

Marsden Community Primary School

Percy Street, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 0BE

Inspection dates 3–4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Given their starting points, pupils achieve well to reach average standards at Year 6.
- Teaching is good, with enjoyable lessons. Reading, writing and basic mathematics are taught well. Sport and science are taught particularly well.
- Pupils benefit from high levels of care from all adults, with a dedicated team of staff supporting pastoral development. This contributes to pupils' good behaviour and safety.
- The school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity is shown in the excellent support provided to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils report that learning is fun. Imaginative events such as the recent 'Alien Visitor' inspire learning. An extensive range of visits and visitors broadens the pupils' understanding of the wider world.
- Of the parents who expressed a view, all would recommend the school to others. They appreciate the overall quality of education provided and the way the school supports their home values and faith.
- The headteacher and senior leaders display care, compassion and a strong ambition for the school. Staff are very well managed, professional skills and pupils' achievement consistently improve as a result of leaders' actions.
- A strong governing body supports the school and sets high expectations for its performance. The school is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The needs of the most-able pupils are not consistently met. Pupils are not given enough scope to become independent learners or to use computer technology to support learning. Pupils are not guided enough about their longer-term targets for improvement.
- Communication with parents about pupils' progress, their targets and how some basic skills are taught is not fully effective.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were conducted with governors, the staff team and four groups of pupils. In addition, a meeting was arranged with a representative of the local authority.
- Information from the scrutiny of a range of school documentation added to inspection judgements. This included the details relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and records of pupils' standards and progress.
- The views of parents were gathered by meeting 21 parents in two meetings and conducting two separate conversations with parents by telephone. An analysis was made of 10 responses posted on the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, an evaluation was made of the recent questionnaire of parents' views carried out by the school.
- An analysis of 30 staff questionnaires, together with an ongoing dialogue with teachers and teaching assistants, gave the inspectors an insight into the views of the staff.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gillian Hunter	Additional Inspector
Gillian Burrow	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Marsden is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of Asian Pakistani heritage and the proportion with English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement or special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is average. The pupil premium funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes in teaching staff. There are four newly qualified teachers.
- The school provides a daily free breakfast club and offers a wide range of after-school activities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that achievement improves further by:
 - establishing among teachers and teaching assistants the skills required to ensure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged
 - developing a clearer approach in the school to developing the skills of pupils in working independently, for example, by building the pupils' capacity to apply their basic skills in mathematics to complete mathematical investigations
 - increasing the use of computer technology in lessons to support pupils' learning.
- Improving the quality of communication with parents so that they can be even more supportive at home by:
 - more frequently giving parents details about their child's progress and targets for improvement
 - working with parents to improve the way they are informed about the methods used to teach some basic skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From low starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in the command of English, good progress occurs across the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with English as an additional language do as well as others. Given the pupils' starting points, this represents good achievement.
- In the Reception class, the proportion of children working at a good level of development increases at a good rate but by the start of Year 1, levels are below the national expectations. In Key Stage 1, progress has been accelerating in recent years and is good. The gap between the attainment of pupils in Year 2 and the national average is narrowing but standards are typically below average.
- Between Years 2 and 6, there has been a marked improvement in writing in the last two years. The proportion of pupils gaining the standards expected for 11-year-olds in both English and mathematics has increased quickly in the last three years.
- Across the school, the large majority of pupils develop confidence in reading, become capable writers and acquire the essential knowledge that underpins mathematics. The pupils' ability to independently apply their mathematical skills to a wide range of contexts, however, and employ computer technology in lessons is underdeveloped and holds back the progress of some pupils.
- The progress of pupils eligible for funding through the pupil premium is good. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than that of other pupils in the school and similar pupils nationally. This success is due to the effective use of assessment and well-planned deployment of other adults' support. It is also a positive indication of the school's successful promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress because of the very effective leadership of their provision. The performance of the most able pupils is improving. In 2013, two pupils attained standards that far exceeded the expectations for their age. The school understands, however, that not enough attention has been given to making sure that the most-able pupils consistently achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils' involvement in sport is good and enhances their health and well-being. Access to excellent sports facilities in the school, the appointment of a full-time sports coach and the opportunity to attend a wide range of after-school sports clubs give all pupils a good chance of success. The Primary School Sport funding is used to enable the sports coach to provide staff a better knowledge of the best practice in physical education.

