



St Mark's VA Ecumenical
Church of England/Methodist
Primary School

Prospectus

For
Academic Year
2007-2008

"At our church school we work together to inspire children to develop a love of learning and the confidence to realise their full potential"

Contents

Contents	1
Message from the Headteacher	2
Essential School Information	2
Local Authority	2
Religious Affiliations	3
Religious Education	3
Worship	3
Sex and Relationships Education.....	3
School Governing Body	4
Our Vision, Ethos, Aims & Values	5
Entry to School	6
Transfer to Secondary School.....	6
School Terms And Holiday Dates.....	7
School Hours.....	8
Arrival At School	8
Extra-curricular Activities	8
Educational Visits	8
Enriching Activities	9
Special Educational Needs.....	9
Arrangements for Children with Disabilities.....	9
Homework.....	10
Code of Dress.....	11
Complaints	11
Charges And Voluntary Contributions	12
Attendance	12
Holidays in Term Time	12
Illness At School.....	13
Medical Care.....	13
Road Safety.....	13
Volunteers	13
Home-School Agreement	13
Policy File.....	13

Copies of this prospectus are available at school for reference or on the school website. You may also have a copy free-of-charge on request. If you require this prospectus in a language other than English or in an alternative format (e.g. Braille) please contact the school office.

Message from the Headteacher

St Mark's VA Primary School has a strong Christian ethos where we work together to inspire children to develop a love of learning and the confidence to realise their full potential. We have an excellent staff, and extremely supportive governing body and parents who work in partnership with the school in order to best meet the needs of their children.

We benefit from a modern building and spacious grounds, which include three playgrounds complete with shade and shelter, excellent foundation stage, play areas and stimulating playground environments for the children. We also have a large playing field on site. There are two classes per year group, therefore, fourteen classes in total. At the January count, there were 414 children on roll, boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven.

Our recent Ofsted inspection, in May 2007, identified St Mark's as a "good school with very strong features that serves its community well." Ofsted noted that a particular strength of the school is the carefully balanced and successful commitment to pupils' academic progress and personal development. A copy of the full report is available through a link on our school website. A copy of our forthcoming SIAS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools) report will also be available on the school website from the end of July 2007.

I hope you find the contents of this document useful. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. You may also wish to visit our school website, www.saintmarks.co.uk, where you can see pictures of our school and find more information. Visits to the school are warmly welcomed. Please contact the school office to arrange an appointment.

Mrs Helen Bath, Headteacher

Essential School Information

St Mark's Voluntary Aided Ecumenical Church of England/Methodist Primary School

Address: St Mark's Road, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, North Somerset BS22 7PU

Telephone: 01934 513008

Fax: 01934 522007

Website: www.saintmarks.co.uk

Local Authority

St Mark's School resides in North Somerset, a unitary authority. The current Director of Children and Young People's Services is Mr Colin Diamond.

The contact information for North Somerset Council is as follows:

The Town Hall
Walliscote Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare
BS21 1UJ

Telephone: 01934 888888

Religious Affiliations

St Mark's is a voluntary aided (VA), ecumenical Church of England/Methodist primary school. The school and the local authority work in partnership with both local churches and church organisations. In the local area, we have a direct link with St. Mark's Church, which is part of the Worle Local Ecumenical Project (LEP), a project between the Church of England and the Methodist Church. In the Worle LEP, there are three churches, St. Mark's, Mead Vale and St. Martin's.

The churches can be contacted at:
Worle Parish Office, St. Mark's Church, St. Mark's Road, Worle,
Weston-super-Mare, BS22 7PW
Tel: 01934 515922

We also have support and direct links with the Diocese of Bath & Wells and the Methodist Union.

Contact information is as follows:

The Diocese of Bath & Wells
The Diocesan Office, The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset. BA5 2UG
Tel 01749 670777; Fax 01749 674240

Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5JR
Main Switchboard: 020 7486 5502

It is important to note that, due to our voluntary aided status and our links with the local Christian churches, this is reflected in section 4 of our admissions policy paragraphs d,e,f & g.

Religious Education

Religious education is a core subject and is taught through the "Awareness, Mystery and Value" scheme produced by the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Our religious education promotes understanding and tolerance within our multicultural society. It is taught as a subject in its own right but it is also an integral part of other areas of the curriculum. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from religious education and where they do so, alternative provision would be discussed with them. Please contact the headteacher if you wish for your child to be withdrawn from religious education.

Worship

Worship is an important aspect of school life at St Mark's. All children take part in either key-stage or whole-school worship each day. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from worship and where they do so, alternative provision would be discussed with them. Please contact the headteacher if you wish for your child to be withdrawn from worship.

