

# Marsden Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107644
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	324611
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roger Gill

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	176
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Gill Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Frances Swallow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Brougham Road Marsden Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD7 6BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 222583
<b>Fax number</b>	01484 222583

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<b>Age group</b>	3–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Marsden is a small school situated in a village on the outskirts of Huddersfield. Most pupils attend the school from the immediate area, which is mixed but broadly typical in socio-economic terms. The school's provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. An average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but there are more pupils with a statement of special educational need than is typical. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic families and those that are do not learn English as an additional language. In the last few months the school has experienced a substantial turnover of staff including the headteacher, who took up her post three days before the inspection. The deputy headteacher was the acting headteacher from September 2008. The school possesses the Healthy Schools Award and an Activemark for its achievements in physical education.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Marsden is a satisfactory school with several good features. It is going through a period of rapid change, which is mainly responsible for slowing the speed at which pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn. Despite this change in the pace of progress, the very newly formed leadership team possesses a clear idea of how to remedy the situation. Moreover, it has managed to maintain the dynamic ethos of the school and the school's reputation as being at the heart of the local community is as strong as ever. Parents, for example, praise the school's 'great links to the wider community'. The school provides good care and pastoral support for pupils, which results in their good personal development, typified by considerate behaviour and positive attitudes.

Standards at the end of Year 2 are generally above average, which represents satisfactory achievement after children's good start in the EYFS. Progress in reading has improved since the last inspection to bring it more in line with achievement in writing and mathematics. However, standards in all three areas should be higher still. Currently, the combination of satisfactory teaching and a suitable curriculum ensures that pupils make adequate progress and acquire satisfactory basic skills for later life. A good level of support exists for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which ensures that they progress soundly. For example, pupils with emotional difficulties, who find it hard to concentrate, are managed well; they achieve satisfactorily as a result. By contrast, not enough is expected of higher attaining pupils who grasp ideas more quickly.

The drop in the rate of pupils' progress is caused by some weaknesses in assessment and the monitoring of teaching. Assessment of pupils' learning is accurate, which allows teachers to know what levels pupils have reached. However, the setting of new and challenging targets is not applied rigorously enough to make sure that learning is as effective as it could be. Moreover, pupils are not always closely enough involved, through helpful marking and discussion, in what they need to do to raise their performance. These areas for development often exist in teaching that is otherwise well prepared, engages pupils' interest and makes a positive contribution to personal development. The curriculum has a sound effect on progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but is well enhanced by visits, visitors and links within the local community. For example, pupils are involved well in activities promoted by the National Trust, know a lot about the famous Imbolc pagan festivities in Marsden and enjoy frequent lessons in African drumming.

Pupils' buoyant singing in assembly, friendly play in the schoolyard and healthy attitudes demonstrate their enjoyment of school life. At lunchtime, pupils' pride is apparent when talking about why they are chosen to sit on the coveted 'Friday' table to eat their food. They know, for example, that eating a healthy diet comprising enough fruit and vegetables and behaving safely during fire drills are causes for celebration. The concerted efforts of teachers, their assistants, office staff and midday supervisors make sure that pupils' personal development continues to be a strength of the school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory despite their good influence over pupils' personal development. Lessons and pupils' work are monitored, but the emphasis is often on teaching rather than pupils' learning and progress. As a result, teachers do not get enough advice about how learning could be quicker and pupils could achieve more. There are already some coherent plans in place designed to tackle the issues related to progress and achievement. In this way, the leadership demonstrates a good level of understanding of the current situation. However, the general effect of leadership and the capacity for improvement are satisfactory because

there has been so little time for the headteacher, senior staff and governors to implement their ideas.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The effectiveness of the EYFS is good. Children make good progress because they are looked after well, teaching is effective and links with parents and carers are productive. Many children benefit from the school's good links with the local playgroup, so most arrive with a level of confidence that equips them for learning straight away. Achievement is good. Children's skills on entry to Nursery are in line with those typical for their age. By the end of Reception, standards are regularly above typical levels. The provision ensures that children's personal development and well-being are good. There are a few satisfactory aspects of teaching, largely because new staff are making relationships and establishing routines, but these do not detract from the established pattern of good progress and achievement that exists in the EYFS.

Regard for children's welfare is good because there are established systems in place that new staff can follow easily. Learning and development is good because teaching provides a helpful blend of directed activities with plenty of free choice for children to devise their own tasks. Teaching also fires children's imaginations with stories, which results in children in the Nursery, for example, bursting to discuss the pictures in 'Peace at Last' and join in with the repetitive phrases. Moreover, staff make useful assessments of learning to help them devise new tasks that match children's needs. Outdoor learning is always available and children love the contrast between quiet stories inside, for example, and energetic activities outside. The EYFS is well led and managed in a way that recognises what is successful and what needs to be improved. For example, the full curriculum is not fully represented in activities outside, but the school is aware of this relative weakness and is already starting to rectify it.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and improve the progress of pupils, including that of higher attainers.
- Improve the use of assessment to ensure that teachers set more challenging targets and pupils know how to improve their work.
- Develop the monitoring of teaching and assessment of pupils' work to provide clearer guidance on how to improve learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Above average standards from above average starting points demonstrate that children in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily. Attainment in mathematics appears to be better than in reading and writing, but that is because pupils' starting points at the end of Reception are generally higher in numbers and calculation. Results in reading have improved because the teaching of sounds and their letters has become more effective. Nevertheless, standards overall could be higher if the more able pupils, in particular, did better. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make steady progress owing to the emphasis the school places on supporting their learning. By contrast, pupils capable of more demanding work do not always receive appropriate

