

St Mark's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101874
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	354508
Inspection dates	27–28 May 2010
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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 of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Harvey Gallagher
Headteacher	Brian Mellish
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons taught by 13 different staff. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's self-evaluation documents, including records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Inspection questionnaires were received from staff, pupils and 182 parents and carers.

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

- how rapidly and consistently pupils, particularly those who are potentially higher attainers and those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make progress and whether this is helping to raise levels of attainment
- how consistent and effective the teaching is and how well staff use assessment to plan work for pupils at the right level
- the quality and effectiveness of leadership, how accurately school leaders, including middle managers, evaluate the work of the school and whether governors meet their statutory obligations in relation, for example, to community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school, which is in the process of expansion. From September 2010, it will admit two full classes of pupils in each year group. This represents an additional 15 pupils per year on the current enrolment. Although White British pupils are in the majority, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased significantly in recent years, reflecting population changes in the immediate area. Pupils of Asian and Black British heritage now form significant sub-groups. However, only a small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of these pupils is highest in the top two year groups where pupils from other schools have filled available spaces as the school has expanded. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery class. The governing body manages pre-school and after-school care on the premises.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Mark's Primary School provides a satisfactory education. The overwhelmingly positive response from parents and carers reinforces the view that the effective support for pupils' personal development is a key strength of the school's work. Good recent appointments, the commitment of some key staff and the improvement achieved in some areas of past weakness suggests that the school has satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Children typically make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of consistently good teaching and reach the expected level by the end of the Reception Year. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Some pupils benefit from well-managed individual learning targets, but these are inconsistently implemented across the school. Teaching and learning are generally good in Years 1 and 2. However, while satisfactory, teaching is not so consistent in Years 3 to 6 and lessons sometimes lack pace and challenge. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has increased significantly in Years 5 and 6. However, planning does not always indicate clearly the provision to be made for these pupils, and their progress, though satisfactory overall, is inconsistent as a result. In some lessons, support staff are not given enough specific guidance as to what pupils need to learn within a given time. The few pupils with English as an additional language make reasonable progress when withdrawn for support, but are less well provided for in lessons. There is limited specific provision for pupils identified as gifted or talented.

School self-evaluation is broadly accurate and leadership is satisfactory overall. However, while some phase leaders are relatively new to leadership and have yet to have a full impact on teaching and learning in their phase, others have developed their skills and have the capacity to be a force for change in this growing school. Senior leaders analyse data well and have an accurate view of what needs to be done. However, this vision is not always clearly articulated in the school improvement plan, nor are concise targets identified, against which progress could be measured.

Pupils attend school regularly, feel safe and have positive attitudes to learning. The curriculum has strengths in the emerging topic structure which is clearly engaging pupils' interests successfully. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and of the importance of a healthy diet. They behave well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The curriculum enables pupils to build sound basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and there are strengths in sport and information and communication technology (ICT). The engagement with partner institutions and with specialist secondary schools is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching in Years 3 to 6, and the progress which pupils make, through:
 - ensuring that lessons have greater pace and challenge
 - more rigorous planning which identifies and provides for the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils identified as gifted or talented
 - ensuring that learning support staff are more effectively deployed and more accountable for the progress pupils make
 - greater consistency in the use of individual targets for learning.
- Enable the senior leadership team to have a greater impact on teaching and on pupils' learning and standards through:
 - increasing the accountability of senior leaders for the quality of teaching and learning within their area of responsibility
 - more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, ensuring that targets for improvement are met
 - ensuring that the school development plan is closely focused on the most significant areas of weakness and that it identifies precise and measurable targets for improvement by which progress may be judged.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Typically, attainment at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average, reflecting satisfactory progress across the school. That said, there has been some decline in standards at Year 6 this year, mainly because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Some of these have joined the school relatively recently. However, most have still made satisfactory progress. Those who are in the school for the full extent of their education make the most progress. Less effective learning in one phase of the school is then counterbalanced by stronger learning elsewhere. The school is working to redress the recent decline in attainment in reading at Year 2.

Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. For example, in an outstanding Year 2 ICT lesson, taught by a specialist teacher, pupils were very motivated by the challenging tasks and the incentive of being able to upload their pictures and access them at home through the virtual learning environment. The lesson had pace and learning and moved on rapidly. Rigorous assessment contributed to very effective learning and progress. In a less successful, though broadly satisfactory, Year 3 English lesson, pupils had to write about the lives of people in wartime emergency housing. Here, while a few pupils sustained their efforts well, the relatively slow pace and the difficulty of engaging with the theme, led to some loss of concentration and, for some pupils, a relatively low amount of writing.

