

Marshlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114442
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	331599
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Long HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Weiner
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Gibbins
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
School address	Marshfoot Lane Hailsham East Sussex BN27 2PH
Telephone number	01323 841420
Fax number	01323 440139
Email address	finance@marshlands.e-sussex.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and held meetings with pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work and inspected planning and evaluation documents, including the school development plan and those for individual subjects. The school's analysis of pupils' achievement was scrutinised, as were a total of 20 questionnaires received from parents, 68 from pupils and 11 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The impact of work to raise standards in English, mathematics and science
- The effectiveness of teaching in meeting the needs of pupils of differing abilities
- The contribution made by middle leaders, such as those leading subjects, to the school's capacity to improve.

Information about the school

Marshlands is a small school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. About one in ten is of Romany or Gypsy heritage. Many more pupils have free school meals than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average, as is the proportion who leave or join the school partway through the year, or partway through their primary education. About two thirds of the children entering the Reception class attend the Nursery class, and the remainder come from other settings. The Reception teacher joined at the start of this term and one other teacher has joined the school on a temporary basis. When last inspected, the school was given a notice to improve because it was judged to be performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be expected to.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Marshlands Primary is a satisfactory and improving school. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The headteacher has continued to provide good leadership. She has brought together an effective senior and middle leadership team. Good progress has been made in tackling the weaknesses identified in the last inspection and there is good capacity to achieve the challenging targets set by the school for further development. Staffing is now more stable and teachers and additional adults are working well together to move the school forward.

Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved and is now good. The children make good progress and lay firm foundations for later learning. The quality of teaching for older pupils has also improved so their progress is satisfactory overall and increasing numbers are making good progress. Standards are rising but remain below average. The environment for learning has improved. Most pupils behave well, enjoy school more and contribute well to the school community. They are proud of the improvements made, and one pupil expressed the views of many when he said, 'We've got people wanting to join the school now,' as opposed to the falling roll of the past. Teaching remains satisfactory overall but more lessons are of good quality. Tasks are routinely planned to meet pupils' differing needs and ensure they work towards ambitious targets. Lessons are more interesting but are sometimes not sufficiently practical to engage or sustain pupils' attention. Learning objectives are usually made clear to pupils although some opportunities are missed to encourage them to assess their own progress towards the objectives.

Good care, guidance and support have made a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, social skills and other areas such as understanding how to stay healthy. Exclusions have been eradicated and the pupils feel well cared for. A close focus on attendance has improved that of most pupils so that it is satisfactory. However, a small number of parents do not ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Changes to the curriculum are helping pupils to enjoy their learning more. Well-chosen themes link subjects together and reinforce learning in key areas such as literacy and numeracy. Nevertheless, insufficient attention is paid to pupils' attainment in the different subjects involved to ensure these themed activities make the maximum impact. The school promotes cohesion well within the school community and is making an increasing impact on the local area. However, pupils have limited awareness of cultural and ethnic diversity in the country as a whole and are thus not fully prepared to play a full part in the wider community.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' learning further by ensuring:
 - that they are encouraged to be more independent in deciding how to move their work on
 - that activities in lessons are more practical and engaging so as to sustain the pupils' focus on learning.
 - Ensure that the work with the small number of parents whose children miss too much time at school makes more impact on their children's attendance.
 - Maximise the impact of the themed activities by making sure that the work matches more closely the pupils' varying abilities in all the subjects involved.
 - Promote community cohesion more systematically so pupils are better prepared for the culturally diverse society found in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The pupils' improved achievement is underpinned by better progress in lessons and more secure development of their knowledge, understanding and skills. Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed the gains made, as reflected in the unvalidated results of the most recent Year 6 assessment tests. These are up on the previous year with sharp rises in mathematics and science. Improvements in English are clear but less marked due to a legacy of slow progress in the past, notably in writing. Previously the boys have made less progress than girls, and pupils of Romany or Gypsy heritage have done less well than others. These gaps are closing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also making better progress. While the pupils' increased success is generating greater enjoyment, many lack the skills to learn independently so as to take full advantage and be well prepared for the next stages of their education.

The pupils' moral and social development has improved, as shown by their good behaviour. Relationships between most pupils are positive and where problems arise many are sorted out by the pupils. They willingly take on responsibilities. Older pupils help younger ones by acting as playground buddies and there is competition to join the school council. This now makes a real impact on school life, for example in supporting charities and developing a link with an Ethiopian school. Pupils are helpful on a day-to-day basis, as seen when two girls spotted a broken door mechanism, alerted the caretaker and directed people to a different door. Pupils reflected thoughtfully on difficult questions during an assembly on 'new beginnings'. They have a satisfactory awareness of cultural diversity although they have limited direct experience of different communities in the United Kingdom. The pupils have a good understanding of the importance of staying healthy by keeping fit and eating well. Most enjoy sport and the pupils in the canteen were unanimous that they should 'eat all their veg' because it is full of vitamins.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has continued to improve since the previous inspection. Teachers make better use of assessment information to meet pupils' varying needs in lessons and to trigger extra help if required. Teachers and other adults have good relationships with pupils and make more sensitive use of rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing more securely because lessons provide more opportunities for discussion and questioning. Resources and displays are well organised and increasingly good use is made of interactive whiteboards. Objectives for lessons are now made clearer by teachers. Good progress is evident when pupils are encouraged to be independent in assessing their progress toward the objectives. However, this does not happen enough in some lessons. Teachers provide good guidance for improvement through marking, but again pupils are not routinely expected to respond to it or take responsibility for improving their work. Tasks in lessons are more practical and engaging, as in a Year 2 lesson where pupils used their bodies to learn about symmetry. Nevertheless, the tasks in some lessons do not involve pupils enough, for example where they spend too long listening to teachers, and in such cases their rate of progress

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

is slower.

