

Marlpool Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112562
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378511
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Ackigoz
Acting Headteacher	Lynn Stanley
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2009
School address	Prospect Road Marlpool Heanor DE75 7NF
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Introduction

Inspection team

Doris Bell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed four members of staff during seven lessons, covering approximately three and a half hours of teaching. As well as observing full or part lessons, the inspector spent time observing sessions where pupils were learning letters and sounds. She also heard pupils read, watched them being taught in small groups and individually, analysed their work, and discussed their learning and school life with them. Meetings were held with senior and middle managers, and a representative of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaires (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including information relating to the attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils, the school improvement plan, and evidence of monitoring and evaluation. She also spoke to parents and carers, and analysed 45 parental questionnaire responses, together with the responses to the questionnaires returned by staff.

Information about the school

In this very small school, pupils are taught in two classes, one for Reception-aged children and one for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school is part of a soft federation with the nearby junior school. It shares the same governing body but it is responsible for its own budget. It has an acting headteacher, who took up post in January 2012. It has achieved an Anti-Bullying award and Healthy Schools status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It has successfully sustained good achievement and above-average attainment over time, and continues to do so now. It is not outstanding because assessment information is not always used to full effect, and literacy and numeracy skills are not promoted consistently well at all times.
- Because numbers are small, skills on entry to Reception vary from year to year. Typically, they are broadly as expected for the children’s ages, although literacy skills, especially writing, are usually underdeveloped. All groups of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good. In most lessons, teachers’ questioning, and the way they help pupils to extend their answers, result in successful learning. However, reliance on worksheets for writing, and on a published scheme for mathematics, sometimes limits the amount of progress pupils can make in those two areas, and marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve.
- Pupils behave well. They and their parents and carers report that behaviour is always good. Pupils successfully learn to care for and respect others, and they know how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. They state confidently that ‘everyone is kind’ and they fully trust the staff to help them should they have any concerns.
- Good leadership and management by the acting headteacher have ensured that teaching is led well and that teachers’ performance is managed well to ensure the pupils’ continued good progress. The staff are a cohesive team, receptive to advice and eager to implement it, for example, as a result of attendance at courses, visits to other schools, and monitoring of their work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Secure even better progress in writing by limiting the use of worksheets so that pupils can write freely and at length more often to enhance their writing skills.
- In mathematics, match pupils' learning more closely to their individual needs rather than to the scheme of work, by giving them more opportunities to use their mathematical skills in different contexts and different subjects.
- Refine assessment procedures and build on the work already done to involve pupils in them by:
 - ensuring that all work is dated, and all marking matches that of the best in showing pupils what they need to do to improve
 - using assessment information more effectively in planning so that work is always closely matched to pupils' individual needs.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All parents and carers say progress is good. Pupils echo these views and inspection findings match them. Parents and carers say the school 'has put all that it can' into helping their children. Reception children are well prepared for their work in Year 1 and by the time pupils leave Year 2, attainment is above average by one to two terms in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are enthusiastic readers who willingly discuss favourite books and authors. They read regularly at home and at school and use a good range of techniques to help them read new words. They demonstrated their skills well as they read with their teachers and with the inspector.

Pupils enjoy writing. Reception children happily added captions to the sequences they created in a mathematics session, and pupils in Year 1 were eager to write sentences using the list of words they had drawn up to describe the feelings of characters in the 'Rainbow Fish' story. By Year 2, sentences are well-constructed, spelling and punctuation are usually accurate, and more-able pupils write more complex sentences using, for example, a range of connectives. Despite this, writing tasks too often consist of completing worksheets rather than encouraging pupils to write freely and at length. This is particularly the case in different subjects, but is also evident in some literacy work. Similarly, progress in mathematics is sometimes restricted by the completion of too many exercises, such as those in the scheme books, and too few opportunities for pupils to use and consolidate their mathematical skills in practical problem-solving activities, or in other subjects.

Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are met well and, by the time they are in Year 2, the gap between their learning and that of other pupils is narrower than is found nationally. The gap between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils varies from year to year, although they too make good progress overall relative to their starting points.

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Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. All who did said that teaching is good, and they are right. Parents and carers are 'extremely confident in this school team', 'really appreciate their [the teachers'] hard work', and praise the school highly for the good start it gives their children. Teaching and the curriculum make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are successfully taught to heed the feelings of others and to realise that actions have consequences. This happened, for example, in a role-play session, where they explored a text that showed what one person says or does can make another happy or sad. The effective teaching of early reading skills, and of linking letters and sounds, is improving reading in both classes.

Lessons are often imaginative and sometimes lead to sophisticated learning. This was noted in a Year 1 session where pupils were reviewing what they had learned about magnetism. It was clear that their learning had moved on considerably from saying that metal objects 'stick' to magnets, to understanding and using the words 'attract' and 'repel' to describe what happens.

