

St Marychurch Church of England Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113473
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	357361
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Alexander Baxter

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father David Lashbrooke
Headteacher	Philip Mantell
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons and observed 11 teachers. They attended an assembly, observed break and lunchtime activities, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. They looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The provision and planning for pupils who are potentially vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities were evaluated. In addition, questionnaires completed by 43 parents and carers, 92 pupils and 13 staff were analysed.

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

- How the school ensures that pupils benefit from a continuity of good teaching and learning as they move through the school, especially those arriving other than at the normal time from other schools/backgrounds, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and more-able pupils, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- How well pupils are enabled to develop their self-evaluation skills in support of their academic achievement as they move through the school.
- How well leaders and managers bring about improvement, especially in attendance and in pupils' progress through Years 1 to 2.

Information about the school

This is an above-average-sized nursery and primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and includes a much higher than average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Most needs are related to speech, language and specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above that normally expected. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery class and two Reception classes. A privately run after-school club operates on the school site and shares some of the school's facilities. The school holds several awards and has achieved Artsmark Bronze and Healthy Schools Plus awards this year.

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

1

Main findings

St Marychurch is a good school with a strong sense of the closely knit community that it serves so well. There are several outstanding features, such as the high quality care, guidance and support provided by the staff and excellent clubs and visits that promote the pupils' exemplary contributions to learning and to school and community events. It is a very caring, inclusive school where all pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities, both academically and personally. Under the very well-considered leadership of an experienced headteacher, and with a strengthened, team approach to management and governance, it is an improving school.

Crucially, the school's strengths are underpinned by the way that senior managers track pupils' progress and very effectively evaluate the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' achievements to bring about improvement. These developments have lifted pupils' attainment, especially their reading and mathematical skills. Positive improvements made in these areas since the last inspection show that the school now has an excellent capacity to sustain improvement into the future.

The school promotes good links with parents and carers, and outside agencies. These help to ensure that pupils behave well and feel confident, and that their welfare is fully safeguarded. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support. Over the past two terms, links have included a good partnership with the local authority attendance officer that has lifted attendance to a satisfactory level. A small number of pupils are still absent too often and not deriving full benefit from all that the school has to offer. ♦♦

Excellent provision in Nursery and Reception classes gives children an outstanding start and lays the foundation for the school's happy, caring ethos. ♦ Good progress, particularly in developing self-confidence and a love of school, continues throughout the remainder of the school so that attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement, equally for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils with more ability and those joining from other schools. Such positive outcomes reflect the good quality of teaching and academic guidance through the school and the pupils' strong contributions to learning. Staff are particularly successful in extending pupils' speaking and listening and reading skills and provide very helpful oral guidance to pupils. However, the consistency of teachers' written marking and their involvement of pupils in self-evaluating their own work are not established with equal effectiveness across the school.

Consequently, some pupils do not always develop their basic writing and numeracy skills well enough. ♦♦

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Over the course of the next year, improve the quality of marking pupils' work by bringing it to a level that matches the high quality of oral guidance, by:
 - ensuring that written comments give pupils clear information about how to improve their work.
 - making more regular connections with the pupils' previously identified targets for improvement.
 - extending pupils' involvement in self-evaluation so they develop a clearer picture of the specific skills they need to improve.
- Over the next two terms, work with parents and carers, and the local authority school attendance officer, to further improve pupils' attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Observations of lessons show that pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress. This applies equally for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils of high ability, and those who join the school partway through the year. Children make an excellent start in Nursery and Reception classes where they are particularly enthused by much practical activity. Pupils' progress continues at a good pace as pupils move through the rest of school, in response to an increasing amount of good and better teaching and learning. Pupils' attainment, evident in recorded work, spoken responses in lessons and in recent national and school assessments, is above average by the end of Year 6. This shows good achievement from the below expected levels of skill evident at the time children enter the school. Above average attainment was seen, for example, during a Years 5 and 6 guided-reading lesson as pupils responded perceptively to the teacher's sharp questioning or worked to good purpose as individuals. The pupils' willingness to respond to adult questioning or to express their ideas, either as individuals, in pairs or in groups, by writing on small whiteboards, show the improved consistency of good learning evident in all classes. Clear learning objectives and very positive relationships quicken pupils' progress, notably for example in Years 1 and 2 in guided-reading sessions. These were also evident in a mathematics lesson in Year 2 when pupils showed good purpose in calculating the total value of coins and comparing them with other sets of coins. ♦

Additional and often excellent progress occurs when pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive small group or individual intervention support for their specific needs. Sampling of pupils' work, especially of their writing and in mathematics, shows good progress. However, written comments in teachers' marking do not always connect with previously agreed targets or with pupils' particular skills. As a result, even though improvement continues, the basic writing and number skills of some pupils are not always fully developed.

