

Marshbrook First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124148
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380817
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Smith
Headteacher	Sue O'Neill and Dawn Spiers
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons taught by six teachers. Meetings were held with groups of staff and members of the governing body. Discussions were held with groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including pupils' work, minutes of meetings, progress monitoring records and school policies. They scrutinised 58 questionnaires returned from parents and carers, 10 from staff and 48 from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are the higher attaining pupils reaching the levels they should?
- What are the key strengths within the Early Years Foundation Stage?
- What opportunities currently exist for pupils to meet and learn about those from different faiths and cultures from their own?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than average and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average and very few of these have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Recent awards obtained by the school include Healthy School Status and the Dyslexia Friendly School Full Status. A privately managed nursery operates in the school and was subject to a separate inspection. The school is led by two co-headteachers.

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

Marshbrook First School provides a good education. Children get off to a flying start in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage where they make excellent progress in their personal and academic skills. Pupils make good progress from the start of Year 1 to the time they leave at the end of Year 4, when their attainment is above the level expected for pupils' ages. Teaching is good throughout the school with an increasing amount being outstanding. Teachers make good use of data about past performance to ensure appropriate work is set for all groups of pupils. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are well supported in class by enthusiastic and well trained teaching assistants. The marking of pupils' work is regular and generally tells pupils how to improve further. However, there is very little evidence that the advice they are given is followed up by pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of what levels they are working at but are not always given time at the start of the next lesson to discuss the comments made by teachers during the marking of pupils' work.

Pupils say they enjoy school and feel extremely safe. This is consistent with the views of parents and carers, and of the inspectors, that behaviour within the school is outstanding. As a result of pupils enjoying school together with an excellent partnership between the school and parents and carers, pupils' attendance is high. The care guidance and support for pupils is outstanding as is the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures. Whilst pupils' moral and social development is outstanding they have few opportunities, through either visiting other schools or adults from other cultures coming into school, to meet and learn about people from different communities and backgrounds to develop a good understanding of other faiths and cultures. There has been good progress on the actions from the previous inspection. The co-headteachers work exceptionally well as a team and their evaluation of school performance is very accurate. All the strengths identified during the previous inspection have been consolidated and several, including behaviour, attendance and care guidance and support, have improved to outstanding. The improvements to provision and outcomes confirm that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work, within Key Stage 2, consistently informs pupils what they need to do to get to the next level in their learning and that they are given time in lessons to respond to the advice.

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- Increase the opportunities for pupils to meet and learn about people from different backgrounds to support their learning of other faiths and cultures.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills at the expected levels for their age. They make good progress to reach above age-expected levels of attainment by the time they leave Year 4. Achievement is good because progress is good, attainment is above average and pupils enjoy school. There is no difference in the attainment and progress of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their lower starting points. Pupils’ enjoyment was evident in a Year 4 mathematics lesson about weight. The lesson started with a ‘brain gym’ activity which they all joined in enthusiastically. The pace of learning was high and pupils moved swiftly between periods of direct teaching and group activities which were very clearly explained. Achievement was outstanding in this lesson because the activities matched the pupils’ abilities whilst providing challenge. They all were fully engaged in their learning and their attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made the same progress because of very effective support from the teaching assistant and the class teacher throughout the lesson. More-able pupils were able to make the progress they should through personalised learning activities. The excellent behaviour is a consistent feature throughout the school.

The questionnaires completed by pupils show that pupils feel exceptionally safe in the school. Pupils feel confident that they can talk to an adult if they have any concerns because there are very good relationships throughout the school. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good with outstanding features in moral and social development. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through being ‘POW WOWs’ (the school council equivalent), members of the eco committee and playground monitors. They make a good contribution to the local community through activities such as the choir singing in the market place at Christmas and taking part in the Parish Council ‘Victorian Fair’. They support the wider community through charity fund raising. Attendance at over 96% is high as a result of a determined effort by the school.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account:	2
	2

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. They use assessment data well to ensure appropriate work is set. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is monitored closely and extra intervention is put in place where needed. The teaching assistants have been given specific training to ensure they can provide very effective support to all pupils including the small number of pupils who have English as an additional language. Activities set by teachers also give the more-able pupils opportunities to extend their learning. The setting of targets for pupils is well established and pupils are actively involved in both self assessment and peer assessment. The marking of pupils' work is consistently thorough. However teachers do not always ensure that pupils have followed up their advice and they do not allocate time within lessons for them to do so.

