

Marshland Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106690
Local Authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	356001
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Jane Hughes

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jaime Evans
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Rouse
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2008
School address	Marshland Road Moorends, Doncaster South Yorkshire DN8 4SB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed five teachers in a total of eight lessons. Inspectors held meetings with governors and staff and talked with children. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined questionnaires from 74 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. Inspectors looked in detail at a number of key questions.

- Is attainment across the school high enough in English and mathematics for all groups of pupils?
- Is teaching consistently good enough to ensure pupils make at least good progress?
- Do children make a strong enough start in the Early Years Foundation Stage?
- How effectively does the school promote regular attendance?
- Are leaders, managers and the governing body driving and securing improvement at a fast enough rate?

Information about the school

This school is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is far larger than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A larger than average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has achieved the Activemark.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Children enter the school with skills which are well below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, from Year 1 onwards, pupils do not make sufficient progress throughout their time in school. By the time they leave Year 6, the outcomes and achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are inadequate. Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is too low. Since the previous inspection in March 2008, pupils' test and assessment results have not improved. Attainment has been exceptionally low for several years and pupils' achievement has declined to well below average. Leaders' and teachers' expectations of pupils' rates of progress are pitched too low. This contributes to pupils' lack of preparation for the next stage of their education.

While the teaching observed during the inspection was generally satisfactory overall, teaching since the last inspection has not been strong enough to reverse the school's declining performance and is therefore inadequate. New systems to assess and track pupils' progress are developing. These are starting to provide more useful information for teachers as they plan pupils' next learning steps but are not embedded fully. Most pupils behave satisfactorily. Attendance has improved and is broadly in line with the national average.

The school provides a caring, friendly environment which pupils and their families appreciate. The headteacher has initiated some changes since the last inspection. For example, greater stability within the teaching team has strengthened the quality of teaching and teachers are more accountable for the performance of their pupils. External expertise has been provided, by the local authority and, more recently, from an associate headteacher. Despite fragile advances, improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate. Significant weaknesses remain. Attainment continues to decline and pupils' learning, progress and achievement are inadequate. The quality of teaching has not improved to the consistently good levels required to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress in their learning. As a consequence, pupils are not making up the gaps in their learning.

The curriculum lacks inspiration and does not engage all pupils fully in their learning. There is insufficient attention to the promotion of community cohesion. The governing body has too little impact on the direction and work of the school. Self-evaluation lacks

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accuracy, detail and rigour. The school's leadership, including the governing body, do not demonstrate the required capacity to promote sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics and ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across the school by:
 - ensuring the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - giving pupils clear guidance through teachers' marking about the steps they need to take to improve their work
 - providing more carefully targeted work that better matches the needs of individual pupils.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - ensuring it fully meets pupils' needs
 - promoting basic skills in increasingly practical ways to engage pupils, boys in particular, more readily in their learning
 - improving the links between subjects and so make learning experiences more interesting and enjoyable for all groups of pupils.
- Develop the effectiveness of all leaders and managers by:
 - sharpening evaluation so that it highlights priorities and sets a clear direction for improvement throughout the school
 - improving the accuracy and recording of tracking, monitoring and assessment information and use this effectively to plan pupils' future learning
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the school rigorously to account for its performance in order to bring about sustained improvement
 - ensuring that the governing body is fully involved in setting the strategic direction of the school
 - ensuring that the governing body accurately monitors the effectiveness of its own work.
- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - presenting attendance issues in a more engaging way to parents and carers so they appreciate better the importance of regular attendance
 - provide clear practical guidance to parents and carers to help them improve their child's attendance.
 - increasing the range of rewards available to pupils who improve their attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils' achievement and their enjoyment of learning are inadequate. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils' attainment is low and shows little

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sign of improvement. Pupils generally do as they are asked in lessons and increasingly they listen carefully to instructions and try hard to complete tasks. In the few lessons where work is challenging and largely practical in nature, they learn at a good pace. For instance, inspectors saw pupils in Years 5 and 6 taste a number of exotic fruits and then search for exciting vocabulary to describe these flavours. More often, pupils' progress is merely satisfactory as they respond to lower levels of challenge from staff. Where this occurs, pupils are sometimes not inspired to respond to the teachers' instructions and this limits their learning. Pupils' progress is inconsistent over time, it is satisfactory at best, with little evidence of improvement. Overall, pupils make too little progress from entering Year 1 to leaving Year 6.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They generally behave satisfactorily and form positive relationships. A minority of pupils consider that behaviour is not good. Inspection evidence confirms that a small minority of pupils lack self-discipline and find it hard to conform to expectations. Pupils are learning the key features of healthy and safe living and generally apply these in school. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility in school but have less opportunities to do so in the wider community. Pupils' abilities to apply their oracy, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are weak for their age. This provides a barrier to their future success. Overall attendance is broadly average but rarely rises above this. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory although pupils have limited awareness of cultures other than their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

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How effective is the provision?

Since the previous inspection, teaching has not been consistently strong enough to promote improvement in pupils' attainment, learning or progress. In particular, there is a lack of urgency in lessons and pupils are not encouraged to make rapid progress. Current levels of classroom performance and the match of work to the needs of individual pupils are not good enough to ensure that attainment rises and progress accelerates. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make supportive comments. However, the quality of marking is variable. Too frequently, it does not inform pupils well enough about how to improve. Pupils are starting to evaluate the quality of their own work and their learning. However, it is not clear from their subsequent work that they take heed of any identified improvement points and teachers fail to systematically check this.