Pupils respond well to the very caring adults, and clearly feel safe and greatly enjoy being at school. When interviewed, pupils' comments such as 'We are pleased that our school is improving' fully illustrate their enthusiasm for school. Pupils make excellent contributions

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to school and community events, and are diligent in undertaking responsibilities as representatives of the 'pupils' voice' on the school council. Pupils receive caring support and consequently behave well, in and out of lessons. Increasingly, especially in Early Years Foundation Stage classes, behaviour is excellent. The pupils' very friendly relationships show the success of the school's efforts to welcome and include pupils from other schools. As a result, by the time they leave school, the pupils' good academic achievement and positive attitudes to learning prepare them well for the future.

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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Typical strengths in teaching include high expectations and suitably challenging questioning, which alongside valuing pupils and their responses, promote the pupils' confidence and sustained efforts. The teachers and their capable assistants are diligent in getting to know the pupils and track pupils' progress accurately to make sure that their planned lessons match well with the pupils' abilities. Additional one-to-one and group support from adults are equally well planned, timed and effective, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those new to the school and for more-able pupils. Pupils with complex learning and physical needs receive exemplary support. The pupils' good progress in guided reading illustrates the supportive way that pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and benefit from regular routines and challenging adult questioning. Teachers give very helpful oral guidance and when questioned, pupils show

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good knowledge in explaining their 'Traffic Light' system of self-evaluation, using colours to signify their success or otherwise in developing their understanding. However, the written guidance and targets given to pupils when teachers mark their work, especially in mathematics, are not always consistent or precise enough. For example, in helping some pupils to know just what they have to do to overcome difficulties in spelling and using number bonds quickly enough.

Success in learning is engendered by the teachers' good use of information and communication technology in the form of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils' interest and, as for example in an English lesson in Years 5 and 6, to use pupils' ideas to enhance their writing. Staff provide exceptional pastoral care and have an in-depth knowledge of all the pupils, especially those who have specific needs. They work effectively with parents, carers and outside agencies to further enhance the quality of the support available. Such partnerships with parents and carers and with the local authority attendance officer are lifting pupils' attendance, but have not been sustained long enough to bring attendance to a level which matches the good level of other outcomes. The well-planned curriculum is enriched by a very good range of clubs, such as the Breakfast club, which reflects its new Healthy Schools Plus Award and stimulating visits out of school, for example to the nearby Babbacombe Model Village. These promote the pupils' interest, personal development and well-being effectively and particularly stimulate their very willing contributions. Currently, although opportunities are not always taken to fully enhance the pupils' cultural understanding across other subjects, topic work, such as 'Christmas around the World', is beginning to improve this aspect. ♦ ♦

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The well-respected and capable headteacher promotes teamwork and a sustained drive for improvement in an exemplary way. He is extremely well supported by senior managers and the governing body in raising expectations of what pupils can and should achieve both academically and personally. Rigorous and very successful monitoring of provision, especially through exemplary use of information and communication technology to track pupils' progress, underpins the school's very effective self-evaluation. However, while leaders and managers ensure that assessment is used very precisely to inform teachers' planning, their work in bringing a consistency of good practice in teachers' marking and pupils' involvement in self-evaluation remains work in progress.

The governing body and staff with responsibilities fulfil their responsibilities well. Their good working partnerships with parents and carers and outside agencies enable them to

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meet pupils' differing needs and to safeguard their welfare to good effect. St Marychurch is a very inclusive school where pupils, across the range of ability, enjoy equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination. They achieve equally well in relation to their needs. These are evident in the school's success in raising boys' achievement and in quickly settling and re-engaging an increasing number of pupils who have found learning difficult in other schools. Improved attendance and re-established good learning through Years 1 and 2 further illustrate a very strong capacity to improve into the future.

