

St Mark's CofE Primary School

Sussex Way, London, N19 4JF

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The executive headteacher, with the head of school and governors, provides strong and effective leadership. Together, they rigorously check the quality of teaching and progress in learning. They respond robustly to any sign of underachievement. As a result, both teaching and achievement have improved since the last inspection.
- Provision in the early years is good, with children making good progress in almost all areas of learning.
- Pupils in Year 2 last year made good progress across Key Stage 1. For the first time in five years, standards were in line with the national average.
- Current pupils' progress in Year 6 is good in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are on track to do well in this year's national tests.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress.
- Workbooks show that pupils in all year groups make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to this school. They are proud to be part of its community.
- Safety is outstanding. Pupils are very aware of how to keep safe and are exceptionally well cared for by all the staff. Pastoral care is a strong feature of this inclusive school.
- The Christian values of the school promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always ensure that pupils make the rapid progress that they are capable of.
- In the early years, children who find the work easy are not always helped to make accelerated progress in their basic skills.
- Pupils do not consistently take enough care over the presentation of their work, and their handwriting is sometimes untidy.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 14 lessons. Seven of these were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, both informally and formally, including a group of the most-able learners. They heard pupils in Year 2 read and talked to them about their reading habits.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents, including the 50 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They also talked to some parents before school. Inspectors considered the views of staff expressed in 17 responses to the inspection questionnaire.
- Discussions were held with representatives from the local authority's advisory service and the Diocese of London, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. Inspectors held meetings with members of the senior and extended leadership teams, and other staff.
- Inspectors examined information on pupils' progress and the work of a randomly selected group of pupils. They also looked at records of learning of children in Reception. Other school documentation considered included: the school's self-evaluation and development planning; the minutes of governing body meetings; and information on pupils' achievement. Behaviour logs, policies and information relating to child protection and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Barbara Firth, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mark's is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Just under three quarters of the pupils belong to minority ethnic groups and just over two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language. These proportions are above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- All children in Reception attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding given to schools for disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for free school meals or are children who are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- In September 2014, the management team was extended to include two non class based middle leaders with the responsibility to support pupils eligible for funding through the pupil premium. Currently, there is one newly qualified teacher in the school.
- The executive headteacher is a local leader of education (LLE) and the headteacher of Kentish Town Church of England School in the London Borough of Camden. The two schools have worked together in an informal partnership since January 2012. The partnership is due to cease in July 2015. The current head of school has been appointed by the governors to take over as the substantive head of St Mark's in September 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress by ensuring that:
 - pupils' understanding is regularly checked during lessons and that teachers adapt their teaching to make sure pupils' learning is secure
 - the most-able pupils are moved on to more challenging tasks in a timely manner
 - pupils are consistently expected to take more care with their handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- Accelerate children's progress in the early years so that children who find learning easy make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers, including governors, are strongly committed to improving this very inclusive school. The executive headteacher and head of school communicate high expectations to staff and pupils. Their ambition for the school is shared by governors and staff. As a result, the morale in the school is high and there is a purposeful atmosphere for learning.
- The executive headteacher and head of school have been effective in tackling underperformance. They provide teachers with effective support and training to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, achievement has improved since the previous inspection and is set to improve even further in 2015.
- Middle leaders are effective in their roles. They have a range of opportunities to check the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils. As a result, they are able to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress and provide effective support for improving teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Their roles are enhanced by senior leaders through being involved in senior leadership meetings and providing them with appropriate training opportunities.
- All staff are involved in the self-evaluation process and the development of the school development plan which quite rightly identifies the main priorities of the school with appropriate timescales for actions.
- There are effective systems in place to check the progress of different groups of pupils and to identify those who are not making the expected progress. Pupils who fall behind with their learning are provided with highly effective support. This ensures that weaker learners, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. This reflects the school's commitment to removing any barriers to learning and promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Senior leaders involve teachers and middle managers in the process of tracking the progress of pupils. Leaders use a rigorous system of managing the performance of teachers effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. As a result, in 2014, the gap in attainment narrowed between these pupils and their classmates and that of other pupils nationally. To accelerate their achievement further, the funds for this academic year have been used to employ two teachers with the responsibility to support those pupils who are eligible for this funding. They are members of the leadership team and are non-class based. Current school information indicates a very favourable impact on the achievement of pupils currently in the school.
