

# St Mark's Church of England Academy

## Inspection report

---

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 134003               |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | N/A                  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 343803               |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 28–29 September 2010 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | David Scott          |

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

---

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Academy                           |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Maintained                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–18                             |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                             |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form         | Mixed                             |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 771                               |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 41                                |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Geraldine Hutchinson              |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Chris Mallaband (Principal)       |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 24 June 2009                      |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Acacia Road<br>Mitcham<br>CR4 1SF |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 020 8648 6627                     |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 020 8640 8305                     |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | school@stmarksacademy.org.uk      |

---

|                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 11–18                |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 28–29 September 2010 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 343803               |

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 38 part lessons, observing 37 teachers, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of students. Inspectors did not hold meetings with parents and carers. They observed the academy's work, and looked at the academy's self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans and school policies, and analysed questionnaires from 36 parents and carers, 87 students and 13 staff. The academy's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

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

- The impact of the quality of learning in lessons on students' attainment at Key Stage 4.
- Whether actions taken by the academy's leaders are leading to sustainable improvements in the quality of provision for students in the sixth form.
- The behaviour, safety and attendance of pupils and the impact of strategies to improve these.
- The provision for the more able students and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Information about the school

St Mark's Church of England Academy is smaller in size than most secondary schools. One in three students (a proportion that is three times the national average) speak English as an additional language. The largest group of students are of White British heritage, although over three quarters are from a range of minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds, most of whom are from Black African or Caribbean backgrounds. In the main academy, the proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. In the sixth form, over a quarter are in receipt of the educational maintenance allowance. The proportion of students that join the academy at times other than the usual starting points is much higher than that found nationally. A third of students - a proportion that is higher than that found nationally - have special educational needs and/ or disabilities, these being mainly moderate learning needs and behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties. The academy has specialist science and performing arts status since 2009. The academy is sponsored by CfBT Education Trust and the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education.

In June 2009, following its Section 5 inspection the academy was given a notice to improve. A subsequent monitoring visit took place in March 2010 and a new principal commenced his appointment in September 2010. The academy has been subject to a major building programme which is due to be completed in October 2010.

**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

'The academy has a new principal. He is a good communicator, friendly and I believe the academy has a positive future ahead', commented a parent reflecting the views of many. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the academy no longer requires significant improvement.

St Mark's Church of England Academy provides a satisfactory standard of education, but one that is improving. The academy has undergone recent significant changes of senior leaders and teaching staff, mainly because of re-focusing and restructuring. The school's priority during this period has been to re-establish a shared vision among all staff in order to raise standards and to bring about much-needed stability. This has increased the confidence of staff, parents and carers.

The academy faces exceptionally challenging circumstances due to the high levels of mobility of students throughout the year. Over the years, this has had a significant impact on attainment. Progress and learning are improving securely as is students' enjoyment of learning. However, there has not yet been time for recent initiatives to be reflected significantly in students' attainment, which is below national averages, so that students' achievement overall is satisfactory. Students who join the academy at unexpected times are well supported, so that they make satisfactory progress. However, many do not reach average levels of attainment due to their low starting points and interruptions in learning; emotional difficulties; or because they sometimes arrive understanding and speaking little or no English.

The academy is a welcoming and harmonious community, where students are happy and safe and make sound academic progress. They behave appropriately, respect the views of others and have a realistic sense of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. Effective pastoral support and guidance, especially for the students and their families who are experiencing difficulties, make an increasingly positive contribution to the school's improving relationships with parents and carers.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are examples of good practice, but the quality across the academy is variable. This is because activities are not always closely matched to students' individual needs. Teachers do not ask sufficiently probing questions or provide specific targets to help students, particularly the more able, to make consistently good progress and raise standards.

Information is used regularly and with increasing accuracy to identify what the academy does well and to plan for improvement. Criteria against which to judge the impact of any changes are not always sufficiently measurable. Some leaders are new in post and additional training and coaching will be needed to help all staff become more effective in raising standards, particularly in English. The governing body meets its statutory

**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

responsibilities and supports the academy's work, but has not systematically sought the views of stakeholders nor challenged or held the academy to account with sufficient rigour. Since the last inspection the school has begun to raise attainment, reduce exclusions and improve attendance. These actions demonstrate that the academy has the necessary satisfactory capacity to make the further improvements that are needed.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to accelerate students' progress and to raise standards, particularly in English, so that they are consistently good, by:
  - ensuring teachers use day-to-day assessments to provide activities that are challenging and are carefully matched to the varied needs of all students, especially for students with special educational needs and/ or disabilities
  - asking more probing questions in lessons which give students opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully, especially for more able students
  - ensuring that lessons are active with an emphasis on students' learning in order to increase the pace and accelerate progress
  - reviewing targets more systematically with students so they clearly understand how to improve.
- Enhance the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on school
  - improvement, by:
    - ensuring that tracking and monitoring information is analysed robustly by setting quantifiable measures against which to evaluate success
    - intensifying the programme for spreading good practice in assessment throughout the academy, by coaching and mentoring
    - extending the capacity of leaders at all levels still further to manage their areas of responsibility
    - ensuring that the governing body seeks the views of stakeholders more systematically and challenges and holds the academy to account with more rigour in order to fulfil its role more effectively.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

