

Marlpool Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112561
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	393485
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Joan Hewitt HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Acikgoz
Headteacher	Mary Hill
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2011
School address	Claramount Road Heanor DE75 7HS
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspector observed teaching in 10 lessons taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with groups of staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, data and analysis, policy documents, the school's monitoring records, improvement planning and the minutes of the governing body meetings. Ofsted parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections.

Information about the school

Marlpool Junior School is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a few other minority ethnic groups represented. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has met the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government for progress and attainment.

As a result of the inspection in February 2011, the school was subject to special measures because of weaknesses in pupils' achievement and in the school's leadership and management. Since the previous inspection, there has been a high turnover in staff and half of the teachers in post at the previous inspection have left. A new leadership team has been appointed since the time of the previous inspection.

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	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. This is a satisfactory school. It is improving quickly because teaching is increasingly effective. Consequently, pupils’ achievement is accelerating. A notable strength has been the introduction of the topic- based curriculum which is supporting pupils’ development of independent learning skills. The school is not yet good because there remains some unevenness in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory. Leaders have shown determination and resilience in pursuing improvements. Consequently, pupils are now making satisfactory and often good progress. The improvement in pupils’ writing skills has been particularly marked.
- Teaching is satisfactory. There is an increasing proportion of good teaching in the school. Assessment information is used efficiently to identify areas in which pupils are struggling but this is not always used to plan precisely to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. It is generally good in lessons. When pupils are given the opportunity to demonstrate independence they respond very well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do not always develop independent learning skills because they sometimes rely too heavily on the support of teaching assistants.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new leadership team has combined to be an effective force for change. They have developed strong systems to track pupils’ progress but the analysis of other aspects, such as pupils’ behaviour, is under-developed. The management of teachers’

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performance is improving. Teachers are supported successfully in improving their practice through effective training and a developing range of coaching programmes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out the inconsistencies in the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, by:
 - ensuring teaching assistants consistently support pupils in developing independent learning skills
 - further developing teachers' use of assessment information to plan and teach to meet the precise needs of individuals.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - using existing good practice to develop teachers' questioning skills to provide the appropriate level of challenge for individual pupils.
 - developing systematic opportunities for teachers to observe and share good practice.
- Sharpen leaders' monitoring and analysis of the school's work by extending current monitoring systems to include pupils' behaviour and access to extra-curricular clubs.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

'Learning is fun now; my teacher lets us work things out for ourselves.' This was just one of the positive comments pupils made to the inspector that captures the enthusiasm they have towards their work. From above average starting points, pupils are now making progress in line with expectations. This has recently accelerated rapidly. In 2011, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was average, and progress was below expectations, especially in writing. The improvements in teaching have secured some marked gains and the school's robust tracking data shows attainment in Year 6, including reading, is now above the national average. Gaps between the progress made by different groups of pupils are closing and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals now generally make the same progress as other groups. Improvements in the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have been more modest. Pupils in Year 4 are now making rapid progress but there remains some underachievement. This is largely the result of significant disruption to staffing.

Pupils have a natural thirst for learning and they have responded positively to the new enquiry-based curriculum. This has supported them in developing a range of

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strategies to solve problems and work collaboratively. Parents and carers have also noticed the improvement this approach has brought about. One parent commented, 'My child is very motivated. She is always working on school activities.'

Pupils enjoy reading for different purposes. They speak enthusiastically about information they have researched and new stories that have captured their imagination. Pupils confidently sound out unfamiliar words. Work in books is carefully presented and pupils are proud of their achievements. In lessons, most pupils are keen to answer questions but not all contribute when the teacher asks for 'hands up' responses.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory and it is improving rapidly. There is a significant proportion of teaching that is good and there are also examples of outstanding teaching. The lacklustre teaching noted at the time of the previous inspection has been replaced by lively and interesting activities. Parents and carers are appreciative of the improvements to teaching. One parent commented, 'It is making learning more interesting.' Teachers often use assessment data to match activities to the needs of groups of pupils and this helps to create appropriate challenge, particularly for the most able. However, teachers do not consistently use their detailed knowledge of individual pupils' achievements to tailor work to meet their precise needs.