Sex and Relationships Education

Sex and Relationships Education is taught as part of the year five and year six curriculum. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Sex and Relationships Education and where they do so, alternative provision would be discussed with them. Please contact the headteacher if you wish for your child to be withdrawn from Sex and Relationships Education.

School Governing Body

Ex-officio Church Ministers

Rev'd Matthew Frankum Ex-officio Church of England
(Vacancy) Ex-officio Methodist Church

Chair/Treasurer/Forum Representative

Rachel Fisher

Vice-Chair

Tracy Humphris

Child Protection Link Governors

Sue Cameron
Helen Yeadon-Ray

Governors

Diane Anderson
Sue Cameron
Abbe Hayward
Clare Howling
Derek Irwin
Nilan Karadia
Ron Moon
Elizabeth Painter
Karen Parfitt
Paul Wilfan
Helen Yeadon-Ray

The Headteacher

Helen Bath ~ Headteacher Governor

Clerk to the Governors

Lisa Herlingshaw ~ Clerk to Governors

All Governors are contactable via the school office – contact details on the first page of this prospectus. Governors meet regularly to discuss the life of the school and the strategic vision and development of the school. Being a Voluntary Aided School, the governors are responsible for the outside repair and maintenance of the building.

Our Vision, Ethos, Aims & Values



Our Vision

"At our church school we work together to inspire children to develop a love of learning and the confidence to realise their full potential"

Our Ethos

Recognizing its historic foundation, St. Mark's School will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all its pupils.

Our Aims

- To share and celebrate our Christian values.
- To provide a secure environment and foster a sense of belonging.
 - To encourage self-discipline and independent learning.
- To work in partnership with parents, governors, local community, church, diocese and LEA.
 - To support one another through team work.
 - To provide a broad balanced and enriched curriculum.
 - To develop creativity and enquiring minds.
- To promote physical development and a healthy life style.
- To be open and flexible to change and to new challenges.
 - To ensure equal opportunity.
 - To celebrate success.

Our Values

The things we value at our school are:

Responsibility	Self control	Trust	Friendship
Consideration	Politeness	Kindness	Self-confidence
Effort	Honesty	Respect	Cooperation
Enjoyment	Self-belief	Teamwork	

The staff and governors are proud of the high level of pastoral support that is provided. The vision, ethos, aims and Christian values are constantly promoted and they underpin the day-to-day life of the school leading to very good personal development and well being of the children in our inclusive, Christian school.

Entry To School

North Somerset policy allows all children to have three years of infant schooling. To achieve this, children may start school in September, provided they have their fifth birthday during that school year. This is a voluntary option open to all North Somerset parents, but by law, all children must start school at the beginning of the term that follows their fifth birthday.

Any prospective parents are welcome to visit the school to meet the head and staff and see the school in action. Please telephone for an appointment.

Application forms for entry are available from the school office from July and completed forms must be returned to North Somerset Council at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare by the date in October stipulated on the form. If you are applying to the school on Church grounds then the supportive letter from the priest or vicar should accompany your application form by the closing date. Our current Admissions Policy and a policy for admissions for the next academic year are available from the school office.

When the places have been allocated the parents will be invited to an informal evening meeting in the school. Appropriate information will be circulated at this meeting regarding the induction. Parents and children will have an opportunity to visit the school in Term 6 and meet their peers and the adults who will help them.

Children starting in the Reception year are phased into full-time school gradually, beginning with half days and increasing to full-time within the first term.

Transfer To Secondary School

In the September following their eleventh birthday, children move to a secondary school. During the first term of their last year at St. Mark's, you will receive a booklet giving the arrangements for transfer and a form on which you note your choice of secondary school.

North Somerset Education Authority does not operate a 'feeder school' policy so attendance at our school does not guarantee a place at any particular secondary school. Full details of North Somerset admissions criteria and policies are available from the Education Authority.

In their final Summer Term, secondary school teachers visit the children at St. Mark's and children spend some time in their prospective secondary school. Parents' meetings are also arranged. Full details of the transfer process are sent to parents in ample time.

