

Marston Green Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique reference number | 104060 |
| Local authority | Solihull |
| Inspection number | 377012 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 March 2012 |
| Lead inspector | John Rutherford HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 339 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mick Tynan |
| Headteacher | Lynn Clark |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 December 2006 |
| School address | Station Road Marston Green Birmingham B37 7BA |
| Telephone number | 0121 779 2227 |
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|---------------------------|------------------|
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Rutherford

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dr Alan Brewerton

Additional Inspector

Christine Murray-Watson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent 12 hours observing teaching and learning in 23 lessons taught by 12 teachers. They also spent three hours observing pupils' progress in improving their literacy skills in 12 sessions led by teachers and teaching assistants. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils and four members of the governing body. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and discussed their books with them. Inspectors looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including those relating to pupils' progress, school self-evaluation, improvement planning and safeguarding. Inspectors considered questionnaires returned from pupils, staff and 235 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most junior schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. There have been significant recent changes in staffing and leadership, one result of which is that a quarter of the staff are newly qualified and in their first post. The governing body manages the Ark club on the school premises which provides activities for 79 pupils before and after school. The school exceeds the national floor standard for pupils' attainment and progress.

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 | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 1 |
| Leadership and management | 1 |

Key findings

- This school provides an outstanding quality of education. A very large number of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire and almost all had positive views about every aspect of the school's work. A typical comments was 'Marston Green is an outstanding school; it gives the children the opportunity to reach their full potential.' Another wrote, 'It has the children's learning at heart and all are treated equally regardless of their cultural background and ability.' The inspection evidence supports these views.
- The majority of pupils make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and most other subjects in the curriculum. Their progress is rarely less than good. As a result, they achieve standards that are well above average, and this has been the case consistently for the last five years.
- The majority of teaching is outstanding and the remainder is consistently good. Teachers motivate pupils in all subjects by providing interesting practical activities and by setting learning in contexts that excite them. They assess pupils' achievement in detail and use this information to plan lessons that are mostly at the right level of challenge for all groups of pupils. In a small number of English lessons, the tasks are not challenging enough to help more-able pupils to accelerate their progress from good to outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. Their behaviour is excellent and they are very enthusiastic learners. They feel safe in school.
- The headteacher and her team of senior and middle leaders are very effective in sustaining and further improving the high quality of teaching across the school. They have a detailed understanding of provision and pupils' outcomes in each classroom and they ensure that every teacher receives exactly the support and training they need to help them raise standards of attainment further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In the minority of English lessons where needed, improve the achievement of more-able pupils from good to outstanding by setting more challenging tasks for them.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils start in Year 3 with above average standards of attainment in English and mathematics. The majority make outstanding progress and, as a result, national published data and inspection evidence show that standards of attainment rise further and are very high by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress is equally strong in subjects other than English and mathematics, particularly information and communication technology (ICT), science, history, music and religious education. Pupils make exceptional progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills by applying them to work across the curriculum and this gives them a very good foundation for their future education. Work in a range of subjects also enables pupils to make excellent progress in their spiritual and cultural development, for example when writing about their feelings following a visit to the Gurdwara, discussing different views about death and researching historical evidence about emancipation from slavery. Nearly all the parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire say they are happy with their children's progress in school. One parent commented, 'The school provides all the building blocks my child needs to further their education at secondary school.'

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress towards their challenging targets because the procedures for identifying their needs and planning their support are very effective. One parent of a pupil receiving additional support summed up the views of others when she commented, 'The school goes the extra mile to support my child's special educational needs.' More-able pupils generally make outstanding progress because teachers' expectations for them are very high. In mathematics, for example, they achieve exceptionally well because they are given very challenging problems to solve, often linked to interesting 'real-life' situations.

From their analysis of the 2011 national tests and assessments, school leaders accurately identified that some of the more-able pupils were not making the same outstanding progress in English as they were in mathematics and this was because teachers were not all equally skilled in planning work at a high enough pitch. This was especially true for reading; almost all pupils were very competent in reading fluently and accurately, however, too few of the more-able pupils were achieving sufficiently high standards in evaluating text and extracting information from it. As a

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result, a very high proportion of pupils reached the national average standard in English in 2011, but the proportion achieving the above-average level, while better than most schools nationally, was not as high as in mathematics. Leaders have introduced a programme of training which has made a positive difference in most classes. However, a small minority of more-able pupils are still not making the outstanding progress of which they are capable because improved methods are not firmly embedded in every class.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is consistently outstanding or good. Nearly all parents and carers who returned an inspection questionnaire agree that their children are well taught. The pace of learning is excellent because teachers plan lessons that keep pupils actively engaged in interesting practical tasks. Teachers provide clear, stimulating explanations and demonstrations and pupils do not have to sit and listen for too long before they extend their new knowledge and skills through group discussion, problem-solving or research. This is a feature of work across the curriculum and is a particular strength in subjects such as history, science and religious education. Pupils are highly motivated to learn because teachers plan challenges for them based on situations that are familiar and interest them considerably.

The teaching of letters and their sounds throughout the school is appropriate to the age and learning needs of the pupils and is well-planned, systematic and enjoyable. Pupils therefore make rapid progress in learning these basic skills. Teachers give high priority to extending pupils' skills in reading for understanding, especially the higher-level skills that more-able pupils need to raise their achievement. These skills are not just taught in English, but they are very effectively developed across the curriculum and enable pupils to strengthen their independent learning through research. During the inspection, good examples of this were seen in the way pupils learned about the American Civil War and explorers by making deductions from historical evidence in text, pictures and objects.

