

# Marsh Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	103233
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376857
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Donna Murrall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marlene Douglas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Marsh Hill Erdington Birmingham B23 7HY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 2920
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 464 2718
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	13–14 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	376857



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Jacqueline Wordsworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jeannette Turner

Additional inspector

Michael Lafford

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 15 teachers in 32 lessons; they observed paired and guided reading sessions and listened to a number of pupils read. The team held meetings with members of staff, groups of pupils and four members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation relating to pupils' achievement and school management, including pupils' work, evaluations of teaching and learning, minutes of the governing body meetings and whole-school improvement planning. Inspectors took into account the questionnaires completed by school staff, pupils and 48 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Marsh Hill is larger than most primary schools. The majority of pupils come from the local area, and the rest from surrounding neighbourhoods. The proportions of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those from minority ethnic groups are much higher than average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also above that found nationally. The school has full-time Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Reception. The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils. When it was last inspected the school was judged to no longer require a notice to improve. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and 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

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school, which is respected within its local community. The leadership team has secured important improvements in teaching, attendance and behaviour since the previous inspection. The school is not good because there is not enough good teaching or effective monitoring of learning to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well and their attainment levels rise, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory due to some satisfactory teaching and strong relationships between adults and pupils. Where teaching is good teachers' questioning and careful assessment of pupils' learning promote independent thinking and challenge the most-able pupils well, but the weaker teaching does not reflect such high expectations or such good use of assessment data in planning.
- Writing skills are not taught systematically across the classes and year groups and there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length or to use a range of more complex writing styles. In some classes, pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) is less well developed because of some inconsistencies in the teaching of this aspect of reading across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils are proud of their school and try hard to keep its rules. They say that they feel safe.
- Professional development and performance management for teachers and other teaching staff are satisfactory. The monitoring of the quality of teaching does not always focus sufficiently on the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning. School self-evaluation is mostly accurate, but sometimes overgenerous where it is not linked to the outcomes for pupils. Systems for checking on the progress made by pupils provide a wealth of data, but are undermined by assessments of pupils' starting points that are sometimes inaccurate.

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Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and improve pupils' learning and progress from satisfactory to consistently good by:
  - ensuring that the key concepts and skills that underpin effective reading and writing, particularly those that develop pupils' phonic knowledge, are taught systematically and securely throughout the school
  - refining the system for tracking of pupils' progress is used by teachers to make a closer match between pupils' prior learning and the activities they are given
  - ensuring that teachers identify, within lessons, when pupils are ready for the next steps in their learning
  - ensuring that the judgements made about the quality of teaching take full account of pupils' learning and progress over time
  - ensuring that the progress evident in the pupils' books translates into improved outcomes in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 by enabling them to tackle Level 3 and Level 5 work more frequently.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' achievement in lessons and over time in reading, writing, and mathematics is satisfactory. Attainment is rising in most year groups. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at the end Years 2 and 6 is below average. Few pupils reach the higher Level 3 or 5 in any subject. Parents and carers are rightly positive about their children's learning. There are no significant variations in the achievement of different groups of pupils, whatever their social background or ethnic heritage. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have appropriately modified work and challenging targets, so that they are supported and challenged to learn and work independently. They make similar progress to their peers in school. Leaders are aware that pupils who are persistently absent from school do not always make progress in line with their peers when they return to school. Pupils make most rapid progress when lessons are lively and engaging but skilfully managed, with imaginative activities and when teachers use assessment information to define precise outcomes for each lesson.

Children enter Reception with skills that are just below the levels expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in developing personal and social skills and basic reading skills. Their progress in other areas of learning is impeded because

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some teachers lack the skills and knowledge for effective teaching of phonics and extending pupils' competence in reading to the higher levels. Similarly, children do not have enough opportunities to practise their early writing skills in a range of situations.

In Years 1 to 6 pupils' progress in reading is satisfactory and they clearly enjoy reading. Pupils have a sound ability to read unfamiliar words, and use skimming and scanning skills. The more-able pupils in Year 6 are able to use the skills of inference and deduction with increasing confidence. The pupils who were heard reading during the inspection talked enthusiastically about the books they had read, and could compare and contrast the different genres they had experienced.

There are examples of good learning and progress in lessons, particularly in Years 1, 4 and 6. Here, pupils forge ahead because the work is challenging and the pace of learning is brisk. Pupils tackle activities with enthusiasm and concentrate for lengthy periods. They particularly enjoy working collaboratively to investigate and solve problems practically. This was evident in Year 4 when pupils keenly interviewed a visiting dinosaur in order to negotiate ideas and invent an imaginative story. Pupils worked hard on their writing and were at pains to include exciting vocabulary and to use punctuation precisely to make embedded clauses. Pupils' progress and learning in other year groups slow to satisfactory, particularly when they are ready to move on to more challenging tasks, or where skills are not taught systematically across the school.

The work seen in mathematics shows that learning and progress is satisfactory, although inconsistent across the school. Most teachers enable pupils to revisit and extend their knowledge by encouraging pupils to talk through their strategies, show their working out and try out alternative methods when answering mathematical problems.