School Terms And Holiday Dates

2007/2008 6 Term Year

Term 1	Start	Monday 3 September 2007
	Finish	Friday 19 October 2007
Term 2	Start	Tuesday 30 October 2007
	Finish	Wednesday 19 December 2007
Term 3	Start	Thursday 3 January 2008
	Finish	Friday 15 February 2008
Term 4	Start	Monday 25 February 2008
	School Closed	Friday 21 March, Monday 24 March & Tuesday 25 March (Easter)
	Finish	Friday 4 April 2008
Term 5	Start	Monday 21 April 2008
School	Closed	Monday 5 May (May Day Bank Holiday)
	Finish	Friday 23 May 2008
Term 6	Start	Monday 2 June 2008
	Finish	Friday 25 July 2008

2008/2009 6 Term Year

Term 1	Start	Wednesday 3 September 2008
	Finish	Friday 24 October 2008
Term 2	Start	Wednesday 5 November 2008
	Finish	Friday 19 December 2008
Term 3	Start	Monday 5 January 2009
	Finish	Friday 13 February 2009
Term 4	Start	Monday 23 February 2009
	Finish	Friday 3 April 2009
Term 5	Start	Monday 20 April 2009
School	Closed	Monday 4 May 2009 (May Day)
	Finish	Friday 22 May 2009
Term 6	Start	Monday 1 June 2009
	Finish	Friday 24 July 2009

IMPORTANT

The school year is based on a calendar of 195 days. Five days are to be used for staff professional development (In-service Days), which means that the school will be open to receive pupils for the legal minimum of 190 days (380 sessions). In-service days have yet to be finalised.

School Hours

For Lower school children the school day begins at 8.50 am when the doors open. The register is taken at 9.00 am. The end of morning school is 12.05 pm. School restarts at 1.10 pm and finishes at 3.10 pm. Morning break is 10.30-10.45 am.

For Upper school children the school day begins at 8.45 am when the doors open. The register is taken at 8.55 am. The end of morning school is 12.15 pm. School restarts at 1.10 pm and finishes at 3.10 pm. Morning break is 10.30-10.45 am.

Registers close at 9.05 am. after which time a child arriving is deemed late.

Allowing for registration, break and lunch, we are fulfilling the nationally recommended hours for these age groups.

The upper school classrooms will be open at 8.45 am and the lower school classrooms at 8.50 am. A member of staff is on duty on the upper school playground from 8.30am. Parents and children should wait in the playgrounds, before school starts.

Arrival At School

In line with our travel plan, if bringing your children to school by car, you are asked to park with care outside the school, avoiding zig zag lines. There are three pedestrian entrances to the school, so for safety reasons please do not use the main school entrance (through the car park) with your children. We ask that you ensure they know clearly the arrangements for their journey home and, if they are to be met, by whom. We would ask that you advise us clearly about any change in this routine. PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE STAFF CAR-PARK.

For security reasons the pedestrian gates will be locked from 9.10 am until 2.50 pm each day, during which time entry to the school site must be via the main entrance in St. Mark's Road.

For the safety of the children dogs are not permitted on the school grounds. If you are collecting a child from the Upper School playground please do not wait immediately outside the gate with your dog as this causes congestion with crossing the road.

There are some storage spaces for bicycles on the lower school playground. Please ensure that any bicycles left there are securely padlocked. The school cannot take responsibility for loss or damage to any bicycles left on the premises.

Extra-curricular Activities

A wide range of clubs and other extra-curricular activities stemming from particular interests of the children will be running during the school year. After school clubs are organised by the staff and outside bodies for the school children.

Sometimes, due to unforeseen circumstances, these activities have to be cancelled. On these occasions children leave school at the normal time if going home on their own. Parents are asked to note this possibility. Children who are met will stay in school, unless contact is made with those meeting them.

Educational Visits

The governors and staff recognise the valuable contribution that the wide range of additional activities, including after school clubs and educational visits can make towards a pupil's personal and social education. Each year, our year 6 children take part in an extended residential visit. We aim to promote and provide such activities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils. Parents are notified by letter and their consent obtained.

Enriching Activities

The children benefit from a wide range of enriching activities throughout the year. The cost of these activities is met through the school budget or school fund.

Special Educational Needs

The progress of all children in school is carefully monitored and recorded to ensure that each child is enabled to develop his/her full potential. If a child needs extending or shows a particular talent which should be further developed, or is experiencing difficulty in school, appropriate action is taken in line with the school policies on Gifted & Talented/More Able Children and Special Educational Needs.

Additional help may be within the classroom or withdrawal for periods of individual or group tuition. Outside agencies are consulted to ensure that the most suitable strategies are being adopted.

Parents of children with special needs are consulted and involved at all stages, as specified in the Education Act, 1981. More information is contained in the appropriate school policies, which are available from the School Office. A copy of the Special Needs Policy is also available from the school website.

Minor alterations to the SEN policy were made during academic year 2006/2007 specifically relating to staffing, resources and communications with parents.

