

# Much Marcle CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116904
<b>Local Authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326482
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rodney Braithwaite

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	114
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>	John Reed
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lorna Harrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 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>	Much Marcle Ledbury HR8 2LY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01531 660607
<b>Fax number</b>	01531 660607

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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.

- Evidence of attainment on entry to the school, and its provision for children entering the school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness of teaching in the school, particularly through academic support and guidance given to pupils.
- The management structure of the school with reference to the contribution of the governing body and leadership during the recent absence of the headteacher.

## Description of the school

This small village school serves a rural area a few miles from Ledbury. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with only a small proportion of pupils from other ethnic groups. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Very few pupils speak English as a second language. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception Year and in a governing body-funded Nursery.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Much Marcle is a good school. Pupils build outstanding personal and social skills and achieve well academically because of the good, and in some cases excellent, provision made for them. This includes an exceptionally stimulating and exciting curriculum. Pupils express much delight in their many and varied learning opportunities, avidly describing their sports clubs, their twinning with a French village, their Bollywood dancing and their study of Charles Darwin. They have very positive attitudes to learning, their behaviour is exemplary and they are caring and kind to each other. This helps them to build independence and self-confidence which prepare them well for their next stage of education. Community links are further enhanced by the very good partnerships that the school has with local schools, especially the high school, which regularly assists with resources for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils are frequently involved in their own community, especially through the school council. They enjoy regular opportunities to take part in village activities, church projects and the Ledbury poetry festival. The school also has a breakfast club and a very popular after-school club to provide for family needs. Community cohesion is strengthened further by the school's involvement in the European 'Comenius' project, the development of other links with schools in India, Mexico and Switzerland, and its application for International School status. This has been a major factor in the improvement in pupils' cultural education which now complements their outstanding spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils' enthusiasm for physical activities demonstrates their understanding of a healthy lifestyle, and is assisted by the school's excellent sports field which it shares with the village.

Children make a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception Years. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 continue to achieve well and reach standards that are above the national average by the end of Year 6. Standards have been particularly consistent in English and mathematics, and a significant number of pupils reach higher levels by the time they leave. This trend looks set to continue. There was a dip in attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2008, when attainment was below the national average. The school's small cohorts sometimes cause a skewed picture of attainment, but taken over a three-year period, attainment is slightly above average at the end of Year 2. Attainment targets are challenging, and have been met for several years. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties/and or disabilities, and the gifted and talented, make good progress. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are also above average. ICT is used very well across the whole curriculum. The school is introducing a new system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. This is not yet fully in place, so at present staff are not always clear on how quickly pupils are progressing, as the data are not being used consistently to guide improvement.

Good and occasionally outstanding teaching enables pupils to develop good basic skills. Classrooms are well resourced, and good quality displays of pupils' work, such as African sunsets and letters from the 'anti-witch council', demonstrate the breadth of their learning. Teaching assistants, who are lively and knowledgeable, make a significant contribution to pupils' learning by supporting them and encouraging them to do their best. Lessons are well planned with specific detailed learning tasks provided for pupils of all abilities. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils trust and respect their teachers, and consequently respond well to their guidance. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of their group targets for learning. The teachers' marking offers clear hints on how to improve and gives praise and encouragement through the use of house and table points. Teachers go to great lengths to enrich learning

through activities such as inviting poets to visit and work with pupils. Good links have also been created with the Royal Shakespeare Company. These have led to great enthusiasm for drama in the Year 5/6 class through interpreting *Romeo and Juliet*.