### **Quality of teaching**

Pupils say that teachers help them and parents and carers believe that the quality of teaching at the school is good. Inspectors found good features of teaching in a number of lessons observed. For example, teachers generally provide clear explanations about new concepts because their knowledge of the subjects they teach is secure. Where teaching is most effective, planning is clear and involves other adults well to provide support for those pupils who find learning more difficult. The support provided is a mixture of intervention groups and in-class support. In most lessons, teachers use new technology effectively to help clarify pupils' learning. The best teaching is underpinned by rigorous and regular assessments of the pupils' understanding and progress, and pupils know what they need to do next because they understand their targets and are given very specific guidance in marking, with clear pointers for what has been done well and how responses could be improved.

However, while some teachers display good technical skills, the impact of teaching on learning in a significant proportion of lessons is no better than satisfactory. This is

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because some teachers do not always take account of what the pupils already know and can do and, therefore, do not always ensure that planned activities fully meet the needs of different ability groups. Teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils. On occasion extra activities or enrichment work are provided only after they have completed the same work as the rest of the class – work that for more-able pupils is often unnecessary.

At times teachers give insufficient attention to checking the learning of independent groups, particularly in paired reading, and this lessens the effectiveness of the activity. Guided reading, on the other hand, is more focused and provides appropriate challenge and includes a regular assessment of pupils' skills.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour in classes is typically orderly and considerate. Pupils collaborate well in pairs and small groups and are willing to help others when they encounter difficulties. The vast majority of pupils behave sensibly around the school and are very courteous and friendly, both to adults and to each other. There are a few examples of boisterous behaviour during break and lunchtimes, but nothing that causes pupils to feel unsafe in school. Pupils are confident there is always an adult they can turn to, if they have a problem. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils express their confidence in the school's ability to deal promptly and effectively with any instances of bullying. They have an appropriate understanding of the difference between one-off incidences of inappropriate behaviour or name-calling and the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudiced-based bullying related to race, sexual orientation, or religion.

Pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep safe and of the risks they face. They know about internet safety and the dangers of social networking sites. Almost all say they feel safe in school, and almost all their parents and carers agree with this and their positive views on behaviour. The school has taken strong measures to tackle a preconception in the community that children do not need to attend regularly or come to school on time, and is now taking a firm line on such practice. Consequently, the level of persistent absence is reducing and overall attendance is rising and is now average. Such improvements all serve to contribute towards improved learning in lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders are aware that teaching is not good enough at present for the school to realise its ambition of raising pupils' attainment to be above the national averages by the time they leave school. Key staff contribute appropriately to the school's ambition to become a good school. Although yet to be fully embedded, improvements in both provision and outcomes are evident in the progress seen in pupils' work. For example, the appointment of a pastoral support manager has a good impact on the pupils' improved behaviour and attendance. Leaders have successfully tackled the difficult and sensitive task of

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improving attendance with individual families. This reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunity and its desire to work more closely with, and gain the confidence of, parents and carers to emphasise the importance of full attendance. Appropriate use of professional development to improve teaching, the successes secured in improving pupils' attitudes to learning and attendance, and the growing confidence of parents and carers in the effectiveness of school combine to demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Leaders can point to a number of examples of the effectiveness of its work in securing good outcomes for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable than their peers. However, the school's assessment and tracking system makes data on pupils' progress difficult to follow. This restricts senior leaders' ability to identify and tackle any potential underachievement. As a result, the promotion of equality of opportunity is currently no better than satisfactory.

The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. Its members are knowledgeable and skilled individuals and are fully committed to the continuing improvement of the school. They have appropriate systems to prevent discrimination. Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements. Some minor procedural errors were corrected and updated during the inspection.

The curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately. The school celebrates diversity in faiths and cultures through a range of artistic and musical experiences. Richness is added to school life for very many pupils by the very popular and wide range of extra-curricular activities.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Marsh Hill Primary School, Birmingham, B23 7HY**

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school and for telling us your views, including through your questionnaires. We were pleased to see that some of you have gained certificates for 100% attendance. This is a real achievement – well done!

You have really helped us. We think your school is a satisfactory school, which means it does some things well but also has some areas for improvement. These are the things that we liked most.

- The school has worked hard to improve teaching, attendance and behaviour
- You enjoy school, particularly reading and attending of the after-school clubs.
- You are kind and helpful to each other and share your toys and books.
- You are good at helping around the school and do what adults ask you to do.
- You really know how to keep yourself safe on the internet and understand who to go to for help you if you are worried or upset.

The school is working hard to make things even better for you. We have asked the adults in charge to make sure that:

- teachers always give you work that makes you think hard and helps you make faster progress and reach even higher standards, in reading, writing and mathematics
- all your teachers improve the way they keep track of what you have learned and check whether you have done well enough
- teachers who are involved in checking how well you are doing in class look at exactly what you have learned.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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