

# Marlpool Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112562
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325633
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Edwards

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	42
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>	Ms Sarah Acikgoz
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Newell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 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>	Prospect Road Marlpool Heanor Derbyshire DE75 7NF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 717647
<b>Fax number</b>	01773 717647

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how effectively the school is encouraging the boys to become skilled readers and writers in their formative years at school
- how effectively the school is planning for the future in the light of upheavals in the recent leadership arrangements
- to what extent the school celebrates the culture and faiths of different ethnic groups and how well it prepares its pupils for life in a multicultural society
- how effectively the school provides for the indoor and outdoor experiences of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A range of school documents was scrutinised, particularly those concerning safeguarding procedures and the questionnaires returned by parents. Inspectors looked at parts of lessons and met staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This very small infant school serves the former mining community of Marlpool on the outskirts of Heanor. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and almost all come from homes where English is the first language. Attainment on entry to the school varies year-on-year but is broadly average overall. There is a wide range of ability in each class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities is below the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in a Reception class.

The school is federated with Marlpool Junior School and shares the same governing body. However, Marlpool Infant School has its own budget and has been led and managed by an acting headteacher since complications arose in the federation arrangements in 2008. The two schools continue to work very closely together.

## 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 that has made good progress since the last inspection. The school has emerged from an unsettled period in its history and has made significant strides in improving the quality of education, particularly in improving the quality and accuracy of its assessments and how it records children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A common feature in both classes is the warmth of the relationships that nurtures outstanding behaviour and motivates pupils to do their best. Teachers and classroom assistants work very effectively together to provide pupils with good support to develop independent learning skills. Interactive whiteboards are used successfully to demonstrate new techniques and teachers ensure that the pace of learning is good. Teachers are skilled in asking open-ended questions to gauge pupils' level of understanding and pupils are keen to respond because they know that their answers will be valued. However, there is an overdependence on the use of published work sheets to provide the tasks for pupils' work, and opportunities for independent writing are lost as a result. Furthermore, teachers do not consistently make sufficient use of plenary sessions to enable pupils to talk about what they have learned.

Nevertheless, pupils report that they enjoy coming to school enormously because they like their lessons so much. Attendance rates are above average and pupils arrive punctually. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are articulate, courteous and confident pupils who are enthusiastic about what the school has to offer. They report that they feel safe and secure. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through the school's many initiatives to promote healthy eating. However, opportunities for a full range of physical activities are limited by the accommodation, particularly the lack of space around the school. Pupils value the care shown to them and feel increasingly involved in making decisions, particularly through the school council where they make a meaningful contribution to school improvement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with the moral and social dimensions being the key strengths. Pupils are beginning to develop a good awareness of cultural diversity in contemporary society. They are extremely well prepared for the next stages of their education as their attitudes to learning are outstanding and they are confident in their use of new technologies. They are well equipped with key skills in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils achieve well academically. In the Reception class, children are becoming confident, enthusiastic, independent learners who achieve well in each area of learning. They listen carefully and are encouraged to develop their vocabulary. The current theme of space travel has fired their imaginations and provided good opportunities for role play. However, the school lacks a discrete outdoor area for the children in the Reception class and this lack of access to a carefully designed outside space limits their opportunities to apply their skills in a range of contexts. In Key Stage 1, standards are consistently above average in literacy and numeracy and pupils reach above average standards in the national assessments for reading, writing and mathematics year-on-year. The school's strategy of ensuring that pupils develop their thinking skills through a range of practical and investigative activities, particularly in science, has enabled them to progress well. For example, a recent visit to a local wood has enabled the pupils to study and appreciate the diversity of spring flowers at close quarters. In writing, standards have improved because pupils have been encouraged to use an exciting vocabulary and to be confident in their use of language. Boys and girls achieve equally well because the school is very mindful

of individual needs. Furthermore, traditional interests of boys, such as technology, non-fiction books and construction materials are used effectively to develop their vocabulary and inspire a love of learning. Pupils take pride in their work and standards of presentation are consistently high. They make good progress in information and communication technology because computers are used regularly to support learning across the curriculum.