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The school's calm and caring ethos promotes a strong sense of community and most pupils are committed to the school's values. Inspectors saw consistently good behaviour, with very few recent exclusions. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to share their views and to make a difference to their community. Pupils demonstrate good social skills, readily engage with visitors and are eager to accept responsibility.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mostly good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 as a result of some well-judged staff appointments. Successful team working, good relationships, effective behaviour management and planned opportunities for pupils to work independently support generally good learning and progress. However, teaching in Years 3 to 6 is less inspiring. While teaching is good enough over time to ensure that most pupils make satisfactory progress, there is insufficient challenge to move their learning to the next level. Planning does not explicitly identify the needs of groups of pupils. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, though satisfactory overall, is

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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inconsistent. School leaders recognise that the deployment of support staff is not fully effective at present. The school tracks the progress of individual pupils satisfactorily. Pupils learn to evaluate the quality of their work. Marking is generally thorough, giving clear guidance as to what pupils need to do next, but this is not fully consistent between classes.

The school is implementing a more creative curriculum up to Year 4. This offers some unusual learning opportunities, such as a study, in Years 3 and 4, of architectural styles in London and the social conditions and expectations which typified the different periods. Links with partner schools contribute well to good provision in physical education, sport and French. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. There is a satisfactory range of well-supported extra-curricular and enrichment activities. The school provides good pastoral care, effectively supporting pupils and their families, including newly-arrived pupils with limited English. Guidance for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or for those who are gifted or talented, is less consistent. Induction and transition arrangements are thoroughly organised. The school works very closely with a range of support agencies. These effectively meet the health, social or behavioural needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. It successfully provides, from time to time, for pupils who find it difficult to cope in other schools. The school's systems for promoting attendance are good. The before- and after-school care provision satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils and parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has established a good partnership with parents and carers and has ensured stability at a time of significant change. An increasingly diverse intake has thrown up new challenges for a hitherto stable staff. While school leaders show commitment to promoting pupils' personal development, they have not always been so prompt to recognise and tackle issues around learning and progress. As a result, the progress of older pupils, although satisfactory overall, is inconsistent. School leaders have not been rigorous enough in leading and managing teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make good, rather than satisfactory, progress. Where weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 to 6 are identified in lesson observations, they have not always been followed up systematically enough. While the senior leadership team has several effective members, some are relatively new in post and have not yet had a full impact

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on improving provision. The school improvement plan identifies a range of priorities but is not sufficiently focused on standards, achievement and teaching and lacks precise measurable outcomes against which improvement can be judged.

Governance is satisfactory. A few governors show considerable commitment to the school, visit regularly and monitor its work rigorously. Governors accept that they need to improve their monitoring and evaluation so that they can more effectively hold the school to account. Governors ensure that legal requirements are met and this includes the satisfactory procedures for safeguarding pupils. Roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are clearly defined. A high priority is given to pupils' safety and well-being. The school works closely with the local agencies to support pupils' health and well-being. Potential discrimination is tackled satisfactorily. Though it does not always evaluate the impact of its actions sufficiently, the school promotes links with the local community increasingly well and opportunities to learn about other faiths and communities are established through links such as those with France, Malawi and Uganda. It also ensures that pupils have the opportunity to visit and learn about very different, predominantly rural, communities in other areas of the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

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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 great majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are very pleased with the school and the opportunities it provides. One said, 'St Mark's has given my son the best start in life - a first class foundation.' The few concerns related mainly to the level of challenge in lessons, to extra-curricular provision and to issues around pupils' behaviour. These issues were discussed with the school. The team found that the school manages challenging behaviour appropriately, and with the minimum of disruption to other pupils. It also found that, overall, pupils' behaviour was good. Playground supervision was effective and pupils play together harmoniously. The team agrees with the view that the number of extra-curricular activities is not extensive. The inspection team also endorses the view that teachers' expectations and the level of challenge in Years 3 to 6 could be greater. It also judges that provision for pupils who are gifted or talented could be strengthened further. Overall, however, parents and carers overwhelmingly feel that this is a caring school where pupils' personal development is supported well and the inspection confirms this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mark's 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 182 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 347 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	141	77	37	20	2	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	130	71	47	26	4	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	107	59	67	37	5	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	105	58	67	37	7	4	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	129	71	50	27	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	105	58	70	38	5	3	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	104	57	71	39	5	3	1	1
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)	99	54	71	39	5	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	102	56	68	37	5	3	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	89	49	76	42	11	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	96	53	75	41	6	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	114	63	63	35	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	133	73	45	25	1	1	2	1

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 May 2010

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and watching you at work. We found that yours is a satisfactory school which has some good features.

Our main findings are these:

- You behave well and work hard in lessons.
- The youngest children are well provided for in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You make satisfactory progress in your learning and generally reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- You feel that teachers support you well.
- You feel very safe, have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and make a good contribution to the school and local communities.
- You enjoy a satisfactory range of after-school clubs and extra activities.
- Those of you who are learning to speak English get suitable support.
- School leaders ensure that you are well looked after.

We are asking the school to make the following changes so that you do even better:

- Help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to make better progress by ensuring that more of the lessons are challenging and interesting, that better use is made of your personal learning targets and that those of you who find learning difficult are supported really well.
- Ensure that the school leaders have the opportunity to support other teachers and to help them make their lessons more interesting and challenging. Make sure that all the staff are aware of the most important things the school needs to achieve in the next year.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan

Lead inspector

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