



# Marshlands Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114442  
**Local Authority** East Sussex  
**Inspection number** 289914  
**Inspection dates** 28–29 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Eileen Chadwick

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Marshfoot Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Hailsham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		BN27 2PH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 841420
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	172	<b>Fax number</b>	01323 440139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Janet Olesen
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Kavanagh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 April 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28–29 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 289914
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves an area where there are significant areas of deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time is above average. The number of pupils on roll has dropped over the past three years. Following a period of significant disruption to the leadership and management of the school, a new headteacher took up post at the start of this term.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

The school's effectiveness is unsatisfactory. Progress has been too slow since the previous inspection as standards remain exceptionally low in much of the school. The new headteacher has identified a clear way forward and has already improved pupils' behaviour. He is taking action to improve systems for raising standards and for managing the school. However, much remains to be done. Other senior leaders' roles are insufficiently developed: they are not having enough impact on evaluating and improving pupils' standards and achievement. Teachers have not received enough support and training to keep them up to date and this is preventing them teaching to their full capacity.

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. This is because the quality of teaching is uneven and unsatisfactory overall. When children join the school their standards are well below those expected: children's language and communication skills, as well as personal skills, are often underdeveloped. However, because teaching is good, children make good progress in Nursery and Reception and, by the time they begin Year 1, standards are closer to those expected. However, the work pupils are given in Years 1 and 2 does not build upon their earlier attainment. By Year 2, standards are exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is not good enough to raise standards, which remain exceptionally low in English and mathematics. At least one third of the pupils in each class have learning difficulties. Their progress is unsatisfactory in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils say they enjoy learning but their attendance is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, although a minority do not have positive attitudes to learning. This often reflects inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Teachers make sure activities interest pupils but there is not enough direct teaching of reading and writing skills. Occasionally, pupils are not managed adequately.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. It is practical and the early steps in literacy and numeracy are taught well. In the rest of the school there are some good opportunities for art and sport. However, the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because of weak provision in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are cared for and learn how to be healthy and keep themselves safe. However, academic assessment and guidance is unsatisfactory.

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The appointment of a new headteacher is an important step forward but discontinuity of school leaders in the recent past has limited the development of other senior roles. This has restricted management's impact on raising achievement. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are weak. In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 6.
- Improve the quality of teaching and eliminate unsatisfactory teaching by improving assessment and ensuring work is well matched to pupils' needs.
- Improve school leaders' ability to bring about improvement, and the systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' achievement.
- Improve pupils' attendance by implementing more rigorous procedures for raising attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average; but by Year 6 standards are exceptionally low in English and mathematics.

Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. Their progress is particularly good in Reception in reading because of strong teaching of speaking and early reading skills. By the time pupils begin Year 1, standards are closer to those expected, though still below expectations in speaking, reading and mathematics. Writing is significantly below average.

Standards in Year 2 are exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics. Many pupils in Years 1 and 2 have inadequate word-building skills. Their phonics understanding is weak and they do not always recognise enough common words. Their handwriting is not well formed. It is untidy and spelling and punctuation are weak. Pupils are not heard reading often enough and basic skills are not systematically taught. In mathematics, pupils' progress slows because work is often too hard or easy.

Results in Year 6 national curriculum tests in 2006 were very weak. They were well below average in English and science, and below average in mathematics. However, in English, standards were exceptionally low for boys in reading and writing. Over the past few years, standards have often been exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science for Year 6 pupils. Pupils make inadequate progress in Years 3 to 6. This is mainly because progress is particularly weak in Year 4, where work does not build well enough on what pupils already know in English or mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make inadequate progress in Years 1 to 6. Throughout Years 3 to 6, at least one third of pupils in each class have literacy and behavioural difficulties. A significant proportion do not know simple common words and do not know the sounds of letters or combinations of letters. Catch-up programmes for literacy and numeracy are inadequate. This prevents the school addressing the backlog of underachievement. The school is not likely to reach its targets this year in either English or mathematics.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. This includes their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Behaviour is satisfactory, reflecting improvements in behaviour management this term. However, a significant number of pupils still need a lot of adult support in order to consistently behave properly. Pupils say they feel safe and, although there is occasional bullying, staff deal with incidents firmly. Most pupils show concern for the well-being of others. The number of exclusions is low. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It is still well below average, as at the time of the previous inspection.