The good curriculum is carefully structured to enable pupils to have a secure grounding in the basic skills. Furthermore, pupils are motivated by the programme of well-chosen visits and the range of activities beyond the school day that support their personal development. The school has an outstanding knowledge of pupils' academic progress and identifies pupils who need additional support or challenge. Consequently, pupils are highly motivated by the activities planned to meet their needs, make good progress, and standards continue to rise. The school provides excellent day-to-day care for pupils. Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear and fully understood by staff. There is a strong emphasis on nurturing and developing each child as an individual. Adults provide excellent role models and consequently the school is a happy and inviting place in which to work and learn. Staff greet the children and their parents at the start of each day and this informal opportunity for exchanging information has cemented the closeness of the relationship between school and the home. However, although the school has established good links within the village community, it has yet to evaluate the effectiveness of its policy on promoting community cohesion.

Leadership and management are good and the school has good capacity for further improvement. Although the school's self-evaluation documentation needs updating, the school's view of itself is broadly accurate and has resulted in a clear strategy for continuing improvement. The priorities detailed in the school improvement plan, based on a clear evaluation of its contribution to the broader community, are entirely appropriate. The strength of staff teamwork and the commitment to equality of opportunity are key features of the success of the school.

All of the pupils are encouraged and supported, and enabled to achieve their best. The school maintains a productive partnership with the federated junior school that eases the transition arrangements and the continuity of learning for the pupils. The quality of governance is good and the governing body has both the skills and strategies to gauge the school's effectiveness and to measure its performance. It recognises the need to reduce the amount of money it retains for contingency now that greater stability has been achieved in the school's leadership.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Although standards on entry vary from year to year, most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are expected of this age. All children make good progress through good teaching and start Year 1 with standards that are above those found nationally. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff form excellent relationships with families right from the start, enabling children to settle quickly. Parents appreciate the close liaison that encourages them to become fully involved in their children's learning. Teachers and teaching assistants show exceptionally high levels of care, ensuring children flourish both academically and socially. The safety and welfare of children is extremely important to them. In return, children's personal development is outstanding. Children care very much about each other and love coming to school. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well, ensuring children understand the importance of staying active and fit. Staff work very effectively as a team, organising a well-balanced range of learning opportunities in the classroom and, to a much lesser extent, outdoors. The limitations of the

building severely restrict children's freedom of choice to work indoors or outside. In spite of this, exciting activities engage children's interest and make learning enjoyable. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's communication skills through, for example, asking searching questions. The high ratio of adults to children ensures those who need extra support enjoy success through individual attention. Procedures to evaluate children's progress are good and much improved since the previous inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and there is a shared sense of commitment towards improvement.

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

- Develop the outdoor area as a learning facility for children in the Reception class.
- Fully implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's policy on community cohesion.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### 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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

<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>	1
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

7 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Marlpool Infant School, Heanor, DE75 7NF

We really enjoyed our visit to your school this month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. We particularly enjoyed our discussions with you and hearing your views. It was a privilege to be able to work with you in your classrooms, take part in your assembly and meet members of the school council. A particular thrill was watching your dance session in the Reception classroom. Where did you find all that energy? We can understand why you are so proud of your school as there are many things that make it special. Here are some of them.

- You have an excellent attitude towards school and you achieve good standards in your work.
- You clearly enjoy school and your behaviour is outstanding.
- All the staff are very mindful of the need to keep you safe and happy.
- Your teachers make a good team and they make sure that learning is fun and exciting.
- The staff provide a wide range of activities to keep you interested.
- The staff team is determined to make sure the school gets better and better.

You are fortunate to be able to attend your school. It is really important that you continue to work hard and make the most of the opportunities your school provides. We have made one or two suggestions that should help it to become even better. First, the school needs to develop a suitable play area for the children in the Reception class so they have more opportunities to learn outdoors. Second, the school needs to consider very carefully how it can help the different communities in Marlpool and further afield to understand each other better and work more closely together. I know that you can help the school to become even better by continuing to work hard.

We would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector