

# The Mareham-le-Fen Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	120576
<b>Local authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380065
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 April–01 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Duncan Ramsey

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Stainton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Avril Moore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Mareham-le-Fen Boston PE22 7QB
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<b>Age group</b>	4 – 11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	30–1 April 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380065



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by four teachers. He heard pupils reading, scrutinised pupils' work, visited an assembly, spent time on the playground and undertook other activities in order to observe pupils' learning. Meetings were held with the headteacher, two members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school-evaluation documents, safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress, school-development planning and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. Responses from questionnaires completed by 37 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from 39 pupils and 13 staff.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school serving the village of Mareham-le-Fen and surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils have English as an additional language and none are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. There is a breakfast club managed by the governing body. There has been considerable disruption to staffing over the last two years. The school did not meet the current floor standards in 2011, which are the minimum standards expected by the government for pupils' performance at the end of Year 6.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because there is not enough good teaching to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress, and leaders' evaluations of progress, to drive improvements, have weaknesses. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress and the current Year 6 pupils are on target to reach average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures they do as well as others. Phonics teaching, which links letters and sounds, is often good but occasionally lacks sufficient pace.
- Pupils enjoy school and are engaged in their learning. They behave well and say that they feel safe. Pupils are courteous, kind, responsible and conduct themselves well as they move around school.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Relationships in class are positive and learning activities are often stimulating and enjoyable. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons. Too often, however, the tasks that pupils are given are not fully matched to their abilities, and not clearly explained, so that they are not always engaged in productive learning. Marking is thorough, but pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to the comments that teachers make.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher knows her school's needs well and, as a result of accurate self-evaluation, has put in place a programme of improvements that has led to a rise in achievement over the last two years. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are satisfactory. The use of assessment data to set class and whole-school targets is not fully developed, and pupils' progress is not linked to staff performance management.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - planning and teaching lessons which ensure appropriate challenge for the full range of abilities in class so that all groups of pupils make good progress in each lesson
  - ensuring that learning intentions for each lesson are expressed in words that pupils understand and are referred to regularly
  - helping pupils understand how to improve their work more fully and giving greater opportunities for them to respond to marking
  - ensuring monitoring consistently focuses on how well teaching meets the learning needs of different groups and accelerates pupils' progress.
- Ensure that all those with leadership responsibilities rigorously evaluate and improve pupil achievement by:
  - setting challenging targets for pupils' progress in each year group and ensuring these are met
  - linking progress of pupils more closely to teachers' performance management targets.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and attainment is now average by Year 6. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly in line with those expected of four year olds and make satisfactory progress in a happy and caring classroom. In Key Stage 1, the pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that attainment is in line with the national averages. Attainment at Year 6 dipped in the last three years, and was below average overall. It fell in part due to cohorts with relatively weaker standards and was exacerbated by disruptions to teaching that affected progress. Inspection evidence shows that progress has accelerated rapidly over the past two years due to the successful range of strategies introduced by the headteacher, as well as more stable staffing this year. In particular, accurate self-evaluation means she knows the school well. A focus on improving the quality of teachers' assessment ensures that leadership sets a clear direction for school improvement. As a result of interventions to support the progress of boys across the school, and to improve learning in mathematics, all groups of pupils are now making satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of carefully targeted support, and detailed plans that map out the learning that should take place for each individual. Effective intervention programmes, provided to support those falling behind, have been a key factor in raising attainment to match the national average in all key stages.

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Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1, and remain average by the end of Year 6. Pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the books they have chosen. There are good reading links between the school and home. A recent focus on 'Visual Literacy', which supports writing through the use of visual clips to engage and enthuse pupils, has been successful in increasing the rate of progress that boys make in Key Stage 2. A good example of this in practice was observed when year 6 pupils watched a short video clip and commented on the different emotions of characters that they saw. Most parents and carers reported that they feel their children are making good progress. Whilst the rate of progress is increasing, the inspection found that it was satisfactory.

**Quality of teaching**

The great majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agree that their children are taught well. Pupils agree with this. Inspection evidence shows that most teaching is satisfactory, although there is some good teaching that is successfully accelerating pupils' progress through activities that ensure a good match of work to pupils' abilities. In the well-planned Reception classroom, children were actively engaged in a wide range of enjoyable and interesting activities, but not enough children were choosing activities that would help their literacy and mathematics development. The regular teaching of phonics is done satisfactorily throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, so that almost all pupils can read at an appropriate level, reaching average attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and deal with new words that they haven't seen before. However, on occasion, the pace of these sessions can slow towards the end. The teaching of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Planning for these pupils is detailed and support provided by the co-ordinator and assistants leads to these pupils making similar progress to other groups of pupils within the school.