St Mark's Academy is making a significant difference to the students in its care. Year 11 students' attainment, while improving, is still low. This is largely because many have not had the benefit of being in the academy from the normal starting point, or have experienced a legacy of variable teaching which has impeded progress. From low starting points when they enter the academy, students are making secure progress and achieving satisfactorily. Students are motivated to learn because of the good relationships with staff and each other. Their positive behaviour in lessons and real desire to improve contribute effectively to their learning. Most of those who previously demonstrated challenging

**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

behaviour have been motivated by the academy's drive to help students achieve. St Mark's has been successful in encouraging students to engage more actively with their learning. This was very evident in a Year 9 drama lesson where students prepared their own improvisation based on the story of Anne Frank. This led to a lively discussion where students gave feedback on each other's performance based on criteria, and as a result made good progress. Similarly, Year 10 students achieved well in a religious education (RE) lesson by closely examining each other's work in order to improve their understanding of examination grade criteria. Students' learning flourished as a result of the teacher carefully planning and matching tasks to their individual needs.

Students' progress is beginning to accelerate as they move through the academy. Through changes to the curriculum and more systematic monitoring of the work of departments, unevenness in subject performance is gradually being eliminated. For example, students' performance in mathematics has improved, as has that in science, but as yet a sustained record of improvement has not been achieved in English. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language also do as well as their peers because of effective support and one-to-one tuition. Students with statements of special educational needs do particularly well.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the academy. As a result of the many performance opportunities available, students have developed a strong sense of social and cultural awareness which has enabled them to improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. As a result, students are adequately prepared for the world of work and employment. The school has worked hard both with students, parents and carers to emphasise the importance of good attendance which has improved markedly over the last year and the number of persistent absentees has reduced significantly.

Students are very positive about the changing and improving ethos and buildings in the academy. They say they feel safe, enjoy their education and make sound progress. Behaviour generally supports learning in lessons with just some occasional boisterousness in corridors. Students are confident that the rare cases of bullying are addressed promptly. They have a sound understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, participating enthusiastically in sporting activities and physical pursuits.

Many students are keen to take on responsibilities and report the value of the active academy council who were involved in the appointment of the new principal. Members of Year 8 have been trained as peer mediators to help out with any problems Year 7 students might experience. Students make an enthusiastic contribution to their local community, for example, by the Gospel choir entertaining senior citizens at their Christmas lunch party and working with two special schools on a joint musical project.

**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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 4        |
| 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        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 3        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Improvement in the quality of teaching is at the heart of the academy's drive to remedy the legacy of underachievement in the students' performance. Teaching, although satisfactory, has a number of strengths. Relationships between staff and students are positive. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English are well supported in lessons because teaching assistants are generally well deployed. There are pockets of good practice in assessment, particularly in performing arts, personal, social and health education and RE. However, marking and teachers' explanations do not always indicate clearly how the students can improve their work. Sometimes teachers' explanations are over-long which reduces the opportunity for students to think for themselves and to develop and explain their ideas. When this happens, the pace of learning slows.

The curriculum has recently been re-organised and is increasingly effective at meeting the needs and enthusiasms of all students, for example the nurture programme for Year 7. Students experience a good range of activities. Guest speakers, musical productions, dance extravaganzas and clubs ranging from boxing to samba band enhance the curriculum further. At Key Stage 4, there is an appropriate blend of vocational and academic courses. This, together with visits to 'The Gadget Show', Sadler's Wells and overseas trips to France, provides opportunities for students to broaden their personal and

**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

academic skills. The provision for vocational pathways is an area of weakness, particularly in the sixth form.

The academy is proud of its increasingly good care, guidance and support. The most vulnerable students benefit greatly from good links with external agencies. Staff can point to real successes in helping students overcome difficult histories and challenging episodes in their lives. The inclusion team provides a wide range of support to enable vulnerable students to play a full part in school life and is increasingly successful at engaging hard-to-reach families. Although students' progress is regularly tracked, analysis is not always sufficiently robust to improve the progress of all.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Despite the many changes of staff that have interrupted progress in the recent past, the approachability of the new principal and his commitment and determination to improve the academy are impressive. He has a clear vision for the direction the academy should be moving towards. Within a very short space of time he has established new systems for quality assurance, with clear lines of accountability, which are focused on raising attainment. The vision has been shared effectively with all staff who embrace it wholeheartedly. Strategies for tackling weaker teaching have been implemented and there is a clear ambition to ensure that all lessons are good and that all students achieve well. Consequently, teaching is improving and learning and progress are beginning to accelerate. A number of leaders are newly appointed to the academy or are new to their responsibilities. Although improvements are beginning to emerge, for many it is still too early to assess their full impact.

The principal and senior team work together to guide and support staff. Self-evaluation is honest and constructive. Senior staff have an accurate view of the strengths in teaching and learning, as demonstrated when they undertook joint lesson observations with inspectors. Nevertheless, leadership roles across the academy are insufficiently focused on evaluating the impact of teaching on learning against clear success criteria in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment.