The school, under the leadership of the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), seeks to identify special educational needs early and staff work collaboratively with pre-school staff prior to children starting at St Mark's or with St Mark's school staff to ensure early intervention.

The school has effective links with external support services and agencies e.g. education psychologists, speech therapists, behaviour and family support services, education welfare and social services.

St Mark's school is an inclusive school where the individual needs of children and adults are taken into account. The school has a comprehensive accessibility plan available from the school office.

Arrangements for Children with Disabilities

If St Mark's school is named in a statement of special educational needs, the admissions authority is legally required to admit the child to the school. Some children will therefore be allocated places before all other admissions criteria are applied (a copy of the admissions policy is available from the school office).

If the parents/carer of a child with disabilities, but without a statement of special educational needs applies for a place at St Mark's, then they would have equal opportunity as an able-bodied child.

Every possible step would be taken to ensure their smooth transition into school and their attendance at St Mark's. St Mark's School has disabled access, disabled toilet facilities, changing facilities, wide corridors and the benefits of being a single story building. Please refer to our equal opportunities policy and our comprehensive accessibility plan for further details (available from the school office).

Homework

Our school values parents as partners, and homework has an important role to play in the academic development of pupils. Current Government guidelines recommend an average of one hour for years 1 and 2, one and a half hours for years 3 and 4, and two and a half hours for years 5 and 6, per week. The school recognises that parental involvement and homework will vary depending upon the domestic arrangements of the family. The work set does not require parents to 'teach' their child, but to encourage and support them.

The purposes of homework are:

- To improve children's learning.
- To consolidate/reinforce work undertaken in the classroom.
- To increase children's independence within the learning process.
- To increase parental involvement in their own children's learning.
- To prepare children for the volume of independent study at home in their future education at secondary school and beyond.

The term 'homework' covers a wide variety of activities which are done at home or outside the normal school hours. This includes:-

- Reading alone or with an adult for a short amount of time each evening are crucial elements of homework. This provides children with the time to practise reading skills and develop good habits which cannot be covered within the limits of the school day. A reading record book will be provided for parents to complete after hearing their child read.
- Specific learning of spellings and mathematical facts assist tremendously other work done in school. These may be tested formally and will always have direct relevance to other work.
- From time to time children may be asked to complete a task at home which was started in school time. The child will take responsibility for the completion of this task on time.
- Children will sometimes be asked to collect objects or information from home which will support the learning in the classroom.
- Children may be asked to research an aspect of topic work using the library, books at home, ICT resources or by talking to adults in the home environment or local community.
- Children with special educational needs will often have an element of individual homework within their termly action plan. The role of parents in this will be crucial in achieving the targets set.

Additionally, for children within Key Stage 2:

- Teachers will set specific tasks to be completed at home. In general, children should be able to complete these without adult input. However, monitoring and some assistance by parents will be of help to the child.
- Each class or set group will have its own system for ensuring that parents know what homework has been set.
- Teachers will monitor the completion of homework. This may include provision of a 'Catch Up' period in the child's own time in school e.g. playtime or lunchtime if homework is not completed.

If parents choose to take their child out of school for whatever reason, homework will not be set. Please remember that most children work very hard during the school day. They need to have leisure time when they can follow activities for personal enjoyment and have time to relax. However, children also need to appreciate the value of doing some academic work at home in order to support the work done in school. Parents of children who do not complete homework on a regular basis will be notified.

Behaviour Policy

Our behaviour policy is in accordance with our Christian values and the children are aware that it is based on the need for reconciliation and forgiveness. The behaviour policy supports children in order that they feel safe and secure with the school community.

Code of Dress

St. Mark's School uniform is detailed below. Items marked with an * are available to buy from school on a Thursday morning.

Sweatshirts* & Cardigans*: Plain navy with school logo

Polo Shirts*: Plain navy or white with school logo

Shirts & Blouses: White

Trousers, Skirts & Pinafore Dresses: Grey or Black

Summer Dresses: Pale blue check

Shoes: We ask parents to send children in sensible footwear – trainers or shoes with high heels are not permissible.

P.E. Kit

T shirt*: blue/white

Shorts*: blue

Plimsolls: (not training shoes) preferably slip-on for younger children.

P.E. bag*

Swimming: Towel, swimming costume and hat.

Other items

Painting overall* or old shirt for artwork.

Reading book bag*

Cap* for wearing on sunny days.

Jewellery should not be worn at school as it could be dangerous or be lost. Studs in pierced ears are permissible. Watches may be worn.

Nail Varnish should not be worn.

Long hair should be tied back with a blue band. Hairstyles should be smart and tidy.

