

# Marlborough Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103232
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376856
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Davis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	322
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Masaud Aslam
<b>Headteacher</b>	Evelyn Cooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Marlborough Road Small Heath B10 9NY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 22 lessons and nine teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff, and groups of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at: policies; development planning; data related to the tracking of pupils' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; pupils' work; and 114 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

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

- How effectively do pupils in current classes learn, particularly those of highest ability?
- How consistent is the quality of teaching and learning across the school? How well do teachers plan to meet pupils' individual needs and in particular to challenge the most able?
- How well does the school promote regular attendance? What has been the impact of strategies to raise levels of attendance?
- What has been the impact of leaders' actions to raise the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage?

## Information about the school

Marlborough Infant is a larger-than-average inner-city school. All of its pupils are from minority ethnic heritages with over 80% being of Pakistani origin. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is five times the national average, and a significant proportion enter the school unable to speak any English. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs and/or disabilities or on school action plus is below the national average. However, the proportion on school action is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has Healthy Schools status, Activemark and the Leading Parent Partnership Award. A breakfast club is provided every morning.

**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

Marlborough Infant is a good school. Pupils enjoy their learning and the outstanding care provided ensures that they feel very safe and secure. Parents and carers were keen to tell inspectors how much they value the school's work, including the support provided for families. Part-time specialist teachers speak of how much they enjoy coming to the school because of the welcome they receive and the enthusiasm of the pupils.

Since the previous inspection there has been a steady rise in attainment to average, despite the low level of skills, particularly in spoken English, on entry to the school. As a result of the individually-focused support provided, children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and this accelerates during Key Stage 1. However, some pupils lack confidence in speaking and listening and occasionally give one-word answers; opportunities are missed to encourage them to talk at length about their work or to insist on extended answers to questions. Pupils behave well and attendance rates that have been low, have risen rapidly and are now average, as a result of the robust action of the school's leaders. Pupils from all backgrounds and faiths get on very well with each other and celebrate their similarities and differences. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong and know and apply the school rules and understand why they are in place. They are keen to sort out minor disputes themselves rather than relying on adults to do so. As a result the school is a harmonious and happy multicultural community.

Teaching is good overall and some outstanding practice was observed during the inspection. There is, however, some inconsistency. While most teachers plan well to meet the individual needs of pupils in their classes, sometimes those pupils with the highest abilities are insufficiently challenged. Teaching assistants are extremely effective in leading group work and are a key strength in the school's provision. Assessment practice is good and most teachers plan well to close the gaps in learning identified from their assessment of pupils' work. The curriculum is focused on promoting skills in literacy and numeracy; however there are currently insufficient opportunities across the school to develop skills in information and communication technology. The provision for the creative arts, including dance lessons is taught by a specialist who inspires creativity, develops confidence and promotes physical well-being. However, the foundation curriculum is not yet fully embedded and planning for cross-curricular topics lacks coherence.

Every pupil is known and cared for as an individual and adults work extremely hard

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to provide support for families for whom circumstances may make them vulnerable. A translation service is provided for parents and carers at an early stage of learning English and weekly language lessons are also valued. As one parent commented: 'Staff are very helpful and understand your problems and try to help you sort it out...I could not ask for a better school'. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well supported both in the classroom and in one-to-one support; this contributes significantly to their good progress.

The headteacher is very well supported by her senior team and together they have systematically tackled underachievement and successfully worked to raise attainment. Robust monitoring and evaluation and the rigorous analysis of the performance of the many different groups of pupils enables their good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are quick to address any areas of underachievement. For example, as a result of Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes falling in 2011, they made swift and effective staffing changes and provided focused support from the senior team, with the result that outcomes are now good. This effective leadership has resulted in many areas of the school's work, particularly, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, improving since the previous inspection. The school shows a good capacity to sustain these improvements.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment, particularly in speaking and listening by:
  - providing more opportunity for pupils to talk to each other and adults about their work
  - ensuring that teachers' questioning promotes extended answers.
- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better by providing appropriate challenge and support to meet the individual needs of pupils, particularly those with highest abilities.
- Embed the foundation curriculum across the school to cater for the needs and interests of all children and to provide increased opportunities for developing their skills in information and communication technology.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below average in most areas of learning and many are unable to speak any English. They enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are still below average but, by the end of the Year 2 in 2011, they had reached average attainment in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. The proportion of higher attainers however, remains below average in both reading and mathematics. Pupils are excited about their learning and during the inspection were engrossed in listening to and writing stories and poems about