The academy has a strong commitment to ensuring that every student has an equal chance to learn. It works hard to eradicate any differences in the achievement of groups of students. For example, it has been very successful in helping some students with previously challenging behaviour to enjoy learning again and they now make expected progress.



**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

The governing body is supportive and fulfils its statutory duties. Its level of challenge has had an impact on some areas of the school's work; for example in the areas of buildings, personnel and financial management, and the implementation of new management systems. Nevertheless, the governing body is not rigorous enough in holding the academy to account with regard to students' performance in examinations, for example. The academy has sound procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. These meet all government guidelines. The academy community is a cohesive society which has a detailed understanding of its own community and the different faiths, ethnicities and cultures that exist within it. However, the academy is at an early stage of raising students' understanding of a broader national and international context.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

Attainment is low but beginning to rise so that achievement is satisfactory overall. The checks on the progress of current Year 12 and 13 students indicate that the majority are on track to meet their challenging targets. Students are particularly successful in the academy's performing arts and information communication and technology vocational courses.

The sixth form curriculum is satisfactory and offers an appropriate range of academic and vocational courses that meet the needs of current students well. Although current numbers are low, as a result of curriculum adjustments and a more appropriate offer, an increased number of Year 11 elected to proceed to the sixth form. This represents an increase in retention rates compared to the previous year. The increasing popularity of the sixth form has been brought about by improvements in teaching and rising standards at Key Stage 4. Nevertheless, the range of vocational pathways into training and employment is too narrow to meet the increasingly sophisticated aspirations of students as

**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

the sixth form grows. Teaching is satisfactory overall and most students complete their courses to proceed to further education and training. Under sound leadership, the care and support of the students is satisfactory and improving, and, as a result, students' personal development is satisfactory. Attendance has improved significantly and demonstrates how much all students feel they enjoy belonging to the academy community. Punctuality to lessons is good. Students receive good feedback on their major written tasks and the quality of the day-to-day marking of their work has improved so that most students are clear how close they are to their targets.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:                           |          |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form        | 3        |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form     | 3        |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form    | 3        |

## Views of parents and carers

A very low proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Of these, the academy enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority. Almost all respondents were very positive about the academy and felt that it keeps students safe and helps them to prepare for the future. A few parents and carers raised concerns over the quality and cost of academy lunches and communication with the academy. Inspectors discussed these issues with senior staff who agreed that these areas need to be addressed. Inspectors were also shown evidence of the academy's own recent surveys of parents' and carers' views and these too were positive.

## 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 Academy 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 771 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 10             | 28 | 25    | 69 | 0        | 0  | 1                 | 3 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 12             | 33 | 19    | 53 | 3        | 8  | 0                 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 16             | 44 | 15    | 42 | 2        | 6  | 1                 | 3 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 10             | 28 | 22    | 61 | 2        | 6  | 1                 | 3 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 8              | 22 | 22    | 61 | 4        | 11 | 1                 | 3 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 10             | 28 | 17    | 47 | 7        | 19 | 1                 | 3 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 5              | 14 | 17    | 47 | 9        | 25 | 3                 | 8 |
| 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) | 8              | 22 | 22    | 61 | 1        | 3  | 2                 | 6 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 11             | 31 | 20    | 56 | 1        | 3  | 1                 | 3 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 9              | 25 | 18    | 50 | 6        | 17 | 1                 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 7              | 19 | 20    | 56 | 7        | 19 | 1                 | 3 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 10             | 28 | 19    | 53 | 4        | 11 | 1                 | 3 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 13             | 36 | 19    | 53 | 2        | 6  | 1                 | 3 |

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 all 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      | 58  | 36   | 4            | 2          |
| Primary schools      | 8   | 43   | 40           | 9          |
| Secondary schools    | 10  | 35   | 42           | 13         |
| Sixth forms          | 13  | 39   | 45           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 33  | 42   | 20           | 4          |
| Pupil referral units | 18  | 40   | 29           | 12         |
| All schools          | 11  | 42   | 38           | 9          |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.**



30 September 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of St Mark's Church of England Academy, Mitcham, CR4 1SF**

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your academy recently, I would like to thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work and recreation. We valued the discussions we had with you and I would like to take this opportunity to share our findings with you.

Your academy is satisfactory, and improving, which means that it does some things well while other things could be better. Your principal and teachers are totally committed to making your academy an even better place to learn. Inspectors were particularly impressed by the way you get along and respect each other's different cultures and traditions. You, your parents and carers told us that it is a caring and happy place where you feel totally safe.

Your principal and teachers are determined to help you succeed and give you the best possible education, so we have asked them to do the following:

Plan work that will challenge and engage you in all lessons, showing you ways to learn by yourselves, particularly the more able amongst you.

Give you clearer advice on how to improve your work so that you can achieve your very best.

Look closely at information about your performance, in order to accurately pinpoint, design and share the necessary advice with you so that you have everything you need to accelerate your progress and attainment, particularly in English.

Once again, it was very good to meet you all. We wish you and the academy all the

- best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Scott

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**