

March CofE Primary School, The

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126031
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	359993
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dominic Ryan
Headteacher	Peter Edgington
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection, 23 lessons and 10 different teachers were observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher; teaching and support staff; members of the governing body; parents and carers; and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, information on the tracking of pupils' progress and on provision for those pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, and minutes of governing body meetings. In addition, questionnaires from 96 parents and carers, 16 staff and 91 pupils were analysed.

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

- What are the school's strategies for assessment and what do they say about pupils' progress, especially the more able in mathematics and science?
- What evidence is there of the apparent strengths in pupils' personal development?
- How well are staff achieving the school's aim of providing flexible accommodation to enable the curriculum to meet pupils' individual needs?
- In the light of the changes in the school leadership, and the commitment to subject leaders, how effectively are the leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, enabling continuity and improvement?

Information about the school

The March Church of England Primary School is on the outskirts of the city of Chichester. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These mostly relate to language, literacy and communication, and emotional difficulties. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class.

The long-term headteacher left in December 2008. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2008 and a new headteacher in April 2009. This headteacher left the school in July 2010 and an acting headteacher was appointed for the autumn term 2010. Following an interview at the end of September 2010, the acting headteacher was appointed as the current substantive headteacher.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The March Church of England Primary is a good school. Despite experiencing leadership difficulties due to changes of headteacher, there is a stable atmosphere of high expectations. The recently appointed and highly effective headteacher knows the school's strengths and what needs to improve. Through careful self-evaluation, involving all the staff and governors, he has identified the priorities to develop and together they are systematically, and speedily, tackling these issues. The school's extremely positive reputation in the community and consistently good pupil outcomes are due to the hard work of all staff and governors who share the headteacher's values and ambitions for the school. Consequently, the school is well placed to build on its strengths and has a good capacity to improve. As one parent, reflecting the views of most, observed, 'Whilst the school has had so many changes of headteacher, the teaching and support staff have been brilliant in maintaining a stable and happy environment for our children ♦ they are a credit to their profession. In the short time the new head has been here he has already introduced some great changes.'

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and are inquisitive learners. Very effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make good progress immediately in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good start is built on well so that standards at the end of Year 2 are consistently above average and the more able pupils do especially well. Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has varied over the last three years, pupils make good progress. By the time they leave the school, attainment is generally above average because the teaching is never less than good. Individual improvement targets and good support for pupils of all abilities consistently raise pupils' levels of achievement. Despite the changes of staff, national test results in Year 6 this year were well above average and reached the school's carefully formulated and challenging targets.

The curriculum covers all subjects well and is enhanced by a good range of additional activities, visits and visitors. The school rightly has a priority to give pupils increasing opportunities to practise and further consolidate their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. It has accurately identified the need to embed the curriculum changes and links between subjects further, and to implement the well-planned building plans, to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment, and make all lessons as relevant to pupils' interests as possible.

The pastoral support, guidance and care provided for all pupils are very good and, as a result, by the time pupils leave the school, they are mature and thoughtful young adults who make an extremely effective contribution to the school and the local community. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and feel very safe, reflecting the staff's high expectations and very effective level of care and moral guidance. Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

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The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very well. The contribution of the Friends of the School Association is exceptional, and much appreciated by all concerned. The audit of community cohesion, undertaken by the headteacher, staff and governors, is underpinned by a careful analysis of these factors in the school's context. While these links with the local community are excellent, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom, and the global community, are not developed sufficiently well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that by July 2011 changes in the curriculum are embedded so that:
 - pupils are given the maximum opportunities to practise and reinforce their skills and learning in English and mathematics
 - the exciting and relevant activities that are linked across subject areas are present in all lessons.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom, and global community, and extend the provision for community cohesion by:
 - building on the findings of the recent analysis of community cohesion
 - implementing the plans for twinning with schools in other localities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In all lessons observed pupils made good or better progress. They enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually broadly in line with those expected for their age, and immediately make good progress. Pupils are generally well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and are keen to please their teachers and other adults. This is a reflection of the strong moral code of the school that encourages good behaviour, attentiveness and hard work, and enables them all to make good progress as they move through the school. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 science lesson, pupils listened well to the teacher's effective opening, and appreciated the great deal of freedom they were given to respond in their own way and at their own pace. This led to some insightful conclusions about up thrust and water resistance. In a Year 1 lesson on using natural sources to create pictures, the pupils were organised very effectively into different groups so that they were all well challenged at their level. As a result, they all made good progress.

Targets set for pupils' progress are used very well in all classes, and they are well monitored. The progress of different groups of pupils, such as those with specific learning needs, is good. Their targets are used well to make sure they are appropriately supported and challenged in every lesson. More able pupils have benefited from tailored small group sessions both within lessons for English and in withdrawal groups outside the classroom for mathematics, which have successfully raised their achievement. In particular, activities that specifically involved them in problem solving aided their confidence in using their mathematical skills for different purposes.