ALL ITEMS NEED TO BE CLEARLY MARKED WITH THE OWNER'S NAME

We expect parents to co-operate in encouraging their children to take a pride in their appearance. We will also continue this in school.

Order forms for items available through school are to be found on the shelves in the entrance hall.

Complaints

The school has a complaints policy and a complaint against the school curriculum policy. Both of these documents are available in the policy file outside the school office. Copies of these policies are available from the school office

Charges And Voluntary Contributions

All activities that arise during normal school hours and are a necessary part of the national curriculum, or which relate to religious education, will be provided free-of-charge to pupils.

The governing body reserves the right to make charges for the following activities organised by the school:

- the cost of board and lodging for the year 6 residential visit
- the cost of peripatetic music tuition
- the cost of clubs lead by outside agencies.

These charges may be reduced in cases of hardship. Please contact the Headteacher, as necessary.

Parents will be invited to make voluntary contributions towards educational visits. If payment is difficult, we would hope to be able to cover this. Contact the headteacher or class teacher in confidence. Copies of the policy relating to charging are available from the school office.

Attendance

The attendance figures for 2005/2006 are as follows: Attendance 94.55%, authorised absence 5.43% and unauthorised absence 0.02%.

If your child is absent from school, please let the office know first thing in the morning and each morning of your child's absence. If there is an extended absence due to sickness, please keep us informed on a weekly basis.

Please request in writing, giving the reason and time of absence, if your child needs to attend an appointment (e.g. doctor or dentist).

Children will not be allowed to go home alone for any reason during the school day and must be collected by a responsible adult. Please sign the "signing-out" book in the entrance hall should your child need to leave the premises for any reason during the school day and inform the office on their return. Please notify in writing, to give your child permission for them to walk to school or walk home at the end of the day. We are fortunate to have a "lollipop-lady". In the event of her absence, we can then notify parents should they wish to make other arrangements for their child.

At St Mark's we firmly believe that children are more likely to achieve at school if they attend regularly. We therefore expect staff, governors and parents to support good attendance. It is also very important that children arrive on time each day for school.

Holidays in Term Time

Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Act 1995 gives the headteacher the discretionary power to grant leave of absence in accordance with the arrangements made by the governing body of the school. All term time holiday will be unauthorised by the headteacher unless it meets the following criteria deemed as exceptional circumstances:

- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting,
- Parent's employment restrictions
- Significant family events
- Cultural and religious requirements

A letter outlining the circumstances would need to be attached to the holiday form available from the school office, for the headteacher to consider. The attendance policy is available from the school office.

Illness At School

It is school policy that a clear symptom-free 48 hours must have elapsed before a child with sickness and/or diarrhoea can return to school.

If your child is ill at school we shall try to notify you, so that he/she may be taken home. In cases of emergency a daytime telephone number and alternative address of a neighbour or friend who will be willing to take your child are essential. You will be asked to give these details to the school when your child first begins. It is important that you notify school of any changes to contact details.

Medical Care

It is the Authority's wish that no medication be given to a child while in school, under normal circumstances. However, under exceptional circumstances, a note of indemnity will need to be signed by a parent prior to a named member of staff administering medication to a child. A copy of the medication policy is available from the school office. Provision will be made for those children with long-term medical needs.

The doctor, dentist and nurse make visits to the school, you will be notified in advance of such visits. Routine visits by the nurse when making regular checks will not be notified.

We would ask you to inform us of any special health or other problems your child may have as it is vital that those caring for your child know of these. You will be asked to complete a form detailing your child's medical information. Your permission will also be sought for a photograph to be taken of your child to accompany their records. A copy of this photograph will also be displayed on the staff-room wall with a brief description of their medical condition or need.

Road Safety

Cars - Parents are asked to observe normal parking restrictions and to be aware of the busy nature of the school entrances at the beginning and end of the day. Please do not bring cars into the school car park. In the interests of the safety of both children and adults alike please do not park on the yellow zig-zag lines.

Volunteers

The staff warmly welcome the support of parents, grandparents and carers. If you are able to help in any way, please contact the class teacher directly. It is now a requirement that volunteers working with children complete a CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) form prior to helping in school. If at any point during your time at school, a child discloses any information to you, it is our school policy to pass on this information to the headteacher or class teacher. Please fully respect the confidential nature of information and activities that take place at school. A parental volunteers policy is available from the school office.

Home-School Agreement

A copy of the Home-School Agreement needs to be signed by the headteacher and the parent of each child attending St Mark's School when they join. A copy of this agreement is available from the school office.

Policy File

A comprehensive file of school policies is always available outside the school office. If you require a copy of any school policy, please request one from the school office.

