

Marsden Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119176
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358509
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Dorothy MacInnes
Headteacher	Mrs Gemma Whaling
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2008
School address	Percy Street Nelson Lancashire BB9 0BE
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed 15 teachers and held discussions with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 111 responses to questionnaires submitted by parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- The effect with which the school has worked to raise attainment, especially in English and mathematics.
- Whether there is sufficient challenge for pupils who are more able and for girls in mathematics.
- The extent to which the school has improved marking to better involve pupils in developing their learning.
- The impact of changes in the senior leadership team over the last year.

Information about the school

Marsden is a large school compared to most primary schools nationally. It has gained a number of awards, including the Activemark, and has achieved Healthy School status. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average. Almost all pupils are of Asian British heritage and a minority is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. It is designated as an extended school that provides a range of activities beyond the school day to meet the needs of its pupils, parents and carers, and the wider community. There is a daily breakfast club run by the school. There have been significant changes in the structure of the senior leadership team over the last year.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, has initiated improvements in teaching and learning that have accelerated pupils' progress and raised their attainment. The governing body and leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, because self-evaluation is accurate. It has correctly identified the most urgent priorities for improvement and put in place effective action to address the school's needs. There are excellent partnerships between the school and outside agencies, other schools and key individuals locally. These enable the school to provide opportunities for all pupils to succeed in their learning and to enjoy a range of activities that might otherwise prove difficult to offer. As a result of all these advances, the school has a good capacity to sustain these improvements in the future.

Pupils make good progress and attain standards that are broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This shows good achievement from attainment on entry, which is generally below that expected and low in language and social skills. Though teaching is good overall, there are inconsistencies between classes, which prevent standards from being even higher. Sometimes lack of precision in the use of assessment information limits the challenge for the more-able pupils. Moreover, there are insufficient opportunities overall for pupils to develop their spoken language and extend their vocabulary, through such activities as paired and group discussion. This limits their ability to express their ideas clearly and imaginatively when speaking and writing. In mathematics, it hinders their powers of reasoning and ability to explain the strategies used to solve problems. Consequently, standards in English and mathematics are average rather than above national levels.

Excellent care, guidance and support ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils. It is a major contributory factor in pupils' outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and their excellent adoption of a healthy lifestyle. The school has worked successfully to improve attendance and it is now average. Marking has been developed since the last inspection and gives clear guidance on how to improve. However, teachers do not give pupils enough time to reflect on and respond to this guidance. As a result, pupils' skills in assessing for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve are underdeveloped. The curriculum is rich and rewarding, with pupils having many opportunities to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment to above average levels in English and mathematics, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop and use their spoken language across the curriculum

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- ensuring that pupils who are more able are suitably challenged consistently throughout the school.
- Improve the use of assessment in order to further increase rates of progress, by:
 - providing more opportunities to respond to teachers' marking
 - involving pupils in the assessment of their own work, so they have a better understanding of how they need to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning contributes positively to the good progress they make. They enjoy their activities and are keen to do well. Pupils are particularly engaged in their work when challenged to solve practical problems. This was observed in a science lesson for pupils in Year 4, in which they were making simple electrical circuits that incorporated a switch. The school has successfully improved the engagement of girls in mathematics over the last year and now they make the same good progress as boys. The progress of the more-able pupils in some classes is sometimes limited by a lack of sufficient challenge. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make good progress. This is because they receive regular good quality support in small groups and individually from a teacher or teaching assistant.

The development of skills for the future is often good in terms of personal qualities but satisfactory overall owing to the inconsistencies between classes in challenge and the involvement of pupils in discussion and self-evaluation. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, such as being a member of the school council. They work hard to raise money for good causes, both locally and in the wider community. As an example, over the last few years pupils have raised enough money to enable two new schools to be built in Uganda. Pupils talk very knowledgeably about how to make healthy eating choices and clearly know, in detail, what might be an unsafe situation.

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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 to teaching has led to a better pace in lessons and pupils being more engaged in their work. Good subject knowledge means teachers are able to enthuse and effectively challenge most groups of pupils, so their progress is good. Nevertheless, in some classes assessment information is not always used effectively to set the next steps for learning, nor are pupils given sufficient opportunity to evaluate for themselves how they might improve. Teachers use a variety of resources, especially interactive whiteboards to capture pupils' imagination and maintain their interest. At times, teachers spend too long on explanations and not enough time on developing pupils' spoken language through discussion. Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants mean that pupils' particular needs are usually met well.

