

Marlborough Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113306
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	357314
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P Egerton
Headteacher	J M W Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons taught by nine teachers. They met with a member of the governing body, senior and middle leaders and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation such as the school's development plan, external monitoring reports, information on pupils' progress, attendance data, targets for pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and curriculum plans. In addition, questionnaires from 58 parents and carers, and others from staff and pupils were analysed.

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

- How is the school tracking the rates of pupils' progress and attainment across the school but especially in Key Stage 1?
- How successful are the initiatives and strategies to accelerate progress and raise attainment in Key Stage 1, and for boys and for higher-attaining pupils across the school?
- How effective are the senior and middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and its impact on pupils' achievement?
- How effective are the school's procedures to improve pupils' attendance?

Information about the school

Marlborough is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils live in the immediate area and the vast majority are of White British heritage. There are very few pupils speaking English as an additional language but this number is increasing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is also well above average and increasing. During the inspection, the pupils were participating in 'Science Week' activities with most of the school visiting a zoo on the second day.

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

This is a good school and one that is improving rapidly, having made significant progress since the last inspection. The school has been supported well by the local authority and by other partner schools and the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a consequence, the quality of teaching and learning is now consistently good or better and has resulted in good pupils' progress and rising attainment, particularly in mathematics. These improvements, taken together, demonstrate that the school has good capacity for future improvement.

Staff work effectively to eradicate any differences in the achievement of groups of pupils. Pupils also behave and respect each other well. This is because staff have very high expectations of them. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average and their achievement is good. Nevertheless, attainment in English, and especially in writing, is below average. Inspectors' own observations confirm that good programmes have been developed to address this weakness resulting in higher attainment, especially at Key Stage 1 and for pupils capable of achieving the highest standards. Effective systems to track pupils' progress and to assign challenging targets have been central to this improvement, as teachers know each pupil extremely well. Lessons are modified well to meet the needs of all pupils, assessment strategies are effective. The creative curriculum meets the needs of pupils, and especially boys, because it is well organised and delivered. Pupils state that they enjoy the performance, filmmaking, art and visits the curriculum provides.

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are given a high priority. The care, guidance and support for pupils are also good, especially for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, together with those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. A 'Nurture Class' and the many therapy sessions effectively support those children with specific needs. Most pupils behave well around the school and in lessons and pupils state that they feel safe, as the result of the high expectations of the staff and the level of care and support they receive. However, pupils' attendance rates are now close to average following significant improvements over the past few years. The school has worked hard to reduce the number of persistent absentees but the number of absences resulting from holidays taken during term time is still too high.

The school is very much part of the local community. Its commitment to share school facilities, such as the hall and areas of the playground, has been welcomed. The many displays in the school demonstrate that links with the local community are strong. The pupils' awareness and understanding of the way of life of more diverse communities in the United Kingdom are insufficiently developed.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, and especially in writing, by developing the use of learning walls to boost expectations for pupils and ensuring pupils act more purposefully on the advice they receive on how to improve.
- Raise levels of pupils' attendance to at least 95% by December 2011 by working more closely with parents and carers who take holidays in term time.
- Strengthen pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom by establishing links with a school located within a contrasting community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The quality of learning and progress in lessons is good. Pupils behave well, and mature into polite, thoughtful and considerate young people. The overwhelming majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their tasks and respond appropriately to teachers' requests and demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. In Year 1, the learning environment has been carefully modified to meet the needs of the pupils. Building on their visit to the zoo, for example, the children were observed enthusiastically learning letters and sounds, extending their vocabulary, being creative and conducting internet research. Many demonstrated a readiness for learning, independence and curiosity that are typical in all classes and represent a vast improvement from their relative starting points. In Year 6, pupils were observed successfully using strategies to solve and check their written methods in mathematics; here, the pupils demonstrated well-developed skills and perseverance.

Attainment is average by the end of Year 6. In 2010, pupils' performance in mathematics was stronger than that in English. Despite this success, leaders are anything but complacent, being ever vigilant to continue to help pupils improve their analysis in writing skills. Overall, from below average starting points, pupils make good progress and their achievement is good. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, as do those who speak English as an additional language. This is as a result of effective guidance and one-to-one tuition given by teachers and teaching assistants to meet their needs effectively and carefully track their progress through the use of rigorous systems. An increasing number of pupils are now achieving the highest standards in both key stages.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about many aspects of school life, such as themed weeks, school visits and the many extra-curricular activities planned for them. The pupils are very proud of the artwork and displays that adorn the corridors and which demonstrate high levels of skill and commitment.

Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel safe in school and show a good understanding of the risks from potentially unsafe situations. They have a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. ♦ Attendance has improved and is now close to average. This has been due to a reduction in the number of persistent absentees and higher attendance among those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Improved attendance and higher attainment, especially in mathematics, mean that pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their school career.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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. Importantly, this is consistent across the school and represents an improvement since the last inspection. The school's creative and stimulating curriculum has a significant impact on pupils' willingness to learn and engagement. In many lessons, there are strong elements that help pupils of all abilities to make good progress; high expectations, effective behaviour management strategies, planning to meet the needs of all pupils and clearly articulated learning objectives are typical. Most teachers keep up a brisk pace and help pupils to meet their high expectations by asking challenging questions, and this has resulted in improved outcomes for those pupils capable of achieving the highest standards. Teachers' improved expectations of pupils' progress are reflected in the challenging targets set for individuals and year groups. Teachers give high-quality feedback to the pupils through carefully worded oral and written comments and all pupils have a good understanding of their targets and what to do to improve. However, the school recognises that this needs to be strengthened through the improved use of the learning walls that feature in each classroom by including samples of assessed writing. In some lessons, for example, staff were seen to be helping pupils assess their own and each other's work very effectively, and encouraging them to identify what to do next. This was clear in an English lesson in a Year 2 class where pupils were enthusiastic and sensible as they dramatically acted scenes and judged each other's performances.

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Throughout the school, positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the pupils' readiness to learn. There are many examples of where the school has worked extremely well with pupils, their families and outside agencies to help remove barriers to learning, such as the use of therapeutic services. The impact of the school's extremely effective support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils' good standard of behaviour and developing social skills. Rates of attendance are improving because of multi-agency support, targeted use of the breakfast club, an 'Early Bird Lottery' and robust systems to challenge absence and lateness. However, the school recognises the need to mitigate the impact of pupils' absence by working more closely with parents and carers who take holidays during term time.

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 headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked effectively to develop a shared and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This has ensured that the school has made the necessary improvements from the last inspection and has resulted in better outcomes for pupils, especially in terms of progress and attainment and consistency in teaching and assessment. Comments from staff in the questionnaires are highly supportive of the school's leadership and direction. The governing body ensures that all statutory duties are fulfilled; it has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and holds the school to account when necessary. Staff and governors ensure that discrimination in any form is not tolerated and the school is effective in promoting equal opportunities that have helped all groups of pupils to make similar progress. It values the opinions of parents and carers and pupils and acts upon these. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are adequate and all members of staff and governors are well trained. Checks made during the recruitment of staff follow recommended guidelines and are recorded carefully.

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 community-based organisations to promote the personal and academic development of the pupils and the professional development of the teachers are effective. This includes the link with Real Ideas Organisation that has had a profound effect on curriculum planning and delivery. However, the need to expand the school's links to provide better national perspectives is well understood by the school, as these connections are not yet sufficiently well developed.

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

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Overall, children start school mostly with a range of skills that are well below that which is expected for their age. By the end of Reception, they attain levels that are just below those expected for their age and make good progress. Nevertheless, some weaknesses still remain, especially in personal and social skills and communication, language and literacy. Children feel very secure and supported as individuals as a result of the commitment of the staff and effective leadership. The newly formed team of adults has a good understanding of the needs of each child and the curriculum has been adapted successfully to reflect individual interests. Adults monitor the progress of each child skilfully through well-developed systems to assess and record progress. All adults have high expectations, provide clear routines and have developed positive relationships with parents to support transition.

There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and as a consequence there were high levels of enjoyment both inside the classrooms and in the well-resourced outdoor learning area (especially on the pirate ship!). Children were highly motivated as they searched for Noah's 'lost animals' during a guided writing exercise to prepare them for their forthcoming visit to the zoo. The personal care and well-being of the children are given a high priority and the school has developed effective partnerships with external agencies to support the many vulnerable children it receives.

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

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

These are the grades for 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

Thirty three per cent of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. The very large majority were very supportive of the school. There were few written comments. Among these, there were several positive comments, such as: 'The school has enabled my son to excel at his level and we have stayed in the area specifically to enable him to remain at Marlborough because of the teaching staff.' A small number of parents expressed concerns over the standard of behaviour of pupils in the school. While the inspection team appreciates that the school has its challenges, it judged that most pupils behave well and incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare and the staff deal with them effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marlborough 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	53	25	43	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	62	20	34	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	38	32	55	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	38	33	57	2	3	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	28	48	25	43	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	40	31	53	2	3	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	38	33	57	3	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	36	29	50	5	9	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	43	27	47	5	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	38	23	40	6	10	6	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	26	28	48	9	16	4	7
The school is led and managed effectively	17	29	32	55	3	5	4	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	47	28	48	0	0	3	5

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.



16 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marlborough Primary School, Plymouth, PL1 4NJ

Thank you for making us welcome in your school. We thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. We think your school gives you a good education overall. This is what we particularly appreciated:

- Many of you are making good progress and you are working particularly hard at improving your reading, writing and number skills.
- Most of you behave well in lessons and in the playground.
- You understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- You are taught well and teachers plan many interesting activities for you to do in lessons, and you particularly enjoy sport, performing and art.
- You say you feel safe in school and this is because all the adults do a good job in looking after you and making sure that you get help whenever you need it.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead your school well and all the adults, including the governors, are working hard to improve the school.

We have given the school three recommendations to help you do better.

- Your teachers need to do more to help you to do better in writing by improving the displays that help you to learn.
- The school needs to continue to work to make sure that more of you attend school more often.
- You need to be helped to understand more about other communities further away in the United Kingdom.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Marlborough Primary School to be an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bryan

Lead inspector

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