In most lessons throughout the school, teachers display good subject knowledge. Where teaching is strongest, pupils are engaged well in their learning and make quick progress on the tasks given them. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 2, activities were planned for pupils based on their ability levels. Good use of support staff and challenging practical activities enabled pupils to learn more about subtraction. Teachers make good use of technology and use the interactive whiteboards effectively to enthuse pupils. At the beginning of lessons, teachers share the 'steps to success' with pupils, to show them what they are trying to achieve. These steps are not always explained clearly, however, and this can slow the progress of some pupils. Planning is detailed, but is not sufficiently focussed on differentiating activities for different groups of pupils. The marking of pupils' work, although thorough, does not always give opportunities for them to respond to comments made. Pupils comment that their lessons are enjoyable and they say that teachers' will always take time to help them understand work if they get 'stuck'. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is developed well through a

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range of stimulating lessons and its effectiveness can be seen throughout school life in the ways pupils deal with each other with respect and integrity. Teaching in this area is given a high priority and sensitively supports pupils in thinking and reflecting upon a range of important issues.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour is good and their attitudes to learning are positive. A very large majority like being in school, as reflected in their above-average attendance. Almost all pupils show good levels of consideration and politeness. In the Reception class, the children play very well together and were observed to take turns during exciting activities. When given challenges or open-ended activities, all pupils respond positively and stay on task without direct supervision. They are very enthusiastic about taking on responsibilities and pupils in year 6 set a very good example to the rest of the school. Several Year 6 pupils talked about how they enjoy looking after the younger children and how they are disappointed if they don't get chosen to look after a Reception child on the walk to church. Pupils of all ages say behaviour is good and there is no bullying in school, and parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed. One pupil said 'If you were naughty you'd get sent to the head teacher, but I've never known that to happen.' Pupils feel safe and trust that staff will look after them. They have a good understanding of the risks they face in everyday life and of different kinds of bullying. They are well aware of the potential for cyber-bullying, for example, and how to deal with it. They listen to adults and to one another and almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire reported that behaviour in school is good and that their children are safe. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration for others, their passion for charity fundraising, and their enthusiasm to develop a quiet, contemplation garden. There have been no exclusions over the past five years.

### **Leadership and management**

Almost all parents and carers are pleased with their children's education and rightly feel that the school is improving. As one said, 'All of the staff work very hard and are continually introducing new things to improve the school and support families.' The headteacher has a clear vision for school improvement and has successfully introduced a range of strategies to improve pupils' achievement. These took effect last year with better progress in 2011 and higher attainment levels throughout the school this year. The partnership between headteacher and governing body, ably supported by all staff, has been effective in dealing with the dip in performance and the school has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve. The headteacher has updated the school assessment system so that there is now a clearer understanding of the levels that pupils of all ages are working at. However, assessments are not used to set challenging progress targets for each year group so that improvements can be monitored effectively. Measures of pupils' progress are not included enough as performance management objectives for teachers. The considerable staff disruption over the last two years has been managed effectively by the headteacher.

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New appointments have strengthened the staff team and effective induction arrangements for new staff have ensured that all teaching is at least satisfactory.

There has been a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching. Staff training, to improve assessment and make lessons more interesting, has had a positive effect. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, and the headteacher has used the information gained to set appropriate strategies for improvement. One successful improvement is the introduction of a phonics teaching programme across the school. This means that the teaching of reading has been given a high priority and is consistently taught across all four classes. Classroom monitoring has improved with the development of in-depth feedback to staff on their teaching. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's performance and provides appropriate support and challenge.

The curriculum is satisfactory. An extensive range of after-school activities and strong partnership arrangements with other local schools provide opportunities to take part in inter-school sport and music evenings. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well through activities such as the Sculpture Garden project, which involved pupils in design, construction and aftercare of a corner of the school playground.

The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily because all forms of discrimination are tackled firmly and all pupils have equal access to all activities. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and monitored effectively to ensure they are applied effectively.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



2 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of The Mareham-le-Fen Church of England Primary School,  
Boston PE22 7QB**

Thank you all very much for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I enjoyed my time in class, on the playground and meeting some of you for discussions. I was most impressed with your polite, courteous attitude to me and pleased to see the way you behave around school. The older children told me how they care for the younger ones and you all said there was almost no bullying. This means you feel safe in school. You also told me how much you like your teachers and enjoy lessons, and this shows in the way you take so little time out of school. As well as your good behaviour, I thought your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was good. You carry out a wide range of duties well and are enthusiastic fund raisers for charity.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education and making a range of improvements that have already had an effect such as the new 'Visual Literacy' which links video clips to literacy objectives. Your headteacher, staff and governing body ensure that you are cared for well and the teachers are successful in making your lessons interesting and fun. Your progress is satisfactory and you reach standards that are average in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6. However, I want the headteacher and governing body to make your school even better. I have suggested some ways in which teachers can help you all make good rather than satisfactory progress. I want them to ensure they match the work given very closely to your abilities and to explain the 'steps to success' more fully so you really understand what you are trying to learn in each lesson. I have asked your headteacher to ensure she keeps a close eye on the progress each class makes every year to make sure no one falls behind.

All of you can help the school to keep improving by continuing to work hard and making sure you let the teachers know if you are not sure of what you are trying to learn.

Yours sincerely,

Duncan Ramsey  
Lead Inspector

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