Recent changes in assessment systems have made teachers more aware of the need to adjust planning and lessons to meet pupils' emerging needs. In one mathematics session, pupils became confused when checking the weights on food packages because the gross weight differed from the net weight on the package. The teacher recognised the confusion, adjusted the task, and pupils made satisfactory progress by the end of the lesson. Nevertheless, there is more to do to ensure that assessment information is always used effectively in planning, and that marking always shows pupils how to improve. There are some examples of excellent marking, but they are not consistent, and some work is not dated, making it more difficult to follow pupils' progress over time through their work.

Teaching successfully enables pupils to develop the skills to learn for themselves, and pupils are becoming increasingly able to assess their own work. Pupils are being taught right from Reception the importance of persevering in order to reach targets. In Reception, children show good ability to work and play independently. However, the occasional lack of timely intervention in independent activities results in some missed opportunities to correct errors, record learning or move it on as it occurs.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Virtually all parents and carers say that behaviour is always good and all say the school keeps their children safe. Pupils say the same, and they all work and play together well. Although they admit to squabbling and falling out occasionally, they report that there is no bullying of any kind. The blank incident books bear this out. Pupils are very clear about what to do should there ever be any. They trust the staff implicitly to help them. Mini-leaders and play leaders take their roles seriously, explaining how they help pupils who might feel lonely, or organise games that make

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lunchtimes good social occasions. The pupils' good behaviour, enthusiasm, and eagerness to do well contribute greatly to their good progress, as do their high levels of attendance and punctuality. Occasionally, pupils become restless, usually because they are not moved on to their tasks quickly enough. At these times, some cease to pay attention and are then not sure what to do when they do move into groups.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Discussions about books such as 'The Red Man and The Green Man' demonstrated the pupils' good understanding of how a story can contain an important message, in this case about road safety. Pupils are reflective and caring. They reach out to others, for example, raising money for different charities at home and abroad. They have an appropriately developing understanding of the range and diversity of culture in Britain and the wider world through, for example, their work in religious education, and links with schools in India and Kenya.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school. She has brought the governing body and all staff on board to help realise it, and staff welcome their increasing involvement in decision making. The school's self-evaluation is well-founded if over-cautious in some areas. The revised school improvement plan has set the right priorities for the school. They are reflected in the performance management objectives for staff, which include a focus on using assessment information better to improve achievement further. The governing body holds the school to account well. It uses the federation effectively, for example, to ensure that the infant and junior schools have a better understanding of each other so that they can ensure pupils' learning is continuous at the point of transfer.

Professional development is being used well to improve teaching and learning, and checks are in place to ensure it has an impact on pupils' progress. The good provision in place for pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs is well led and managed. The pupils' learning is broken down into small, specific steps that, particularly with help from support staff and external agencies, ensure their good progress. Carefully considered staff deployment ensures that job sharing is well organised to provide continuous learning for all pupils. The school has made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection. Alongside the pupils' continued good achievement, all of the foregoing demonstrates a strong capacity for further improvement.

Safeguarding requirements are all met and there are no areas of concern. The school promotes equality of opportunity well, by ensuring that no-one is discriminated against, although there is more to do to ensure all pupils always do as well as they can in writing and mathematics. The curriculum provides many exciting opportunities for pupils, including through visits, visitors and different clubs and activities, and it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It does not ensure that basic skills are promoted equally well in all subjects, however, although work is under way to tackle this. The school's excellent partnership with parents and

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carers is evident in the overwhelming and positive response to the inspection questionnaire.

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).

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 Marlpool Infant School, Heanor, DE75 7NF

Thank you ever so much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. As you know, I came to find out how well you are doing, and I am pleased to tell you that I found you go to a good school, where all of you are making good progress. I was particularly impressed by how well you could talk to me about your work, especially your reading. It was good to see how much you enjoy reading and that you already know how much being able to read well will help with your other learning. The conversations I had with you showed me that you feel very safe in school and that you know how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. You clearly behave well, care for and help each other in class and in the playground. Those of you who are mini-leaders or monitors certainly do your jobs well and help to keep the school a happy place for everyone.

All of the staff want you to do really well, and so I checked for anything that might help them in this. As a result, I have asked them to do the following:

- give you more opportunities to write for yourselves, and make sure that all of your writing is always marked well
- give you more opportunities to solve problems in mathematics, and make sure that what each one of you is doing is what you need to do to make progress
- make sure that your work is always dated and marked well, that you get time to do corrections, and that teachers always use everything they know about how well you are doing to help you do even better.

You can help in all of this by continuing to listen carefully to the adults who work with you, and by trying to do your best at all times. I hope you will always enjoy school and learning as much as you do now, and I wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
Lead inspector

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