Teachers skilfully assess pupils' progress during lessons and immediately increase the support or challenge where needed. This helps to make sure that no pupils lose ground in their learning because work is too easy or hard. A particular strength is the guidance teachers give pupils when marking their work books. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' excellent progress because teachers carefully check that their guidance has been followed and has raised the standard of their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The overwhelmingly positive responses about behaviour in the inspection questionnaires returned from parents and carers, pupils and staff show that this is a consistently very strong feature of the school. Pupils' excellent behaviour makes a significant contribution to their outstanding progress because they can be trusted to work hard without constant supervision. They are extremely friendly and helpful to

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each other and work effectively as part of a team. This was seen especially in music when small groups of pupils collaborated to compose high quality instrumental accompaniments to a well-known song. Every single pupil who completed an inspection questionnaire said they felt safe in school. They told inspectors that instances of any form of bullying are rare and this is confirmed in the school records. They have a thorough understanding of how to stay safe and, in particular, how to avoid danger when using the internet. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, such as cyber bullying, and know exactly what to do if they are subject to any form of bullying. In lessons, pupils show a high level of respect towards people from backgrounds other than their own and they discuss religious differences in a mature and balanced way.

The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. For the very few whose circumstances have put them at risk of significant absence, the school has quickly provided excellent support and raised their attendance to the same high levels as other pupils.

Leadership and management

The headteacher communicates an exceptionally strong ambition for the highest quality of provision and outcomes for all pupils. In realising this ambition, she is very well supported by senior and middle leaders. Together they provide monitoring, guidance and training for all teachers and teaching assistants that brings about a high degree of consistency in excellent teaching. Staff responses to the inspection questionnaire show that their morale is high and they are fully committed to the work of the school.

The impact of leaders' work is seen particularly in the way that guidance to three newly qualified teachers has quickly enabled them to be confident in using the same very effective methods as their more experienced colleagues. At the same time, leaders are introducing new approaches to teaching English which have already made a positive difference in many classes. Because leaders have continued to improve the excellent quality of education and pupils' outcomes in the face of significant staffing changes, they are demonstrating an outstanding capacity to build further on the current very high standards of attainment.

School leaders have excellent methods for recording information about pupils' academic progress and their social and emotional development. All staff constantly use this information to identify and quickly remove any barriers to learning affecting pupils so that they are not denied their equal opportunity to achieve high standards.

The curriculum and extra-curricular programme provide a wide range of stimulating activities for all pupils. Learning through first-hand experience is strongly emphasised, both through practical activities in lessons and visits to places of interest. The Ark provides a well-organised range of recreational and educational activities for pupils before and after school, including a homework club. These take place in a well-equipped room and a safe, carefully-supervised outdoor area. The Ark

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staff work in close partnership with school staff and help them in their aims to teach pupils about being healthy, staying safe and making a positive contribution to their community.

The governing body makes a very strong contribution to leadership and management. They have a detailed understanding of the work of the school which they gain in a wide range of ways, including having frequent discussions with pupils. Based on this, they make a constructive contribution to identifying priorities for improvement and ensuring that budget planning enables these to be tackled effectively. The governing body and school leaders work well in partnership to ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met and kept under continuous review.

The school has a very effective partnership with parents and carers. Almost all of those who returned an inspection questionnaire say that the school keeps them well informed, helps them to support their child's learning and responds well to their concerns. Teachers achieve this high level of satisfaction through a good range of well-attended meetings, workshops and parents' forums. The forums are very effective in giving parents an opportunity to express their views about the school and to influence decision making. For example, following discussion in one forum, specifically for parents and carers of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, the school agreed that the teacher responsible for this area of work would be available at a specific time each week, making it easier for people to contact her when they needed to.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 46 | 46 | 8 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 47 | 40 | 5 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 38 | 40 | 8 |
| Special schools | 28 | 48 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 15 | 50 | 29 | 5 |
| All schools | 11 | 46 | 38 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marston Green Junior School, Birmingham, B37 7BA

Thank you very much indeed for your help when I came with my colleagues to inspect your school. We found our discussion with you very useful in helping us to make the judgement that your school provides you with an outstanding quality of education. Thank you also for filling in our questionnaires which showed that you are all happy with the quality of teaching and care provided for you.

Your teachers and teaching assistants plan very interesting lessons for you which help you to make rapid progress. When starting lessons and marking your work, teachers tell you precisely how you can improve your achievement and you are thorough in following their guidance. You are very good at working in groups to solve challenging problems and to find things out for yourselves and this helps you to really enjoy your learning. You are particularly skilful in learning by discussion with partners. When you are faced with really complicated problems you persevere until you get the better of them. Your behaviour in lessons and during break times is excellent and this makes your school a very pleasant place to visit. You all get on well with each other and you feel very safe from all forms of bullying. We were especially pleased to see that you have a good understanding of how to use computers safely.

Even though your school is outstanding, the headteacher and staff are keen to keep on improving your education, so we have agreed with them one area to work on. This is to make sure that more-able pupils have work that is sufficiently hard in all English lessons. This means that some of you will have even more challenges in your work but I am confident that you will rise to them.

Our very best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford
Her Majesty's Inspector

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