed. Within the mixed-age classes, all teachers show significant skill in questioning and challenging pupils and in matching learning activity to the pupils' ability. In current lessons in Years 2, 3 and 4, for example, Year 2 pupils are benefiting from discrete group teaching in literacy and numeracy. This also enables the class teacher to raise expectations, accelerating progress for pupils in Years 3 and 4, as seen in a mathematics lesson when exploring division and fractions. Other typical strengths in teaching include: very warm relationships, high expectations, challenging pace and clear learning objectives directly linked to the pupils' individually allocated 'next steps' in learning' and targets. In addition, all teachers show proficiency in, and promote the regular use of, ICT, which in combination with other strengths are highly effective in developing pupils as successful independent learners.

The very good breadth of the school's exemplary curriculum is clearly evident in the range of interesting and mostly practical learning activities undertaken each day. It is also seen in its range of curriculum awards and in the high quality displays of pupils' work throughout the school. Literacy, numeracy, scientific enquiry and ICT skills are developed very effectively and aid learning across the full breadth of subjects. Colourful displays of pupils' work promote the imaginative and community dimension of the curriculum. Stimulating topics such as 'World War Two', 'India' and 'Moths', and interesting themes, such as 'Sharing' and 'Our Wonderful World' in assemblies, capture the pupils' interest and promote their environmental, social and cultural awareness.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The well respected and capable headteacher promotes excellent teamwork and is supported extremely well by governors and staff. Rigorous and very successful monitoring of provision, especially of teaching and learning, underpins the school's very

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effective self-evaluation. Assessment, incorporating tracking pupils' progress, and target setting, including targets for individual pupils, is used very precisely to bring continuing improvement. For example, pupils in Year 2 are supported by additional teaching, which is enriching their writing skills. Governors and staff fulfil their responsibilities in an exemplary way and by working very closely with parents and outside agencies are successful in meeting pupils' differing needs and fully safeguarding their welfare. The staff seek the best in all that they do and promote equal opportunity and community cohesion extremely effectively. They monitor provision rigorously to ensure that pupils, across the range of ability, achieve equally well in relation to their needs. Additionally, the headteacher has further enhanced pupils' awareness of disability and the need to tackle discrimination by inviting visitors with various levels of disability to meet with the pupils at the school. Established strengths in school and local dimensions of community are now also accompanied by national and global links with more culturally diverse schools and communities in Birmingham, Brittany and Kenya. As one parent commented, 'Given our relatively rurally isolated location, the school plays a significantly beneficial role in promoting wider community cohesion.'

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and teaching ensure that children make good progress during their time in Reception. Staff provide very warm support, develop excellent relationships with children and their parents and safeguard the children's welfare in an exemplary way. As a result, children really enjoy school and make exceptional progress in developing

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self-confidence and in learning to communicate and work with each other. Practical investigation and opportunities to develop their imagination, and creative and making skills are well-established features that enthuse the children and promote their love of learning. Staff develop children's learning well, especially when learning activities are led by adults. Often this extends outdoors where they make good use of the school's extensive grounds and facilities, exploring words by undertaking 'phonic treasure hunts' or visiting the school pond for nature study. Reception facilities now include a secure outdoor area and this is being developed to offer additional physical play and outdoor learning opportunities to the children. At times, however, children are not able to choose learning activities for themselves and this limits their learning and independence.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents are extremely happy with the school. Responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, unanimously so in several areas. The views of the parents interviewed informally in the playground and evident in additional written comments typically expressed full support of the school. As noted by one parent, inspectors also saw 'joy in the children at school'. There was no consensus within the very few parental concerns expressed and these were not supported by the findings of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mark's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	47	19	53	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	64	13	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	44	20	56	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	47	18	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	53	17	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	47	16	44	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	53	16	44	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	31	21	58	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	44	18	50	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	50	16	44	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	39	20	56	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	53	17	47	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	61	14	39	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mark's Church of England Primary School, Morwenstow, EX23 9PE

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school. Particular thanks to those of you who helped by sharing your views with us. We think that you have an outstanding school and you are right to be very proud of it. We especially like the way you all behave so exceptionally well and try very hard and work together to become very successful learners.

Here are some of the school's highlights.

- You make excellent progress because you know how well you are doing and know exactly what you have to do to improve.
- You express your ideas confidently in lessons and make excellent contributions to school activities and to the local and wider communities.
- You clearly enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. These reflect the way the teachers and their assistants make learning interesting and work very closely with your parents.
- Your headteacher, governors and all the staff work very hard and very successfully to provide you with the best education possible. They take great care of you and want to see you all achieve the best that you possibly can.

Even the best of schools can improve and so I have asked the leaders and managers of the school to:

- provide more opportunities for the children in Reception to learn by choosing their own activities.

We hope you will continue to do your very best at St Mark's and we wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector

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