Pupils' attitudes in lessons are mainly satisfactory. Most are keen to join in lessons but a significant proportion of boys become distracted when teaching does not meet their learning needs. Attitudes are better when pupils learn through practical tasks.

Pupils have a sound understanding of healthy lifestyles and know what to do to stay safe. They make a satisfactory contribution to the community. Pupils have reasonable opportunities to share ideas and work together. Older pupils develop understanding of business and enterprise. However, low standards in literacy and numeracy mean that their preparation for their future life is unsatisfactory.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

Teaching quality is uneven and, too often, unsatisfactory. Teachers provide interesting contexts and usually manage pupils appropriately. They are enthusiastic but their subject knowledge in English and mathematics is often underdeveloped. This prevents them from teaching to their full capacity. Lesson planning does not show enough detail of the skills to be learned and teaching does not build well enough on what pupils already know. There is not enough direct teaching of key literacy skills.

Assessment and target setting are weak and this prevents teachers knowing the level at which pupils should be working. Targets for pupils with learning difficulties do not focus on literacy skills such as key words and specific word-building skills. As a result, pupils make inadequate progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 4

In Nursery and Reception the curriculum is good. It is well planned and learning through talk and good quality practical activity underpin all activities. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is not planned well enough in English and mathematics, although there are some good learning opportunities for pupils in art and sport. Pupils enjoy the wider experiences offered through clubs, visits and special events. New initiatives include an enterprise week to develop pupils' economic understanding. Topics are interesting

to pupils. However, plans are not adapted well enough for pupils of differing abilities. Plans do not clearly show teachers how to systematically build on pupils' previous understanding in literacy and numeracy, especially for the large numbers with low attainment.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 4**

Care, guidance and support are unsatisfactory. Teachers are caring and know their pupils well. Procedures to deal with child protection, safety, bullying and unacceptable behaviour are sound. The school works effectively with a number of outside agencies in order to support pupils with learning difficulties, especially for those with behavioural problems. This promotes pupils' well-being and minimises the risk of disruption in lessons. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is unsatisfactory. The headteacher is now introducing a system which helps teachers to check pupils' progress more regularly and accurately. However, there is much to do. Teachers set class and group targets but these are unsatisfactory. They do not show specific literacy and numeracy targets and they are not set at frequent enough intervals. Procedures for promoting attendance are in place but are not having enough impact in raising attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

The new headteacher has worked hard to improve pupils' behaviour and raise expectations of what they can achieve. He has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve. He is bringing a sense of purpose to raising standards. He has already started to revise assessment procedures and staff are now being trained to improve the teaching of writing. However, a lack of effective leadership by other members of the senior team is standing in the way of better systems for improving the school. The school's inadequate self-evaluation procedures are a major reason why standards are so very low. The school's self-evaluation procedures have not been secure and the school has not always known the seriousness or the extent of the weaknesses. Weak management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and the lack of understanding about how to bring about improvements are all weaknesses of middle management. There has been insufficient focus on providing subject training for teachers so they can keep up to date in their subject knowledge and teaching methods. There is not yet a systematic approach to checking pupils' progress by observing teaching and analysing assessments.

Governors are supportive but do not challenge the school adequately. They do not monitor standards and achievement rigorously enough. The school does not have the capacity to improve at present without strong support.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	4
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	4

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, we visited your school recently. We enjoyed seeing you at work and play and talking with some of you. The school does not give you a satisfactory education at present. We have asked that the school gets some extra help through a programme called 'Special Measures' to enable your school to improve more quickly.

These are some of the things we found out about your school:

- Those of you in the Nursery and Reception make good progress.
- In the rest of the school, you do not make enough progress in English and mathematics.
- Your behaviour is satisfactory, although a few of you do not concentrate well enough.
- Too many of you do not attend school regularly.
- Lessons are interesting but the work you are given does not always build on what you know.
- The curriculum gives you some good opportunities in art and in sport.
- The school cares for you and keeps you safe.
- Your new headteacher is working hard to improve your school.

Here are the ways we are asking the school to improve:

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics for those of you in Years 1 to 6.
- Make sure that all lessons help you learn a lot.
- Make better checks on how well you are all learning.
- Make sure you attend school regularly.

You can help your teachers by making sure you always concentrate. You should do your homework and always try your best with spelling and handwriting.