The curriculum supports pupils' academic skills and their personal development well. It is broad and balanced and planned to provide for pupils of all abilities and learning styles. Pupils are involved in the planning so that the topics chosen are ones that really interest them. There are good cross-curricular links, for example literacy links are well established in the topic work and teachers frequently use French within lessons. A wide range of partnerships supports the curriculum, including good links with the other schools in the area. Transition arrangements to the middle school are well established. A wide range of procedures is in place to promote improved attendance and these have been very effective. Procedures to promote good behaviour are well established and have led to the present outstanding behaviour. Excellent procedures are in place to support the welfare of pupils and health and safety is a high priority. There is good training provided for teaching assistants to maximise their skills. The progress monitoring systems are excellent and are used to provide well-targeted support. The excellent links with families and the good links

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

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with agencies and the local authority contribute to outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

Leaders at all levels share the same vision of providing the best education for all pupils within a caring environment. Systems to monitor and improve progress are well established. Leaders have provided good support to teachers in enabling them to develop their skills. The use of assessment within the classroom is fully embedded and an increasing proportion of teaching is outstanding. Governance is good. Members of the governing body provide good support to the school and share the same vision as the senior leaders. They provide good support and challenge. Statutory requirements are met.

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination is good. There is no sign of discrimination within the school and every pupil has the same opportunities to take on responsibilities in the classroom and to join in other school activities. All groups of pupils make good progress. Safeguarding arrangements at the time of the inspection were outstanding with excellent site security. Records of the suitability of all staff to work in the school are up to date. A comprehensive range of risk assessments is in place and regularly reviewed. Parents, carers and pupils are consulted through questionnaires about safeguarding issues and they are given feedback about actions taken in response to their suggestions. Staff training is regular to ensure they are aware of current safeguarding procedures including e-safety. Appropriate staff are trained in safer recruitment and in first aid. The support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is exemplary, as are the records of meetings with external agencies. The actions to support community cohesion are based on an initial audit. The cohesion within school is excellent and the small numbers of pupils who come from different backgrounds are fully integrated. The cohesion with the local community is very strong and the school is reaching out to the more distant communities by developing links with other schools, although these are at an early stage of development. As part of this cohesion the school has developed an outstanding partnership with parents and carers. The open door policy is fundamental to the partnership and parents and carers are very pleased with what the school provides and how accessible teachers and leaders are. Communications systems have been improved with a text system in

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place and a new web site about to be launched to give parents and carers easier access to information. There are regular questionnaires to parents and carers, a very active parent, carer and teacher association and a forum for parents and carers is being set up. The success of this partnership is illustrated by the high degree of satisfaction shown in the questionnaires.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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 Reception classroom is a spacious and well resourced area where children are happy and secure, enabling them to make excellent progress in all aspects of their development. The teacher and teaching assistant are experienced and knowledgeable. They work very well as team and ensure that other adults who support the children are given very clear guidance and support. There is a priority given to the welfare of the pupils and the key-worker system is well developed so that all the children have a close trusting relationship with at least one adult. All of the welfare requirements for Early Years Foundation Stage provision are met and many exceeded. A daily check is carried out on all equipment before it is used. Leadership and management are outstanding because the coordinator has a complete understanding of what is required to provide for the children and ensures that planning ensures effective support and learning throughout the day. Induction arrangements are excellent and children settle very quickly into routines. Communications with parents and carers are excellent and the vast majority of parents and carers made positive comments about the provision. There are strong links with external agencies to ensure that the needs of all children are met. Close monitoring by adults ensures that extra help is provided at the earliest opportunity. Teaching is outstanding, ensuring that the children who initially have skills lower than expected leave Reception with their skills at or above expected levels for their age.

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Children are polite and friendly and all behave extremely well. There is close liaison with the on-site private nursery so that children are prepared for moving into Reception.

Within the classroom, children are kept motivated and engaged with a wide range of learning opportunities. There is a very good balance between teacher-led activities and ones the children choose themselves. They have good access to the outdoor area which, although limited in size, is used well to extend the classroom learning. The curriculum covers all the areas of learning and is well adapted to meet the needs of individual children. Children enjoy their learning and are proud of the high quality work they produce. Regular assessment systems ensure that teachers set appropriate work and share the progress information with parents and carers.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires were pleased with what the school provides. The proportion who agreed with the questions was much higher than in most schools. A few parents and carers made written comments. Most were supportive comments such as, 'Staff make learning a fun experience' and 'The teaching and administration staff are very professional, approachable and caring'. A very few had individual concerns but they did not follow a pattern.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marshbrook First 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	72	15	26	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	67	18	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	31	53	25	43	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	55	25	43	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	67	18	31	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	33	57	24	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	55	26	45	0	0	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)	31	53	23	40	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	33	57	24	41	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	48	24	41	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	40	26	45	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	28	48	24	41	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	64	20	34	1	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marshbrook First School, Stafford, ST19 5BA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at the work you do. Your school is giving you a good education.

There are many things we admire about your school and these are a few of them.

- Those of you in the Reception class are getting an excellent start to your education.
- You all enjoy school and make good progress as a result of good teaching.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you all feel very safe.
- The adults in school look after you exceptionally well and have ensured that there are good arrangements to keep you safe throughout the day.
- The school and your parents and carers work extremely well together and as well as supporting your education this has led to high attendance rates.

These are the things we have asked the school to do to make it even better.

- Ensure that when teachers mark your work they always tell you how to improve and give you time in lessons to follow up their advice.
- Provide more opportunities for you to meet people from different backgrounds to your own.

All of you can all help by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood
Lead inspector

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