The quality of teaching is good

- There are many strengths in teaching and some exemplary practice. All teachers generate in pupils an enthusiasm for learning and ensure that learning proceeds at a good pace. Adults are warm and responsive to pupils' needs and give learners the confidence to have a go without fearing failure.
- In the very best lessons, the pupils' curiosity and natural desire to learn are harnessed. Practical, hands-on approaches are particularly effective. Year 4 pupils, for example, were captivated as they explored owl pellets and discovered an array of tiny bones, which they matched to those of the human skeleton.
- Communication and language are taught well. The deficit that many pupils have in English is very much at the forefront of staff thinking. Close attention is given to building pupils' vocabulary and extending their skills in speaking English. As pupils' confidence in English increases, their skills are transferred to reading and writing. Pupils have many opportunities to read regularly and write, not only in English, but also in other subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils' basic skills are taught effectively. The achievement of some pupils is held back because there is not enough attention given to them independently applying their skills to

solve mathematical investigations.

- Teachers and teaching assistants are very good role models for pupils. They form excellent relationships, encourage highly positive attitudes to learning and promote meaningful friendships.
- Teachers are very aware of the necessity to identify and meet the needs of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding and also those with disabilities and special educational needs. Effective support is provided for any pupil falling behind. In mathematics in Key Stage 1, for example, some pupils receive excellent one-to-one support by a highly skilled teacher, which enables individuals to understand essential ideas.
- Teachers know the individual strengths and weaknesses of each pupil, but where lessons are not as effective, the needs of the most able pupils are at times only partially met. Teachers' plans are not always sharp enough in ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged, and computer technology is not employed enough to promote independent learning.
- Marking is regular. It offers pupils a clear evaluation of how well they have achieved in a lesson, together with how they might improve their work. Pupils' progress is hindered, however, because they are not always given clear guidance about their longer-term targets for improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, parents and staff are virtually unanimous that incidents of bullying are non-existent. This is testimony to the efforts of the staff team and families to give pupils values of respect and consideration. In lessons and around the school, pupils are polite and thoughtful towards others. Pupils have a very good understanding of different forms of bullying.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they thrive on learning new skills and facts. Despite this, pupils are not confident in using their initiative in learning. This important step to satisfy their thirst for learning is not yet reached.
- Parents are very appreciative of the way the school supports their home beliefs and works with them to complement their faith. A strength in the school is the way that the school encourages harmony in the community. Pupils develop a good understanding of the views of others, including other religions, by working with local mosques and representatives of other religions.
- The views of pupils are valued. The school council influences decisions in school and in the locality through the Pendle Parliament, in which representatives of the school meet other pupils from other schools. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, for example, as playground buddies. They have unselfishly raised funds for others less fortunate than themselves, for example, through Sports Aid and by supporting the Muslim Global Relief appeal to provide water to deprived communities in Asia.
- Pupils are safety-conscious. They are aware of the risks in life posed by roads, railways and fire and are given much guidance about the risks of using computer technology, including social network sites.
- Attendance has improved rapidly and is now average. This is partly because of the sterling efforts of the school attendance officer to work with families to diminish unnecessary absence, and partly because of the strategies of the school to reward regular attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are skilfully building a strong staff team, all of whom have strengths and are willing to improve and learn. The senior leaders provide clear direction and set increasingly high expectations for all involved in the school.
- Very effective systems for checking on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils lead to pertinent areas for school improvement. The staff team are very clear about their roles and constant staff development builds the skills required for each to play their part in the school's development. The performance of teachers is regularly reviewed in accordance with requirements.
- The school is dedicated to promoting equality of opportunity and removing discrimination. This is evident in the very successful management of the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and also those known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding.
- Astute deployment of staff by the headteacher values teachers' individual talents. For example, an excellent sports coach enables high-quality sport to be provided. Pupils and families who are vulnerable due to their circumstances benefit from the support of a dedicated team of trained staff.
- A strong relationship exists between the school and parents. The parent support adviser is an excellent link between home and school. Some parents, however, express the view that there is not enough communication with them about their child's progress and targets. Some also feel insufficiently well informed about the methods used in school to teach their children. Inspectors concur with these views.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum. It offers a wide range of activities that broaden pupils' outlook. This involves good use of educational visits and visitors, access to high-quality sports programmes in excellent facilities, as well as developing secure skills of communication, literacy and mathematics. However, provision for computer technology is only adequate and restricts pupils' independent learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Many pupils benefit from the popular, well-run breakfast club.
- The local authority is very effective in its support. It offers a wide range of training for all staff wishing to improve their skills or take up promotions, gives excellent analyses of the school's assessment data and offers very effective guidance through its school advisers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very involved with the school. It has a thorough process for checking on how well the school is performing by analysing assessment data, taking the views of others, such as the local authority, visiting the school and being involved in its events. Under the leadership of a strong Chair of the Governing Body, the performance of staff, including the headteacher, is carefully checked to make sure any increases in salary are justified. All income is carefully spent. Governors are very aware of the way the pupil premium funding is used and its impact on those pupils eligible for such funding. They are also aware of the impact of other funds, for example, of the recent Primary School Sport funding. Governors make sure that all aspects of safeguarding meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119176
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426298

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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy MacInnes
Headteacher	Gemma Whaling
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2010
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