

Marham Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120900
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	380128
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shamaine Elms
Headteacher	Michaela Webb
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2009
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons taught by seven teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress, curricular planning documents, examples of the ways in which the school supports different groups of pupils, evidence from the school's lesson observations and information from questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 113 parents and carers.

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

- How effectively do the teachers ensure that all groups of pupils make progress in reading and writing at Key Stage 1?
- What does the school do to ensure pupils have a thorough knowledge of the diverse faiths and cultures in the world?
- To what extent does the provision help pupils, particularly those moving from overseas, to settle quickly into their new school and feel secure?

Information about the school

This infant school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school where the vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. The vast majority of pupils are from families working at the nearby airbase, and the numbers who leave or join the school during the school year are much higher than in most schools. The school has recently gained national Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

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 held in high regard by the local community. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by all staff. They say how much this helps their children settle quickly into school and feel safe and valued. The excellent partnership with parents and carers means that they take a full part in school life and are extremely well-informed about their children's progress. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the way all staff make themselves available before and after school. This means that any problems are resolved quickly.

The good teaching means that pupils achieve well. They make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop their early writing and number skills particularly well. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is broadly average overall, and above average in mathematics. This shows a big improvement over the last three years and represents good progress, especially considering the disrupted school life of many pupils. Mathematics is a particular strength because teachers give pupils many opportunities to calculate quickly in their head and solve number problems. While progress in reading is good, there is not enough use of computers or high quality reading books to get the best out of pupils, particularly the higher-attaining ones. Pupils' writing skills are improving as teachers provide ever more motivating tasks to capture their imagination. Sometimes, however, the quality of their work is let down by untidy handwriting and presentation.

Pupils behave well, enjoy school and attendance is above average. One parent, typical of many, commented, 'My child used to hate school but now would happily go even during the weekend.' The well-planned curriculum gives pupils many good opportunities to learn how to stay safe and live healthy lives. They learn something about other cultures in the curriculum, but there are too few opportunities to give them a deep understanding of the diverse faiths and social backgrounds in the United Kingdom and across the world.

The headteacher is highly respected by all members of the school community. Her constant drive for improvements accounts for the school's good progress since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. This has been achieved by rigorous self-evaluation and prompt action to rectify weaknesses in the provision. The headteacher is supported well by other senior staff and the governing body who make an effective team. With these many strengths, the school has a good capacity to sustain this improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading and writing to the levels reached in mathematics by teachers:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to read books of high quality
 - better use of computer technology to allow them to research topics for themselves
 - expecting more of the quality of their handwriting and presentation.
- Develop pupils' cultural awareness by:
 - creating meaningful links with contrasting schools and organisations in the world
 - making better use of pupils' own experiences when living outside the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the school with skills that are below the levels usual of children this age and they make good progress. By the end of Year 2 nearly all pupils read confidently and become increasingly skilled at making words from sounds. They make good progress when reading about exciting topics such as Saint George and the Dragon but the poorly-stocked library provides little motivation for them to pick up a book and read for pleasure. Their writing is interesting and they are good at thinking of exciting words for their stories. For example, their work on the story of The Three Little Pigs was full of expression and showed how much they had grasped the concept of a greedy wolf. In mathematics, pupils' progress is particularly rapid when they learn a skill and then use it in a practical situation. For example, Year 2 pupils made very good progress when learning about money. They used real coins to understand their value and moved on to acting as supermarket cashiers as others paid for their goods.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. They improve their reading very well by regular practice at word-building skills and good opportunities to talk about the stories they have read. Teachers ensure they take a full part in lessons and are careful to give them opportunities to answer questions in whole-class sessions.

Pupils' good personal development prepares them well for the future. They listen carefully in lessons and persevere well with challenging work. They have a good awareness of health and safety issues and speak knowledgeably about the need to eat nutritious foods. This is reinforced very well by their enthusiastic involvement in the school allotment. Older ones in particular understand the need to take care when using the internet and have a good appreciation of the potential hazards of fire and busy roads. They have a good involvement in the local community, particularly the

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military base, and raise money enthusiastically for organisations such as the nearby children's hospital. Pupils think deeply about those less fortunate than themselves and have a good awareness of right and wrong.

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	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	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers show a good knowledge of subjects and explain new work clearly. They make lessons fun by providing lots of practical activities that help pupils reinforce their new learning. Year 1 pupils, for example, learned how to measure using centimetres and then moved on to comparing their height to 'Farmer Joe' from one of their reading books. Teachers employ good strategies for managing behaviour, and pupils soon learn the rules about putting their hands up and listening to each other's answers. In a small minority of lessons, while the middle-ability pupils did well, the work set was too easy for some pupils and too hard for others. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work are mostly high. Teachers make detailed assessments of pupils' progress in lessons, and use these well to plan future work. They mark pupils' work promptly and are very good at showing where it could have been even better.