The school fosters community cohesion well. There are very close links with the church and local community, for example during the inspection, when the choir sang for elderly residents in their care homes. Pupils' insight and opportunities to contribute to the national and international dimension of community cohesion are developed well through charitable events, and by inviting parents and carers, and encouraging pupils from different ethnic backgrounds to talk about their festivities and beliefs. As, for example, in a Year 2 class when pupils enjoyed comparing Christmas customs in Britain with those in Poland. ♦ ♦

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

In response to outstanding provision in the Nursery and Reception classes, children really enjoy school and make excellent progress in all areas of learning, especially in developing self-confidence and in extending their social and language skills. There is an optimum balance between the learning activities led by adults and the range of activities that children can choose for themselves, both indoors and outside. Outstanding teaching and learning are evident in the way that staff promote children's thinking and question the children to draw new learning from the children's chosen activities. For example, in the Nursery when riding tricycles or playing in the 'Let's Pretend' role-play corner and in Reception when discussing how their chosen animals in their table top 'Snow World' are

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adapted to live in a cold environment. Staff are particularly innovative in stimulating the children's interest and enjoyment in learning, for example, in using 'Sammy' the large puppet to enhance children's knowledge of letters and sounds and understanding of words.

Leaders and managers are highly effective in ensuring that the children's individual needs are assessed in full consultation with parents and carers and pre-school settings. As a result, parents and carers are extremely appreciative, and by working supportively with the staff, assist in making sure that children's welfare is fully safeguarded and their needs met as they move through Early Years Foundation Stage classes. ♦♦

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a lower than average response to the questionnaire by parents and carers. Almost all of the parents and carers who spoke to inspectors or who responded to the questionnaire expressed very positive views about their children's experience at St Marychurch. In particular, the overwhelming majority agree with almost all of the statements in the questionnaire. Several parents and carers wrote very positive comments, mostly reflecting the caring ethos of the school. Other typical comments included 'Teaching appears to have changed greatly, for the better, in the past couple of years' and 'I am highly impressed with the way the school has met both of my children's needs.' Inspection findings endorse these views. A few parents and carers disagreed with the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, and about the leadership of the school. Inspection shows that the school has made a great deal of improvement since the previous inspection, largely because of very effective leadership and management, and is very well placed to continue this into the future. The findings of the inspection show that pupils' behaviour is good because the school has effective procedures to promote and maintain good behaviour, and pupils themselves agree with this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Marychurch Cof E Nursery and 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 272 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	65	13	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	77	10	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	67	13	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	67	12	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	74	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	70	13	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	63	15	35	0	0	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)	22	51	18	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	70	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	35	23	53	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	53	17	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	67	12	28	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	74	10	23	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.



10 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Marychurch Cof E Nursery and Primary School, Torquay TQ1 4QH

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our time talking to you and seeing all the things you do. I particularly want to thank the members of the school council and a separate group of Year 5 and 6 pupils who agreed to be interviewed by one of my colleagues. We were notably impressed by your enthusiasm for school and by your willingness to share ideas with each other, especially when you put on your 'Thinking Hats'. We think that St Marychurch is a good school and we agree with you that it is getting better. ♦

These are the other main things we found.

- Teaching is good and helps you to learn well and make good progress.
- Teaching is excellent in Nursery and Reception classes, and is very successful in welcoming you and introducing you to enjoyable learning at school.
- Adults care for you in an exemplary way and work well with your parents and carers and other people to help you to live healthily and safely.
- You work hard and work well together. You greatly enjoy school, especially when talking about your ideas and taking part in community events and visits. ♦
- Your behaviour is good and you are very friendly and helpful young people.
- Your headteacher, staff and governing body work very well together. They have made your school better than it was at its last inspection, and have the skills and determination to make it even better. ♦

To bring improvement, we have asked the school to do two main things.

- Ensure that when teachers mark your books, they make reference to your targets and give you more information about how you can improve your work.
- Make sure that some of you take better advantage of all that the school has to offer by not missing school unnecessarily. ♦

All of you can help by making sure that, when you follow the teachers' guidance, you think carefully about what you have to do to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector

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