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witches and ghosts to celebrate Halloween. For example, one class was spellbound as pupils listened to a story by the light of a pumpkin lantern, before using the vocabulary they had learned to write their story. Outstanding learning was observed in a dance lesson, where pupils, learned a complex dance routine to improve motor skills and promote fitness. Here they also explored the cultural background of the dance they were doing, and explained why they needed to warm up their muscles and exercise their heart, using the correct technical name for the muscles they were using. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported in lessons. Very well focused extra support is provided to develop reading and writing skills and to enable new arrivals to settle quickly and be included. As a result, these groups of pupils also make good progress.

Pupils say that they feel safe and that there is always an adult they can turn to for help. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and enjoy the daily fruit and milk provided for them. They also know the importance of physical exercise and drinking water to keep hydrated. Pupils understand the importance of good behaviour and are quick to respond to well-established classroom routines that promote good listening and good concentration. The school council has recently been re-established and its members understand and are proud of their role in representing others. Pupils value the help of ‘playground pals’ where older pupils support younger ones in resolving disputes or friendship issues. They enjoy charity fund raising and taking responsible roles in the classroom, such as distributing fruit. Pupils’ average attendance rates and basic skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them adequately for their future economic well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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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**The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

**1**

### **How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is good. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to be independent in their learning by making decisions about how they will work or when they need an adult’s help. Here, well-prepared resources enable them to access the support they need from, for example, the provision of a list of appropriate vocabulary or punctuation when they carry out a writing task. In one lesson pupils used a story plan and a list of ‘scary words’ to write their story about a haunted house. Teachers and other adults in the classroom work as a cohesive team in planning and delivering lessons. They have established a calm and purposeful working environment and an enthusiasm for learning; warm relationships between adults and pupils are evident in all classes. Occasionally, teachers fail to keep a strategic overview of how the whole class are learning during group activities and some groups are unable to make sufficient progress for a short period during a lesson. Teachers usually make their expectations for the lesson clear and provide effective guidance as to pupils’ next steps in their learning. In a minority of lessons, opportunities to evaluate learning are sometimes missed to make sure that all pupils are meeting their learning objectives. The whole-school marking policy ensures that pupils know their targets and how to reach them.

The school has appropriately focused on developing literacy and numeracy skills across the school and this has had a significant impact on standards and progress. Leaders have identified the need to establish a more creative curriculum for the foundation subjects and development planning indicates how this will be achieved over the coming year. The curriculum is enriched by a range of visits and visitors, including a strong focus on dance, drama and music and these events are being used to generate excitement and inspire writing. Support to develop the language and literacy skills of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English is a well established element of their provision. A strong feature of the curriculum is placed on understanding different cultures and faiths, through art work, display around the school and celebration of festivals. Opportunities are currently being missed however, to use cross-curricular topics effectively to ensure full coverage of the foundation subjects.

The school provides a welcoming and lively atmosphere. Achievement is celebrated and rewarded, building pupils’ self-confidence and excitement about what they do. The school has been robust in tackling low attendance levels and communicating with parents and carers about the importance of regular attendance; as a result levels have risen significantly and are now average. However the school are still working to establish the unacceptability of taking extended term-time holidays. Very good transition arrangements are in place. Home visits establish good relationships with families and ensure that appropriate support is identified for those who speak little English. Close partnership with the junior school also ensures that pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Younger pupils are able to settle quickly because

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the school ensures that they are able to be supported by their older brothers or sisters in the playground. Those for whom circumstances may make them vulnerable are very well supported through effective partnerships with a variety of external agencies. The breakfast club provides a good start to the school day in a welcoming atmosphere.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and the team have successfully engendered a strong and harmonious school community where adults lead by example in the care they show. Senior leaders have established a common vision of raising attainment and enhancing the opportunities for all the pupils in their care. This is shared by all staff and supported by the governing body. There is a strong ethos of teamwork, class teachers and teaching assistants are provided with the opportunity to plan together, so that all have a shared responsibility for promoting achievement. Targets are challenging and monitoring and evaluation at a senior level is embedded, rigorous and robust. This is not as secure with middle leaders, several of whom are new in post. Senior leaders provide effective coaching and mentoring for these leaders and for newly qualified teachers, ensuring that they are well supported.