The curriculum has significant shortcomings in meeting the needs of all pupils and in engaging them sufficiently in their learning. Some elements, such as topic work, do not motivate pupils and there are few opportunities for them to enjoy practical tasks. Activities frequently lack challenge for all groups of pupils, particularly boys and those of higher ability. New approaches are developing a focus on building pupils' key skills through themed activities and more secure links between subjects although these are not firmly established.

Pastoral care is a high priority throughout the school, particularly because of the relatively high proportion of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Parents and carers appreciate this care and typically agree that 'because the school is small, my child gets better support'. The school works hard to improve pupils' behaviour. Record keeping is very detailed, but some parents are still unhappy with how the school manages incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Although persistent absence has decreased considerably, more remains to be done to ensure the effective promotion of attendance. Some pupils still miss too many school days. Existing systems lack practical guidance for parents and carers and the rewards system does not motivate pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and recently appointed deputy headteacher have cemented a purposeful working relationship. Their complementary skills mean that, latterly, the headteacher has assumed a more strategic role. Since the school's last inspection, the pace of improvement has faltered and the school's effectiveness has seriously declined. Senior leaders are aware that pupils' attainment is too low. Expectations of pupils' rates of progress have also

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been too low. Leaders' evaluation of the school's work lacks accuracy and detail. It is overly optimistic in some areas and places too positive a slant on improvements that have yet to show sufficient impact. While a recent drive to promote improvement has been established there is limited evidence of progress being made. The governing body is keen to help the school to improve but, currently, they have little influence in determining its strategic direction. The new Chair of the Governing Body is injecting a sense of urgency to ensure that the governing body understands the challenges the school faces. However, the governing body does not offer robust challenge to the school about its performance, nor does it evaluate the impact of its own work. There is insufficient evidence to show that leaders fully understand the urgent need to improve the school's performance or have the necessary capacity to secure sustained improvement.

The school's new monitoring and tracking system is beginning to help staff pitch pupils' work with a greater degree of challenge. There is however a lack of consistency in its use and this is resulting in continued variability in the rates of progress for many pupils and year groups. As a result, the effectiveness with which adults promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination is inadequate. Leaders, managers and the governing body ensure that the school promotes safeguarding satisfactorily and follows required guidelines.

The school engages parents and carers appropriately in school life. Increasing numbers of parents and carers are involved in supporting their children's learning. Partnerships with outside agencies help to improve the school's pastoral support and curriculum enrichment. Leaders understand the school's local context. Nonetheless, there is no assessment of how it aims to promote community cohesion beyond the immediate locality. Pupils have little opportunity to develop more than a scant awareness of diversity in British society. In view of the inadequacies in leadership, the quality of provision, pupil outcomes and the overall lack of improvement since the last inspection, the school is providing inadequate value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
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	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy a satisfactory start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle well and quickly become familiar with routines and the expectations of staff. Children have opportunities throughout the day to choose for themselves whether to learn and play inside or outdoors. Currently, they make satisfactory progress from starting points that are well below those expected for four-year-old children. This represents an improving picture and is due largely to adults' increased focus on children's speaking and listening skills. Staff encouragement and a warm welcome to the setting are helping more parents and carers to become increasingly involved in their children's learning. Communication between home and school is good.

Satisfactory leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage have resulted in a recent focus on improving the learning environment and adults' practice. In particular, there are good opportunities to develop children's physical skills. However, more remains to be done to promote children's independent learning and to ensure more achieve a good level of development. At times, there is too much support from adults, so that the challenge in some activities dwindles. Expectations are not always high enough with regard to children's attitudes and response. Adults have a secure understanding of the learning, development and welfare requirements for children of this age.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A larger than average proportion of parents and carers, approximately 60%, returned the inspection questionnaire. There was a strongly positive response that demonstrates how highly the majority of parents and carers value the welcoming and safe school environment. Typically, parents and carers say that their children enjoy school and praise 'the welcoming atmosphere and approachable staff'. This feedback reflects that gathered by the school from its own surveys. Some negative feedback was also received. This related largely to the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection, this was investigated carefully and inspectors' findings confirm that a small minority of pupils lack self-discipline.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marshland 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 128 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	61	28	35	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	58	31	39	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	60	32	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	59	28	35	3	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	50	63	28	35	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	59	28	35	4	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	50	36	45	2	3	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)	41	51	37	46	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	56	30	38	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	44	28	35	15	19	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	46	34	43	6	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	55	29	36	5	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	61	25	31	6	8	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



4 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marshland Primary School, Doncaster, DN8 4SB

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when my colleague and I inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, listening to your views and looking at your work. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

The adults in the school work hard to look after you and keep you safe. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and feel safe at Marshland. Your parents and carers agree and support the school. You know right from wrong and understand how to live healthily. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. However, many of you in Years 1 to 6 are not learning as well as you should and do not attain highly enough by the time you leave the school. We judged that your school needs 'special measures' to help it provide a better education for all of you. This means that your school will have extra help to make sure it improves and provides you with the education you need. Inspectors will visit regularly to check on the progress being made.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governing body to do several things to improve the school. Firstly, to help you achieve more highly in English and mathematics. Secondly, to develop a more stimulating curriculum that interests you more in your learning. Thirdly, to make sure that all the adults keep a close check on the progress the school is making. Lastly, we want attendance levels to rise further. You can help by listening carefully in lessons, working hard and by attending regularly.

We send you and your teachers our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Hughes

Lead Inspector

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