

Marsden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108687
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	377800
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Cottam

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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Parkes
Headteacher	Ann Bell
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2009
School address	Mill Lane Whitburn Colliery Sunderland SR6 7HJ
Telephone number	0191 5292040
Fax number	0191 5292040
Email address	info@marsden.s-tyneside.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Cottam
Moira Fitzpatrick

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven different teachers, and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about their reading and their experience of school life. Discussions took place with governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including those related to safeguarding, the improvement plan and evaluation records, as well as its own assessment data. The inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as those from 47 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Marsden primary is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has increased since the last inspection and is now slightly higher than the national average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with few pupils on roll from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those assessed at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs, is higher than average. The school holds the Healthy School Award and Active Mark. The school meets the current floor standards (the minimum standards expected by the government).

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils behave well in an atmosphere of trust and respect. Standards in reading are above average by Year 6, and are average in writing and mathematics. The school is not yet good because the quality of teaching varies and the progress of pupils is uneven. The leadership of teaching and management of performance have not been strong enough to eradicate some weaker teaching.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Children join the school in Nursery with knowledge and skills that are broadly similar to those typically expected for their age, although their communication, language and literacy skills are lower. Progress in Years 1, 2 and 3 is slow and some pupils lose ground until they reach Years 4 to 6 where they make good progress. By the time pupils leave the school their attainment is broadly average.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is inconsistent across the school with some inadequate teaching seen during the inspection. This is reflected in varying rates of learning in lessons and in the work in pupils' books. Teaching is strongest in Years 4, 5 and 6 where pupils are expected to work hard and activities are matched to their different abilities so that they make rapid progress.
- Parents, carers, pupils and staff have few concerns about behaviour and inspectors agree that it is good. Pupils are considerate and caring and respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for others. The few incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Robust systems for monitoring the work of the school give leaders a good knowledge of strengths and weaknesses.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics by:
 - making better use of time in lessons so that pupils have enough opportunities to practise and consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 3.
 - ensuring that pupils have regular and purposeful opportunities to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 1, 2 and 3, by the end of the autumn term 2012, so that it is consistently good or better and matches that in the rest of the school by:
 - reducing significantly the use of worksheets for pupils to record learning in literacy and numeracy, thereby increasing their independence and accelerating their progress
 - ensuring pupils can fully understand the feedback given through marking and discussion and make time available for pupils to act on the advice given
 - ensuring that teachers make better use of all assessment information to stretch and challenge pupils so that they make better progress.

- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership of teaching by:
 - increasing the rigour of lesson observations so that the detail recorded pinpoints specific weaknesses to be tackled
 - making prompt use of the information the school holds on the quality of teaching and of pupils' progress to manage the performance of staff
 - setting clear targets and timescales for improvement and supporting staff to achieve these

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is uneven across the school because the quality of teaching varies too much. Where teaching is good then pupils make rapid progress because they know exactly how well they are doing, show high levels of interest and have the time and the enthusiasm to produce their very best work. In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow because pupils have insufficient time to develop their skills and understanding and teachers are not assessing pupils' progress well enough as they are learning.

Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they are well prepared with early reading skills when they enter Year 1 and have reached the standards typical for their age. Progress falters in Years 1, 2 and 3 because the pace of learning slows with some pupils losing momentum. There is insufficient work in some pupils' books in these classes and an over-reliance on work sheets, giving pupils too few opportunities to practise their skills by recording their work for themselves.

Progress accelerates in Years 4, 5 and 6 because teaching is good with a brisk and purposeful approach. The work set in these year groups is well matched to pupils' abilities and challenges them to succeed because teachers have high expectations which they share with their pupils. As a result pupils have caught up by the time they leave the school with above average attainment in reading and broadly average standards in writing and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6, because they are given good support by adults and the work set is appropriate to their needs.

Standards in reading are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and above average by Year 6. This is because pupils get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and then have regular opportunities to learn to read throughout their time in the school. There is a good reward system which encourages pupils to read regularly at home and at school.

All parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school helps their child to develop their basic skills, but inspectors judge this could be better in writing and mathematics, particularly for younger pupils.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is inconsistent in quality and this is reflected in varying rates of learning across the school. In Years 4, 5, and 6 teachers constantly assess pupils' work and ask pertinent questions so that they have a clear understanding of how well they are learning and what they need to do next. For example, in an English lesson pupils wrote an argument to justify their views of a character from a novel. They made good progress in their understanding of moral and social issues as they presented a balanced view of the behaviour of a difficult character. The teacher constantly checked pupils' writing and shared the best examples with the whole class so that all pupils were inspired and produced their best work. Older pupils are developing good skills in reading, writing, mathematics and communication because teaching is well matched to their different abilities and pupils are given opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects. For example, Year 6 have used mathematical and information and communication technology skills to monitor traffic outside the school in order to write a letter to the local council. Older pupils know the level they are working at and what they need to do to improve. They are proud of their targets and are ambitious in their endeavours to reach them.

The quality of teaching in Years 1 to 3 is satisfactory with some that is inadequate. Progress is slower in these lessons because time is not used well enough and pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills or become fully involved when the teacher is talking. Work in books shows that these younger pupils do not have enough opportunities to record their work for themselves so that progress in writing and mathematics is slower.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational make good progress because learning programmes are adapted to meet their needs and there is good adult support.

Reading is taught well with many opportunities for pupils to read with adults both in class and at home. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start because there is regular and focused teaching of reading on a daily basis.

The quality of marking and feedback is good. Pupils are consistently told how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Where teaching is weaker, comments in books are too complex and pupils are not given subsequent opportunities to improve their work. All of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires are positive about teaching in the school, but inspectors judge that it could be much better.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are unanimous in their view that behaviour is good and, although the vast majority of parents agree with them, a few comment that behaviour sometimes disrupts learning. Inspectors judge that staff manage behaviour well with good support for the small minority of pupils who have difficulty coping with classroom routines, particularly in lessons where the teaching is good.

Pupils are generally considerate and caring towards each other. Older pupils are usually mature, sensible and reliable and rise to the challenge of taking responsibility for others. For example, the school council decided that play-time would have different daily activities such as 'Tennis Tuesday' and 'Work-out Wednesday'. Other older pupils are setting up after-school clubs. They are enthusiastic about the influence they can have and are learning to be socially responsible.

Pupils have a good understanding of safety, say the school keeps them safe and have a good knowledge of a range of risks including internet security, bullying and racism because they are taught about these in the curriculum.

Attendance is average. The school has successfully worked to reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

Leadership and management

The monitoring and evaluation of teaching has improved since the last inspection so that leaders and governors have an accurate knowledge of the strengths of the school and plans in place to address weaknesses. The school makes good use of the comprehensive tracking system and regularly checks on the quality of pupils' work so that leaders know where pupils are making good progress and where they are falling behind. School evaluations of teaching are more positive than both inspection evidence and the school's other monitoring evidence in some classes. This is because they focus on the teaching during individual lessons in isolation and do not use all of the other evidence available to challenge and improve weaker teaching. Whilst teachers have benefitted from support to address some weaknesses, the impact of a more robust approach to performance management is not evident.

The governing body is fully involved in the work of the school and has made a significant contribution to improving the involvement of parents with a new

community room, improved outdoor learning areas in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for the rest of the school, as well as regular workshops for parents.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are not yet given enough opportunities to consolidate their writing skills across the curriculum, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 3. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent 'Show Racism the Red Card' project and say there is no racism in their school. The school includes all pupils in activities and promotes equality and tackles discrimination satisfactorily.

The school has demonstrated that it has a satisfactory capacity for improvement because it has raised standards in reading, involved parents more in their children's learning, and improved monitoring systems.

The school's arrangements to ensure safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

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).

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.



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Marsden Primary School, Sunderland, SR6 7HJ

My colleague and I would like to thank you for your warm and friendly welcome when we came to inspect your school recently, with special thanks to those of you who met with us, talked to us and read to us. We really enjoyed our short time with you.

Those of you we spoke to and who returned questionnaires told us that behaviour in your school was good and that you feel safe. We agree with you. Your teachers care for you and teach you to take responsibility for yourselves so that you in turn are also caring and considerate. It is great to see that some of you who are older are beginning to take responsibility for others in the school. We think you reach good standards in reading because you are taught to read well at school and most of you practise your reading regularly at home.

We want your school to do better, and have asked the headteacher, governors and teachers to work on two areas in particular.

- We would like you to reach higher standards in writing and mathematics by having more time and opportunities to practise your skills.
- We would like teaching to improve in some classes so that all of it is as good as the best.

We think you can help your teachers by making sure that you read the comments they make in your books carefully and then work hard to improve the 'next steps for learning' that your teachers have highlighted. This should help you to improve your writing and mathematical skills so that they are as good as your reading.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Cottam
Lead inspector

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