An increased emphasis in the curriculum on personal, social and health education has yielded benefits in pupils' behaviour. The curriculum has been adapted well to ensure better progression in the core areas of English, mathematics and science by aiming at age-related expectations. Topic-based work that links subjects together is now more established and has helped revive pupils' interest in learning. The themes studied are selected well to engage lower achieving groups such as boys. However, too little attention is paid to pupils' individual attainment in non-core subjects in order to ensure that activities provide challenge in all of them. The curriculum is supported by a satisfactory and growing range of visits and visitors. Increased use is made of the 'virtual learning platform' and there are good plans to exploit the full potential of this resource. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which pupils enjoy attending.

Care, guidance and support are well organised. The pupils are well known and each is valued so they feel well cared for and able to rely on the adults for help. Their development is monitored closely. The vulnerable or at-risk pupils are identified accurately and extra support is provided where appropriate. Procedures to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have been refined to ensure their needs are better met in lessons and small-group sessions. The school works well with outside agencies such as social services to care for its pupils. It makes good efforts to work with parents and carers when concerns such as attendance are raised and has been successful in all but a small minority of cases.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and other senior leaders are now supported well by middle leaders, such as subject coordinators. Accurate monitoring and evaluation give them a good understanding of the progress made and of the next steps required. They are well aware of the impact of the school's provision on the progress of different groups of pupils and are taking effective action to support those making slower progress so all succeed equally. Staff development is planned well to support the school's ambitions and drive for further improvement. The governors work hard on behalf of the school and are well aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They enjoy positive relationships with school staff but maintain a good degree of objectivity when checking how well it is

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

doing. Procedures for safeguarding the pupils are good because they are given a high priority. The school carries out all checks to ensure that individual adults are suitable to work with children meticulously. Governors take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and regularly review policies and procedures. The school's engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory but growing. The school has identified that some parents and carers are reluctant to get involved in the life of the school and is making good progress in fostering better links. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is keen to expand its work in this area and has recently appointed a member of staff to coordinate and expand its activities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

From low overall starting points the children now make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. More are reaching the expected levels of development by the start of Year 1. The school has worked hard to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good leadership has been provided by the headteacher, who now works with the Reception teacher as she takes over leadership. The quality of teaching has improved so that the needs of individual children are met well. There is a good focus on developing the language and social skills which are weak for many children on entry. Teaching is regularly good and sometimes outstanding. The children's progress is tracked carefully and the information used well to plan learning. Tasks ensure a good balance of child- and adult-selected activities and cover the required learning areas. Good teamwork between teachers and additional adults means that the latter are

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

usually deployed well. On a minority of occasions, however, additional adults do not encourage children to think independently enough about what to do next in their learning. High levels of individual care ensure the children are happy and enjoy their time in school. Indoor and outdoor areas, and the equipment in them, are very well organised to support purposeful learning. The school has rightly identified that the range of outdoor equipment is satisfactory but could be widened and has suitable plans to do this in the near future.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response from parents and carers was strongly supportive of the effectiveness of the school, although this only reflects the views of the relatively small number who returned the questionnaire. In their comments, parents and carers singled out for praise the strong leadership of the headteacher and the high levels of care provided by staff for their children; both of these views are shared by the inspection team. The main concern raised by parents related to information provided by the school about their children's progress. Inspectors judge that the school is taking good steps to improve the effectiveness of communication with parents and carers about their children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marshlands Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	55	6	30	3	15	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	50	5	25	4	20	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	60	6	30	2	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	65	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	60	6	30	2	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	65	6	30	1	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	50	8	40	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	50	7	35	2	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	70	2	10	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	50	8	40	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	65	3	15	2	10	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marshlands Primary School, Hailsham, BN27 2PH

This letter is to thank the many pupils who talked to me when I visited the school recently, and to explain what I found.

- When the school was last inspected it was not helping you to make enough progress with your work. This has now changed and you are getting on better, and children in the Nursery and Reception classes are doing especially well. Well done for the part you are playing by working harder.
- You told me your school has improved and are proud of what has happened.
- The headteacher and the staff are working hard to make more improvements.
- Teaching is better and you now get work in literacy and numeracy lessons which is planned to be at the right level for each of you.
- You told me that you enjoy lessons more because they are more fun but there are still times when you have to sit and listen to teachers for too long. I saw this for myself and that there are also some lessons where you are not asked to think hard enough for yourselves about how to improve your work.
- Your behaviour has improved and is good because the adults help you behave well and you are enjoying learning more.
- Most of you now attend regularly but a few of you still miss too much school.
- You are good at taking on responsibilities such as on the school council.
- The school keeps you very safe and helps you stay healthy, and I note the football team won its match on the second day I was there. Well done!
- The things you learn about are more interesting and you enjoy working on the topics like 'pirates'. However, the topic work is not always planned as carefully as that in literacy or numeracy so as to be at the right level for each of you.
- You do not have enough opportunities to learn what life is like in other communities outside the local area, particularly in other parts of our country.

I have asked the headteacher to include the following into her development plans:

- Make sure all lessons include work which gets you actively involved, and make sure you are asked to think about how to improve your work yourselves.
- Help the few of you who miss school too much to come in regularly.

- Make sure that the topic work is planned better so it is not too easy and not too hard for each of you.
- Give you more experience of people living in other parts of the country.

Thank you again for your help and good luck.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.