Many visitors, visits and after school activities bring excitement to learning and inspire pupils to try their best. Members of the school council talked with enthusiasm about their forthcoming visit to the Houses of Parliament in London. Planned opportunities for pupils to develop and use their spoken language across the curriculum are underdeveloped. The curriculum fosters pupils' personal, social and emotional development well and contributes to their politeness, good conduct and friendliness. The strong provision for promoting healthy lifestyles is shown in the award of the Activemark and in gaining Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The school provides an exceptionally nurturing and caring environment where pupils feel safe. All pupils, including the most vulnerable, are very well supported during their time in school. Transition arrangements run smoothly through the school so pupils are prepared for the next stages of their education and development. The breakfast club has proved effective in supporting pupils, including those who are vulnerable, and improving their attendance to an average level. Good attention is paid to ensuring those who have a planned absence do not fall behind. Parents and carers are very positive about the care that staff provide for their children.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have quickly gelled themselves into an effective team that gives clear direction and has harnessed the enthusiasm of all staff. Consequently, morale is high and there is a strong shared commitment in building upon the successes of the last year. The governing body provides good support to the school and they are not afraid to ask questions to help improve provision for the pupils and to help them understand pupils' achievement. The school is highly committed to working in partnership with others and often takes a leading role in a variety of activities. The school works effectively to promote equality of opportunity, as is shown in the way it has successfully narrowed the gap in girls and boys attainment in mathematics. This aspect of provision is not outstanding because pupils do not make consistently good progress in all classes. There is a thorough awareness of safeguarding issues among the governing body and all staff. The school works well with a range of key agencies to ensure pupils are safe. Leaders promote community cohesion well, particularly in school and the local community. They are keen to develop it further by building on the established links with Uganda to extend pupils' understanding of the way of life in other countries. The school's engagement with parents and carers is enhanced by the activities provided in its role as an extended school.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a safe and stimulating environment for children. Welfare requirements are fully met and great care and attention are paid to the health, safety and well-being of all children. They make good progress, with adults working hard to develop, in particular, their language and social skills, which are low on entry. Children are happy, well behaved and enjoy their activities. They understand the daily routines, settle well and are beginning to work independently. They get on well with one another and quickly learn the importance of obeying rules for the safety of everyone. The balance between activities that are led by the teacher and those chosen by the children themselves is good. However, the activities in which children can take part in independently of adults are not always planned effectively to build upon the initial adult input. Staff work successfully to support a smooth transition into school by making home visits prior to children starting school. Engagement with parents and carers is good and they are kept regularly informed about their children's progress. Leadership and management are good and have improved record keeping procedures to give a clearer picture of the progress that children make. The leader has rightly identified a key area for improvement is to ensure children who are more able are always challenged effectively.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Most were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical, 'I am very pleased at my child's progress. The staff are committed and motivated.' and, 'My children are very happy at the school.' A very small minority of parents and carers do not agree that the school met their child's particular needs or that they make enough progress. Inspection evidence indicates that the school works hard to meet pupils' particular needs and that pupils make good progress overall. Nevertheless, leaders rightly acknowledge that the more able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marsden Community Primary School 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 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 413 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	47	58	52	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	52	51	46	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	41	54	49	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	42	48	43	9	8	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	52	47	48	43	6	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	40	53	48	9	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	41	57	51	5	5	0	0
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)	40	36	58	52	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	37	50	45	10	9	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	46	46	41	8	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	35	59	53	8	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	51	46	48	43	6	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	48	43	39	11	10	0	0

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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marsden Community Primary School, Nelson BB9 0BE

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is good and that:

- you reach average standards because you make good progress in your work
- your behaviour is good and you work hard in lessons
- the extent to which you feel safe and the way you are adopting a healthy lifestyle are outstanding
- in your questionnaires, you say you learn a lot in lessons
- the headteacher, staff and the governing body are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Provide more opportunities for you to develop your spoken language across the curriculum and ensure those of you who find work easy are always challenged to think hard.
- Give you more time to respond to teachers' marking comments and improve your ability in assessing for yourselves how well you are doing and how to improve.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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