Effective care and support, in this thoroughly inclusive school, are centred on the staff's good knowledge of pupils, and good support from external agencies. All safeguarding requirements are met, and pupils are confident that they are very safe in school, and have adults they can turn to if needed. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for those with English as a second language. Attendance has fallen slightly this year to average levels, mainly because of the low attendance of a small number of pupils. The school has effective procedures in place to encourage good attendance. The great majority of parents are proud of the school and are grateful for what the staff provide for their children. This is typified by comments such as, 'The staff inspire children to be the best they can be', and 'Older children give younger ones aspirations and positive role models.' A few parents have concerns about the quality of communication from the school. This is balanced by a similar number of parents who feel that they receive good information from the school.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher has led the school strongly in the direction of high achievement, good improvement since the last inspection, and the provision of an exciting and safe learning environment. She has been very ably assisted by the deputy headteacher. His leadership during the headteacher's absence has been widely praised by all concerned with the school. All staff are involved in the successful management of the school because they are a purposeful and dedicated team. Although leaders do monitor teaching and scrutinise pupils' work, this is not done consistently enough. Consequently aspects of professional development and improvement are not always followed up quickly. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school and has made good progress in improving its leadership contribution. This is perfectly exemplified by its role in the creation and management of the Nursery. The school is accurate in its self-evaluation and shows a good capacity for improvement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the school with a wide mix of skills. Children in the Nursery and Reception Years make good progress, supported by sensitive and caring staff, so that by the time they enter Year 1, they have reached national averages in all areas of learning. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The delightful environment of the Nursery and well-organised curriculum in Reception encourage children to investigate for themselves and explore their surroundings. There is a buzz of excited chatter as children get involved in making a fairground, or use shells to count numbers and listen to the sea. Effective teaching of basic skills in Reception supports good progress in numeracy and reading. Children's writing is lively and imaginative, well supported by the school's new strategies for teaching phonics. In the Nursery the quality of adults' interaction with children is of a very high standard. This makes a significant contribution to developing language skills and helps them to understand the things they discover. In one session, for example, staff encouraged children to discuss their tree climbing, make up their own games and decide how big the sticks were that they were using. The nursery classroom extends naturally from indoors to outside and this enables children to move about freely and develop physical skills and understanding of the natural world. In Reception the school provides as much opportunity for outdoor learning as possible, whilst improved outdoor space is developed. Good quality support promotes children's welfare well. Behaviour during all activities

is excellent. Children work without supervision very well and have exceptionally mature and confident attitudes to working with others. Leadership is good overall, although the use of information on children's progress as a tool to drive further improvement is not well enough developed. The excellent development of children's personal skills can be seen in the way they enjoy taking responsibility, not only by becoming increasingly independent, looking after themselves and helping in class, but also by showing considerable care towards others.

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

- Make the gathering and use of assessment data more rigorous so that the school has a sharper focus on pupils' progress and the steps needed for improvement.
- Ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and consistent and that it leads to improved progress for the pupils.

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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?	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## 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?	1
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>	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?	1
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**

5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Much Marcle C of E Primary School, Ledbury, HR8 2LY Thank you for the warm and cheerful welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. We enjoyed our day with you, and were pleased to hear about the many exciting things you enjoy in school. It was good to hear you say your learning was 'fun' and 'special'. These are the things we found out about your school.

- By the time you leave school you reach standards above those expected for your age, and you make good progress throughout the school.
- Your behaviour is excellent, although we agree with you that everyone can sometimes be a bit annoying.
- You care for each other well, work hard together and have excellent attitudes to your learning.
- The adults who look after you know you very well, you like them and they make you feel safe and confident.
- The staff give you many exciting learning experiences, such as working with a poet, visiting 'Techniquet', and contacting children in other countries.
- You are very healthy, because you enjoy all your sports activities on your wonderful field, and you know what food is good for you (and what isn't)!
- The school has provided you with a lovely Nursery where so many of you are making a good start to life here.
- Your teachers, headteacher, deputy headteacher and all the staff are doing a good job in making sure that you are well cared for and educated. It's really good if you thank them for this sometimes.

We have suggested two things they can do to make your school even better, with your help.

- Use more often all the things they know about your work, so they are always certain about how quickly you are improving.
- Make sure that they know how well your teachers are helping you to do as well as you can in your lessons.

Please continue to enjoy school, especially your learning of foreign languages.

Yours faithfully

Rod Braithwaite Lead inspector