- Leaders work well with staff in the early years to ensure that provision is effective. Children make good progress and are prepared well for Year 1.
- The subjects taught in the school are broad and balanced, and are effective in engaging pupils in their learning and providing them with wider experiences. For example, there are good opportunities for pupils to be involved in a range of trips, visits, artistic, cultural and sporting activities. Within their Christian ethos, pupils develop a respect for people of other faiths and cultures. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and demonstrated this very well in an assembly on forgiveness, observed during the inspection. Pupils have a very good sense of fair play in line with British values, which contributes very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and makes them ready for life in modern Britain. The school is working successfully to implement the new primary curriculum.
- The primary school sport funding is used effectively in the school, including to widen the range of clubs and sports on offer. Pupils enjoy the greater opportunities to be involved in competitive games with other schools. The school has employed a sports coach and teachers have received coaching and training. As a result, the quality of teaching in physical education is improving. The school enjoys a very good working relationship with a local football team, which further enhances the sporting opportunities for the pupils of St Mark's.
- Arrangements for keeping all pupils safe meet current requirements and are extremely effective. All required checks are carried out on staff new to the school and all staff are kept constantly up to date on the latest guidance and advice. Partnerships with outside agencies are strong and ensure that vulnerable pupils are given the most appropriate support in order to enjoy school and achieve well.
- The support from the local authority and the Diocese of London has been effective in brokering a supportive informal partnership with Kentish Town Church of England School in the London Borough of Camden. Termly supported reviews of provision have resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Consequently, the level of support provided by the local authority has reduced over time. The intention of the local authority is to continue supporting the new substantive headteacher in the next academic year.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable, and they attend training to improve their ability to hold the school to account and help to bring about improvements. They visit the school regularly and know it well, including its strengths and areas for development. They check how well the school is doing in comparison to other schools nationally.
- Governors receive good quality information on the quality of teaching from the headteacher, and know how pay is used to reward the best teachers. They manage the performance of the headteacher and set challenging targets on raising the achievement of pupils.
- Governors ensure that financial management is effective and are creative in finding ways to ensure that the pupils have the best facilities they can afford. They have a secure understanding of how pupil premium and sport funding are used, and the impact on improving pupil outcomes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly, courteous and respectful of each other and staff. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, both inside and outside classrooms.
- Pupils from all backgrounds get on exceptionally well with each other. Pupils say that behaviour in the school is good and has improved in the last few years because of the leadership of the school.
- Pupils demonstrate good attitudes to learning and this makes a strong contribution to their progress. However, work in pupils' books is not consistently neatly presented and not all pupils make enough effort to write accurately or with care.
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes are orderly and staff provide excellent supervision. Pupils play and socialise well together in the playground. They show respect for the school environment through ensuring it is litter and graffiti free.
- Almost all parents and carers who completed Parent View and all staff who completed the staff questionnaire agreed that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. Inspectors found that school logs are very well kept and systems to support and follow up any instances of poor behaviour are very effective.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and, as a consequence, attendance is broadly average. The work of the school's home-school link worker ensures that attendance and punctuality continue to improve.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school's arrangements are extremely well led and managed. Parents are extremely positive about pupils' safety.
- All forms of bullying are rare. Leaders have ensured that pupils know about different types of bullying. They know that calling people names is unacceptable. Pupils say that they feel very sure that any instances would be dealt with well by the school staff. Discussions with leaders confirm that there are rigorous policies and systems in place to follow up any such incident if it should occur.
- All staff are trained in safeguarding. Four members of the governing body have safer recruitment training, enabling them to fulfil their role in appointing new staff very effectively. Governors have ensured that all staff are familiar with the most recent legislation. The Chair of the Governing Body checks the single central record on a regular basis.
- The pupils regularly learn how to stay safe, both in and out of school, and have high quality e-safety training.
- School staff work highly effectively with external agencies to support vulnerable children and their families.
- The school site is very safe and all visitors are thoroughly checked before they enter.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Senior leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching since the previous inspection through effective training and support. The quality of teaching is now good and is effective in developing pupils' skills and understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The strong relationships between staff and pupils are a common feature in all lessons. Pupils say that their teachers are a strength of the school. They feel motivated to learn and do their very best in most lessons.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) has been strengthened since September. It is now taught well in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 2 were heard to read with expression and showed a good grasp

of being able to sound out unknown words. The school has a well-stocked library and reading corners in all classrooms. Pupils read regularly, both at home and in school. Opportunities are given during lessons for pupils to read aloud. Pupils were observed in guided reading sessions making good use of well-planned activities to engage them and improve their reading and research skills.

- Teachers are creative in the resources they use to help pupils develop good writing skills. For example, high quality and thought-provoking pictures were successfully used in a Year 6 class to support pupils in developing their inference skills and understanding of how an author's intentions may be expressed through a narrative.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in mathematics. Pupils are taught a range of calculation skills to help them solve mathematical problems and investigations.
- Pupils frequently share their ideas with others. They work successfully in pairs and groups, and have good opportunities for speaking and listening. This helps develop their social and communication skills, as well as helping pupils who speak English as an additional language to make good progress with their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants usually use questions well to test and extend pupils' knowledge and skills. However, they do not always quickly identify when pupils have grasped a new concept. Teachers do not subsequently adapt their teaching, or the task, to ensure that pupils' learning is secure. They do not always provide a more challenging task so that learning does not slow for the most-able learners.
- Pupils know their own targets and often refer to them during lessons. They are able to check their own progress towards achieving them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well and make good progress. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils, both within lessons and when working in small groups. They work closely with teachers and support learning well.
- Work books are marked regularly and well. Teachers' marking increasingly provides helpful feedback and pupils are given time to respond to their teachers' comments. Pupils told inspectors that they value the comments that the teachers make because they help them to make progress with their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' attainment in 2014 at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 was in line with the national average. Progress across both key stages from low starting points was good. Since the previous inspection, many pupils have made good progress, including those pupils of ethnic minority heritage and those who speak English as an additional language. In 2014, all pupils in Year 6 made at least expected progress in mathematics and writing, and the vast majority did so in reading. An increased proportion as compared to the previous year made better than expected progress in writing and mathematics.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of school information indicate that the progress that pupils currently in the school are making in all subjects and in all year groups is at least good. Pupils currently in Year 6 are set to attain standards well above that attained in 2014.
- The school works hard to improve pupils' literacy skills. In Year 1, results in the phonic screening check in 2014 were well below the national average, and below that attained in 2013. In response, leaders reviewed the quality of the teaching of phonics and ensured that staff were well trained. Effective support was put in place to support those pupils who did not make the standard. Observations of phonics teaching during the inspection and scrutiny of school information show that pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in developing their phonic skills. They are able to decode unfamiliar words and confidently read more demanding books.
- Leaders regularly assess the quantity and quality of pupils' writing in all subjects. Pupils are set challenging targets and work in books indicates most pupils are on track to attain them.
- In 2014, by the end of Year 6, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was above that of their peers in reading and the same as them in writing and mathematics. Although the gap in attainment closed, as compared to 2013, disadvantaged pupils were approximately 16 months behind their peers in mathematics, 12 months in writing and six months in reading. Compared to other pupils nationally, they were 12 months behind in mathematics, 10 months in writing and eight months in reading. Analysis of school information and scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection indicate that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making at least good progress, and the gap between these pupils and others nationally is set to narrow further in 2015.
- Adults meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs effectively. Consequently, they make at least expected progress from their individual starting points.
- Although more-able pupils make at least expected progress across the school, not enough make rapid progress to attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have correctly identified

this and have put in place appropriate training for staff to ensure that expectations are higher for all pupils and, in particular, for those who have the potential to attain highly. School records and scrutiny of pupils work books indicate that the proportion of higher levels is set to increase substantially in 2015 as compared to 2014 at the end of both key stages.

The early years provision

is good

- Teaching in the early years is consistently good. As a result, children make good progress from their different starting points.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below what are typical for their age. By the end of Reception, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is in line with the national average. Children are well prepared to move into Year 1.
- Parents are involved in the initial assessments and are encouraged to share information about learning at home through their child's 'learning journal'. Parents spoken to during the inspection were very supportive and said that they were kept well informed about their child's progress.
- Staff are very caring and supportive and the provision meets children's needs well. Children's physical, emotional and health development, safety and well-being, including social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are very well provided for. All safeguarding requirements are effectively met.
- Children socialise well together and become confident and able to work on their own. They enjoy their learning and have good behaviour and attitudes.
- Focused teaching effectively supports children's development in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is a good balance between indoor and outdoor learning, children are able to make their own choices about their learning. Staff work effectively with children to build vocabulary and develop their language skills. This particularly helps children who speak English as an additional language to make good progress in their learning.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Staff and resources are deployed effectively to help children make good progress, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Assessments are used effectively by adults in identifying children's next steps in learning. However, the most-able children are not always sufficiently challenged so that their learning is rapid.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100444
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	462149

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Kinnear
Executive Headteacher	Calvin Henry
Head of School	Martha Braithwaite
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 May 2013
Telephone number	020 72725967
Fax number	020 75619013
Email address	admin@st-marks.islington.sch.uk

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