The school has developed a rich curriculum that links subjects together in order to make learning interesting. This is enhanced by pupils helping to decide upon the topics and how different subjects can be included. Well-planned personal, social and health education provision ensures that pupils gain a good awareness of how to live a healthy life and learn the importance of understanding other's feelings. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum, but there are no opportunities for

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

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pupils to visit different places of worship and enhance their cultural awareness. The excellent extra-curricular clubs are popular and help pupils develop their skills in sport and the creative arts. Pupils enjoy using computers, but teachers sometimes miss opportunities to allow them to use technology as an everyday resource.

Parents and carers are right to feel the school cares for their children exceptionally well. They appreciate the way staff know their children as individuals and are always there if any needs support. They speak highly of the outstanding systems to prepare children for entering the school, particularly those who move from military bases overseas. This comprehensive process helps them settle quickly into their new surroundings and feel secure. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable benefit from sensitive support, both from the school and from outside professionals. The school has taken effective measures to improve attendance and to maintain it at above average levels.

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 headteacher leads well with ambitious targets and a firm determination make further improvements. This has helped ensure that attainment is rising year by year and that weaknesses in pupils' performance are rectified quickly. The rigorous systems to evaluate teaching and learning are valued by teachers and help them learn from the best practice in school. The good governing body contributes much to school improvement and works energetically to support and challenge the headteacher and senior staff.

The outstanding partnership with parents and carers is an important part of the school's effectiveness. They say how well the school communicates with them and canvasses their views on ways to improve the provision for their children. They are particularly appreciative of the excellent systems to keep them informed about their children's progress by electronic mail when they are posted overseas. They say how much they value this, and enjoy reading reports on their children's progress and well-being.

The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures in the curriculum and do some valuable work on festivals celebrated by different religions. The school enjoys excellent links with the adjacent military base. Its personnel takes an active part in school life and make valuable

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contributions to projects such as helping pupils with the school allotment and helping paint new classrooms. Good partnerships with local schools provide cost effective training and help staff share expertise. Links with contrasting schools in the United Kingdom and further afield, however, are only just beginning.

The school is successful in providing equal opportunities for all pupils. Senior staff have developed rigorous systems to analyse attainment by all groups of pupils and plan effective strategies to support those falling behind. For example, when boys' writing lagged behind that of girls, the curriculum was improved by including more topics that captured their interest.

There are good systems for safeguarding pupils. Training is thorough and all adults show a good knowledge of their responsibilities. The governing body is closely involved in these arrangements and reviews systems regularly.

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	1
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	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 good progress and gain much from working alongside older pupils in the mixed-age classes. The good provision for literacy and numeracy ensures they learn important basic reading, writing and number skills and leave the Reception year prepared well for Key Stage 1. Excellent induction procedures, very strong partnerships with parents and carers and thorough attention to children's welfare mean that children settle quickly into school routines and enjoy learning as much as play. Consistently good teaching ensures that all groups of children achieve well. Adults work well as a team and the planning of the wide range of tasks is detailed and challenging. The classrooms' resources are organised well to support different areas of learning. Children choose happily from the range of activities and develop

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their independence well. They enjoy learning about the world by tasks such as writing and drawing about their visit to a local centre focusing on life in Africa. The outdoor area provides some good opportunities for pupils to play as well as reinforce their learning in reading, writing and number. Not all adults, however, make best use of these areas to enable children to build on their learning in the classroom. Staff observe children's learning and development carefully and the 'learning journals' provide a very comprehensive record of their work.

Children's personal and social development is good. They behave well, learn to play with and help each other and take responsibility readily. The provision is led and managed well. The leaders give staff a clear understanding of how well the provision meets children's needs and what, such as the use of the outside area, needs to be improved.

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

Parents and carers think highly of all aspects of the provision. The vast majority appreciate the way their children enjoy school, feel safe and learn how to live healthy lives. They believe the school is well led and that their children are making good progress. All of those who responded say that the teaching and learning are good. They are impressed with the way school keeps them informed about how well their children are doing and how they can help at home. Inspection findings support their views on these issues. A small number express concerns about how well the school manages poor behaviour, but inspectors found that rare instances are managed very well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marham 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 113 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	93	82	20	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	94	83	18	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	81	72	32	28	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	81	72	30	27	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	87	77	25	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	86	76	26	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	76	25	22	2	2	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)	73	65	32	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	69	33	29	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	58	33	29	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	78	69	32	28	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	93	82	19	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	96	85	16	14	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	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).

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"> ■ 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.



28 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marham Infant School, King's Lynn, PE33 9LT

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we came to your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. The many of you who were kind enough to speak to us showed how proud you are of your school. You think yours is a good school and we agree.

All of you work hard and make good progress. You behave well, and this helps to make school a happy place. You have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and live healthy lives. Even the youngest ones think a lot about people in the world who are sad or have too little to eat. Your headteacher and other leaders help to run the school smoothly. You work hard at the activities provided for you and enjoy the many clubs at lunchtime and after school. Your teachers make learning fun and are good at helping you when you find things difficult. They work really closely with your parents and carers to make sure they know how well you are doing at school. All staff at the school take excellent care of you and keep you safe.

The teachers are always looking for ways to improve. We have asked them to:

- help you to make even faster progress in reading and writing - you can help by doing your neatest writing every time and taking every opportunity to read a book
- teach you more about the lives of other people in the world.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston

Lead inspector.

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