

Marshfield Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109168
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	309909
Inspection date	16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Gillian
Headteacher	Kay Pettifer
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002
School address	Chippenham Road Marshfield Chippenham SN14 8NY
Telephone number	01225 891246
Fax number	01225 891246

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	16 January 2008
Inspection number	309909

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how the school is improving pupils' achievement and standards in mathematics and writing; the quality of teaching and learning; the curriculum; and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and the chairperson of the governing body, and from the parental questionnaires. Lessons were observed, school self-evaluation and other documentation seen and samples of pupils' current and previous work were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. Evidence based on the school's self-evaluation has been referred to where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The small number from minority ethnic groups all speak English fluently. Children's attainment on entry is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils are achieving well, both academically and in their personal development. It has undergone significant changes in staffing in the last two years, with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and several teaching staff all being new to the school. One of the major successes is the way that the headteacher has quickly developed a very strong sense of teamwork among all the staff and governors. There is an impressive, collective drive towards school improvement that has resulted from the excellent educational direction that the headteacher has set for the school.

School improvement is sharply focused on addressing weaknesses that were evident when the headteacher arrived at the school. The most concerning of these was the underachievement of many pupils in Years 3 to 6. Although standards by the end of Year 6 appeared good and were above national averages in English, mathematics and science, they were not as high as they should be in relation to pupils' starting points in Year 3. Progress was varying between year groups and was unsatisfactory overall. A range of measures has been introduced to improve this, including staff development on the teaching of core literacy and numeracy skills, target setting, and a rigorous programme of regular checks on pupils' progress. There is growing evidence of the success of these measures. This was seen first in science in 2007, with better progress leading to results in the Year 6 national tests being well above average. Pupils are now showing improved progress in mathematics, reading and writing, and this progress is far more consistent year on year. This means that achievement is now good because the older pupils' rates of progress are rapidly approaching the good levels that have been maintained in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 for some time.

By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average. The current Year 6 group, which has a high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, is on track to attain above-average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of the year. This reflects these pupils' willingness to work hard to fill the gaps in their knowledge and skills that resulted from past weaknesses in provision and, most especially, the high quality of teaching they now experience. Throughout the school, teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan work that is carefully matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. Those pupils with specific learning difficulties have excellent additional support and the intervention programmes introduced to meet special needs are highly successful. Teaching assistants run these programmes and do so very skilfully. Teachers use a range of strategies to extend pupils' learning, such as a series of targets for pupils to work towards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils know their targets well, although they are not involved enough in assessing their own progress towards target achievement.

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum. The headteacher has placed strong emphasis on curriculum development and improvement has occurred not just where she and the staff found gaps but also in response to parents' views on what they thought could be better. There is strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils acquire basic skills in literacy and numeracy lessons, although in Years 1 to 6 there is insufficient planning of opportunities for these skills to be developed in other subjects.

Pupils enjoy school. 'Learning is fun' said one, and others were quick to agree with him. There is a buzz of purposeful activity in lessons. Pupils particularly enjoy the many additional learning opportunities that are provided for them outside the school day. The range of these activities

is exceptional for a school of this size, with opportunities as diverse as drama and cooking, hand bells and watercolour painting, as well as more traditional sporting and musical clubs. The existence of both a choir and an orchestra reflects music's prominence in the curriculum. The curriculum is also enhanced by a very good range of visits and visitors. These provide first-hand experiences for pupils in a variety of topics and have significant impact on their learning, for example, in art where the school has many attractive displays of the work pupils have produced with visiting artists. Theme weeks occur throughout the year and have recently included an Afro-Caribbean week and a European week. One effect of these is the good understanding that pupils have of cultures other than their own. This makes them well prepared for living in a multicultural society.

There is well-planned provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. This results in good personal development and well-being that pleases parents and carers as much as their children's academic progress. This provision, alongside learning opportunities in science and physical education, has developed pupils' excellent appreciation of healthy lifestyles. They talk knowledgeably about healthy eating and it is significant that three-quarters of a sample of pupils of all ages said that physical education is their favourite lesson. Another major strength is pupils' excellent behaviour. Pupils look out for each other and work hard to meet the high expectations the school has of them. They also appreciate that they have many opportunities to contribute to both the school and the village communities.

The headteacher and senior management team carry out rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, identifying areas for development and taking action that improves pupils' achievement and makes teaching more effective. This is good leadership and management. Senior staff's good impact is evident in the significant contribution of the numeracy and literacy leaders to the recent improvement in achievement in Years 3 to 6. Senior management also benefits from the support and guidance of the governing body, which has assisted the headteacher during a period of significant change in key aspects of the school's work. The effectiveness of the steps taken to ensure improvement since the last inspection, particularly the success of recent initiatives, shows that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Foundation Stage leads to children's standards being above expected levels in all areas of learning when they start Year 1. The children's good progress is due primarily to good teaching and learning that matches all learning activities very closely to the needs of individual children. Many parents have expressed their delight with how well staff have helped the children settle into school life. A strength of provision is detailed planning that identifies very clearly the many outcomes that learning activities are designed to achieve. This applies to all activities, whether it is a task taught by an adult or a structured play activity that the children do independently. There is thorough recording of pupils' achievements and regular checking of their progress in all areas of learning. Whilst the classroom environment is attractive and stimulating, outdoor facilities are not developed sufficiently to provide permanently positioned equipment and learning activities. The school recognises this as a priority area for development so that the curriculum can be planned around a better balance of indoor and outdoor learning opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate the teaching methods and assessment procedures put in place to increase the rate of pupils' progress in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- Develop the curriculum by planning opportunities for pupils' literacy and numeracy skills to be applied and developed in other subjects.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Marshfield C of E Primary School, Marshfield SN14 8NY

Thank you for making me welcome in your school and for talking with me so willingly. I thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. You told me how much you enjoy going to school and I think you have a good school that is doing a good job in helping you to learn. The school does many things well. This is what I particularly appreciated.

- You are making good progress in much of your work and those of you in Years 3 to 6 are working hard to make better progress than in the past.
- By the time you reach Year 6, many of you are reaching good standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You behave excellently and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone helps one another.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise. Many of you told me that your favourite lesson is physical education.
- You are taught well and teachers work hard at planning interesting things for you to do in your lessons and on trips, and this helps you to learn.
- All the adults look after you well and make sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led very well by the headteacher, and all the adults, including the governors, work well together to improve it.
- I think your school could get even better if:
 - Those of you in Years 3 to 6 carry on working hard to make even more progress in literacy and numeracy.
 - You have more opportunities to practise and improve your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Marshfield Primary School to be an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee Lead Inspector

17 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Marshfield C of E Primary School, Marshfield SN14 8NY

Thank you for making me welcome in your school and for talking with me so willingly. I thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. You told me how much you enjoy going to school and I think you have a good school that is doing a good job in helping you to learn. The school does many things well. This is what I particularly appreciated.

- You are making good progress in much of your work and those of you in Years 3 to 6 are working hard to make better progress than in the past.
- By the time you reach Year 6, many of you are reaching good standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You behave excellently and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone helps one another.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise. Many of you told me that your favourite lesson is physical education.
- You are taught well and teachers work hard at planning interesting things for you to do in your lessons and on trips, and this helps you to learn.
- All the adults look after you well and make sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led very well by the headteacher, and all the adults, including the governors, work well together to improve it.

I think your school could get even better if:

- Those of you in Years 3 to 6 carry on working hard to make even more progress in literacy and numeracy.
- You have more opportunities to practise and improve your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Marshfield Primary School to be an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee
Lead Inspector