Members of the governing body are aware of their role and carry out their statutory responsibilities well. They are representative of the diversity of the school community and are able to enhance the communication between parents, carers and school. They have a satisfactory understanding of attainment data and involve themselves in the life of the school, but currently are not actively involved in strategic planning. Safeguarding procedures are robust. All staff are appropriately trained and policies are effective and in place. Leaders have addressed concerns about the safety of the school site and have improved the security with a new entrance that has now been built and during the inspection became fully operational. The school has been recognised for its outstanding work in engaging parents and carers, including the support they offer for children and their families who are newly arrived in the country; they provide translators so that parents and carers understand the information made available for them and enable them to settle quickly. A community room has been provided for ‘stay and play’, literacy, mathematics and adult learning including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and leaders have ensured that conditions for this learning are acceptable to all cultures. A wide range of specialists providers brought into the school supports children’s learning and well-



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being, including family support workers, language support and specialist providers for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good links with other local schools colleges and universities also enhance provision. Leaders are rigorous in analysing progress of different groups of pupils and addressing any identified under-achievement. There is no discrimination and all pupils are included and enabled to achieve. The school has a good understanding of its community and family backgrounds and cultures. Although the school is predominantly a Pakistani community, the school endeavours to promote an understanding of the wider national community by forging links with a predominantly white British school nearby. The school has plans to focus on deepening cultural awareness through the arts and visiting different places of worship. The school is proactive in developing services for families in the local community and by raising funds for international issues linked to its own community, for example raising funds for flood victims in Pakistan.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a lively setting and children enjoy their learning. They make good progress and are confident and imaginative in all they do. They are able to work independently and understand classroom routines such as washing their hands, moving around safely and classroom routines. For example, during the inspection one child insisted that an inspector put on an apron before putting hands in a flour and water mix. There is a good balance of teacher-led activities and those initiated by the children, who trust and respond well to adults and show excitement at the range of activities offered. The quality of teaching is good and all adults follow effective established routines in assessing pupils’ progress. Excellent use is made of the drama teacher who was dressed as a witch during the

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inspection supporting speaking and listening. The outdoor space for Nursery and Reception is very cramped but the school is maximising the use of the space they have, including using the school walls for children to practice forming their letters and numbers in chalk. Parents and carers are very positive and supportive of the schools’ work. One parent commented: ‘My son asked if he could stay all night because he enjoys school so much.’ The school has ensured that children at an early stage of learning English are supported by teaching assistants who speak their home language. This is a strength of the provision and reflects how leaders ensure that individual needs are met. The new leader of the key stage has a clear vision for future development and is an excellent role model; he has established good teamwork and a common purpose.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive, with 98 percent agreeing that they are happy with their children’s experiences. Few parents and carers made any comments, although a very few expressed concerns about entry to the school site. During the inspection the building work on the new entrance was completed, so all other gates could be locked during the school day. Inspectors were satisfied that the school has taken all reasonable actions to ensure that the school site is safe and secure and entry well supervised.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marlborough Infant 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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 322 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	64	39	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	61	44	38	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	67	59	46	40	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	42	60	53	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	54	50	44	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	53	46	59	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	46	54	47	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)	49	43	52	46	5	4	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	54	47	53	46	3	3	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	44	51	45	7	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	38	56	49	0	0	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	55	48	50	44	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	57	50	55	48	1	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

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

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Marlborough Infant School, Small Heath B10 9NY**

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. We particularly enjoyed watching your brilliant dancing.

Our inspection has judged that you go to a good school. The excellent care that the school provides ensures that you feel very safe and well-known to staff. The standards that you reach are rising steadily. You make good progress and enjoy your learning. We were impressed by your good behaviour and how well you understand how to stay healthy. You concentrate well and enjoy all the activities and visits that are provided for you. Your teachers provide lessons that are fun and interesting, and you told us how well they support you. We have asked the school to ensure that all teaching is consistently good and that teachers provide work that matches your individual ability. We have also asked them to provide you with more opportunities to talk about your work to improve your speaking and listening skills. You make a good contribution to your school community, get on very well with each other and are very respectful of those with different beliefs and backgrounds to your own. We were particularly impressed by the way you help each other and welcome those new to the school. We are pleased that more of you are attending school every day.

The leaders of the school are working hard to make sure you learn well and develop well as young people. We have also asked them to provide more opportunities for you to use computers and other technology. You can all help them by continuing to work hard and attending well. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis  
Lead inspector

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