challenges; for example, in mental arithmetic, talking in depth about the content of their reading or using more adventurous writing. Moreover, the use of writing to communicate ideas and information in other subjects is sometimes limited because worksheets are overused and so pupils do not learn to write at length soon enough.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils display enthusiasm in a school that cares for them well. They know how to keep healthy, behave sensibly and play safely together. Lunchtimes and communal gatherings such as assemblies demonstrate that pupils enjoy each other's company. Their appreciation of school is reflected in attendance that is above the national average. The school's family atmosphere engenders good social and moral development. Spiritual development is good but cultural development is satisfactory despite the African drumming and other locally inspired events. Activities within the local community result in pupils having a growing sense of belonging, but community cohesion is satisfactory overall because their awareness of cultural diversity within Britain and around the world is limited. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to help out by doing jobs and a school council has been established, which gives them more opportunities to get involved.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching makes sure that behaviour is good and pupils enjoy what they do. However, there are differences in the quality of teaching from class to class owing to the staff changes, which make teaching satisfactory overall. Team teaching, in year groups, exists whereby one teacher leads on literacy while the other leads on numeracy. This allows one teacher to work with small groups and supervise the rotation of play activities. There are merits to this way of working but the lack of challenge in some of the play activities prevents learning from being good, particularly for higher attaining pupils. There are systems in place to assess pupils' progress and teachers use the outcomes to plan future work. However, the assessments are not used effectively to improve learning for all pupils. Marking is helpful in the way that it boosts confidence, but not good at giving advice about necessary improvements.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum promotes satisfactory achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. It provides suitable programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there are good opportunities for all pupils to develop their health and fitness. Basic skills of literacy and mathematics are planned soundly, as are other subjects. The school is beginning to link subjects together to make learning more meaningful but this work is at an early stage of development. However, freely chosen play activities in Years 1 and 2 often lack sufficient direction and this limits the challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Visits and visitors play a prominent part in the curriculum. Pupils are frequently involved in activities at the local Church, they work with sports coaches and discuss healthy living with the school nurse. Discussions about their feelings make a good contribution to pupils' lives as part of the varied programme for personal development.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school is a lively and caring place in which pupils feel safe and happy. The way that they are treated as individuals is a strength which, according to parents, is a hallmark of the school. Underlying this supportive atmosphere are comprehensive systems to analyse and minimise risk. The school meets the current government requirements for safeguarding pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn soundly because the support provided for them is skilful at meeting their needs. It is the more able pupils who lack the same degree of academic guidance. Pupils' behaviour is managed well so that exclusions are kept to a minimum. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and many are. Teaching assesses pupils' work well but it is the relative lack of awareness by pupils about their next steps in learning that make this aspect of the school good rather than first-rate.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The school is experiencing a period of considerable change, but established systems and routines make sure that pupils' personal development and the way that they are cared for remain strong features. Governors provide consistency, in leadership and management, especially as they possess a clear understanding of the challenges faced by the school. The new senior leadership team of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and EYFS coordinator has quickly and accurately assessed the school's current strengths and weaknesses even if their analysis is not fully expressed in documents such as the school improvement plan. The headteacher displays a precise understanding of how to monitor teaching and its impact on pupils' learning but understandably this has yet to be fully implemented. The character of the school is such that, despite the changes, all concerned are working diligently to raise standards and develop teaching in ways that emphasise teamwork and collaboration.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our two days with you all.

You go to a satisfactory school with several good aspects. Things have changed a lot in the last few months. Just think how many new teachers there are when you look around in assembly. Your new headteacher had only just started at the school in the week that we visited. The levels that children reach by the end of Reception and Year 2 are generally better than those expected for their age. After a good start in Nursery and Reception, learning slows a little in Years 1 and 2 mainly because of all the changes. You are making satisfactory progress but I believe you can do even better, especially when some of your teachers have had time to settle in.

As well as your good start, I am also pleased to say that the way you behave and enjoy everything that the school provides is good. This is because everyone at the school cares for you so well. Your school is like one big family; even the pre-school children thoroughly enjoy the lunchtime club and feel part of it all. People in Marsden are pleased with the school. Not only your parents think that you have a lot of interesting things to do but other members of the village like the friendly atmosphere when they are in school to prepare for the local festivals, for example.

I know everyone wants to improve, so I have suggested three things that will help. I have asked your school to improve what you can do in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, particularly for those who can manage even harder work. Your teachers need to use their information about your learning to set even higher challenges and to make sure that you all know what your next steps are. Lastly, your headteacher needs to make sure that when anyone observes your lessons, they think carefully about how well you are learning and what you could do to make even quicker progress.

I firmly believe your school can be strong in every aspect. You can help by trying hard in lessons and continuing to be cheerful around school.