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Pupils' above average attendance helps them to make good progress overall and to achieve well. They appreciate the good opportunities to participate in sporting activities that encourage their extremely positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy. The school successfully instills in the pupils an excellent spiritual, social and moral understanding, which accounts for their consistently good behaviour and positive attitudes to school. A striking feature that the pupils displayed at all times was the caring way they look after each other. The outstanding house system was shown to particularly good effect in the act of worship the Year 6 house captains planned and delivered. The way in which pupils treated each other and spoke to adults with such kindness and respect was exceptional. Pupils' good behaviour, good understanding of how to stay safe and above average standards in basic skills mean pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good. In many lessons, there are strong elements that help pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Teachers work as a keen and enthusiastic team to encourage pupils in their learning. They use a range of techniques, such as excellent use of interactive whiteboards, to make lessons enjoyable. Pupils know that their ideas are valued and the outstanding displays in the classrooms and around the school celebrate their achievements. Most teachers keep up a brisk pace and help pupils to meet

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their high expectations by asking questions that encourage them to think hard. In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 3, the teacher gave high quality feedback to test pupils' understanding, introduced extra challenges and used praise effectively to raise pupils' expectations of what they were capable of achieving. Staff effectively help pupils assess their own and each other's work, identifying what to do next, and marking always helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

Staff's high expectations of pupils' progress are reflected in the challenging targets set for individuals and year groups. In the most effective lessons, the careful planning is implemented with enthusiasm and care. This was clear in a design and technology lesson in the Year 2 class. The pupils were enthusiastic and sensible as they discussed the pizzas they were making. The teacher's good use of praise, in a consistent adopted Italian accent, was a reflection of the way the school constantly encourages pupils' best behaviour, attentiveness and hard work. One particularly notable aspect of the school's care for individual pupils is the work of the special educational needs coordinator and her team. The very effective learning support assistants ensure that those pupils with specific learning needs are very well cared for through identifying their needs early and providing support so they make consistently good progress.

Throughout the school, positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive ethos for study. As a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is exceptionally caring. The impact of the school's very effective support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils' good standards of behaviour and social skills.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The outstanding partnership the headteacher has already created with all staff and governors has established a direction for the work of the school that has begun to enable significant progress in embedding improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked hard to develop a corporate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. There is an effective plan for further development and the subject leaders show an urgency to make sure their impact in each subject is shared so all staff are willing to make further improvements.

The administrative team, with the excellent bursar, plays a central role within the school. Its work is acknowledged and much appreciated. The governing body is fully involved in all developments. It supports the school very effectively and brings a wide range of experience and skills to bear to act as critical friend and requesting explanations where

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this is judged to be necessary. Its hard work to ensure appropriate space is available for all curriculum needs through its well thought out building changes is on track.

Staff and governors ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated, and the school is extremely effective in promoting equal opportunities, and meeting individual pupils' needs. It values the opinions of parents and pupils and acts upon these. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are thorough and all members of staff are well trained. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other local schools and agencies are harnessed well. The need to expand its links to provide pupils with better national and global perspectives is well understood by the school.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start to their schooling in the Reception class and achieve well. They settle happily into school because of good links with parents and because of the strong nurturing environment. Staff make every effort to ensure all children feel welcome. The good parental relationships are maintained on a daily basis as staff make a concerted effort to talk to parents to enable them to understand how their children learn.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well and clear priorities are set for improvement. The enhancements in provision and outcomes since the previous inspection are testament both to the effective leadership of the coordinator and the good teaching. The plans for the canopy over the outside space that is soon to be erected are well defined and thoroughly costed.

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Planning is good because careful account is taken of the regular, ongoing assessments of children's progress. Effective teamwork provides good routines, high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and excellent relationships. Consequently, children develop well personally and engage well with their learning. Staff make good use of the facilities and also of the outside area to extend children's learning, particularly their climbing, clambering and physical skills. There is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Children's language skills are being developed well with a clear focus on vocabulary. Children thoroughly enjoy learning but there are occasional missed opportunities, as activities are not fully enhanced by the use of richer language, such as signs and questions, and by linking the tasks carefully to what children already know.

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

A large number of parents or carers returned the questionnaire and the overwhelming majority, and those who spoke to the inspection team, are very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and the new headteacher leads and manages the school very well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and almost all feel their children make good progress. Inspection evidence shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress. Parents and carers are particularly impressed with the pastoral support their children receive. The majority also feel that the school deals well with any disruptive behaviour. Inspectors fully endorse these views. The very small number of constructive parental criticisms were shared and discussed with the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The March CofE 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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 199 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	78	21	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	82	16	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	66	69	29	30	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	67	29	30	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	68	71	26	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	65	33	34	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	76	23	24	1	1	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)	59	61	29	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	70	25	26	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	51	36	38	6	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	54	39	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	68	71	25	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	84	15	16	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. 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 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.



15 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The March C of E Primary School, Westhampnett PO18 0NU

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is a good school with many strengths, and we agree with what you told us ♦ it is a really fun place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- The school looks after you extremely well and you all make good progress in your learning.
- You always behave well, get along with each other and feel very safe in school.
- You all have very good ideas on how to make things better and the teachers always listen to what you want
- You have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do both in school and on visits and in clubs.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school very well.

Even in good schools, there are some things that could be better. We have asked the staff to speed up using the plans they have made to link the subjects in your lessons to make sure they are all as interesting as they can be. We also want them to give you more opportunities to use your English and maths skills in all lessons and, therefore, give you even more exciting opportunities to learn. We also want your headteacher and staff to make sure you are given the chance to find out more about people in other parts of the country and the world that are different from where you live. In turn, you can all help by carrying on listening carefully and taking note of what your teachers say. Then you will all continue to make good or even better progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead inspector

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