Teachers have worked hard to improve pupils' independence, and the new topic-based curriculum is supporting them in developing fresh approaches. This thoughtful planning is also supporting pupils in reflecting on the world about them. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in developing critical appreciation of the work of Andy Goldsworthy. Pupils are developing enthusiasm for reading because teachers encourage them to read books they would not normally choose. For example, pupils have books selected for them through 'book bingo'.

In the very best examples, lively teaching combined with high expectations, promotes exceptional progress, especially for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and low attaining pupils. For example, a group of low attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs in Year 3 made exceptional progress in practising dividing numbers because they were supported in working independently. However, this is not consistent and there are still occasions when disabled students and those with special educational needs work solely with teaching assistants and this slows their development of independent learning skills.

Marking has improved, it is regular and thorough. Teachers offer detailed comments on what pupils have done well and how they can improve their work. Recently, pupils have been given the opportunity to engage in a written dialogue with their teacher and respond to the comments. This is at an early stage of development and pupils' responses are sometimes too superficial to have an impact on improving their learning.

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Teachers regularly check on the progress pupils are making through questioning. There are several examples where questioning is searching and targeted to individual pupils but this is not consistent.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils state clearly that they feel safe in school and the school's information from parents and carers confirms this view. Behaviour in lessons is generally good, particularly when pupils have the opportunity to demonstrate high levels of independence. There remain a few occasions when discussions carry on for too long and boys, in particular, grow restless and begin to fidget. Pupils are courteous and respectful. Those with identified behaviour difficulties are supported sensitively and effectively in developing strategies to manage their own behaviour. Attendance is in line with national averages and the school has done some detailed work in successfully reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Pupils are cheerful and friendly. They enjoy playing games on the playground but, sometimes, behaviour can be boisterous. Pupils say that bullying is followed up effectively by teachers and incidents are logged carefully. Pupils' knowledge of different forms of bullying is somewhat under-developed but they have an acute sense of fairness. Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of bullying. They were very clear about their responsibilities if they should encounter any incidents.

The 'behaviour ladders' and rewards have been greeted positively by both pupils and staff. Pupils understand the system and are keen to earn a step up the ladder. Equally, they treat any moves down the ladder with concern and take swift action to redeem themselves.

Leadership and management

The new senior leaders, guided by the headteacher, are developing as an effective team. This can be seen clearly in the recent gains in achievement and improvements to the curriculum and teaching. These developments are gaining pace and demonstrate the school's sound capacity to maintain the momentum of improvement. Teachers have benefitted from a suitably focused training programme, along with tailored coaching and support for individual teachers. Teachers regularly share ideas to improve their practice. However, leaders' plans to provide systematic opportunities for teachers to observe best practice have not yet been implemented. Morale is high because teachers are highly motivated by the improvements they can see in pupils' learning and achievements.

The governing body is playing its part in offering a sound level of support and challenge. It has developed appropriate means of evaluating the school's work. However, they have not developed regular and effective ways of gathering the views of pupils or their parents and carers. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Leaders work effectively with partners. For example, Marlpool Junior has worked successfully in partnership with other schools to improve attendance.

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Following the previous inspection, the school has developed effective ways of tracking pupils' progress. This has provided leaders with accurate information and enabled them to take appropriate action to combat underachievement. The clearest example of this is the marked improvement in pupils' writing. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is systematic and the analysis of this is used to plan further improvements. Consequently, the gaps in the rates of progress different groups make are closing and the school's work to promote equality is sound. However, this level of analysis is not routinely used in other areas. For example, leaders have not analysed the information they have about pupils who achieve awards, attend extra-curricular clubs or those who regularly move down the behaviour ladder.

Changes to the curriculum have had a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Pupils talk enthusiastically about 'showcase' presentations when they present their work to parents. For example, Year 4 were animated and excited in describing their zoo for endangered animals. Topics engage pupils in thinking about the environment as close to home as the school's outside classroom as well as global issues. For example, while working on the topic of the environment, Years 5 and 6 pupils considered how Buddhist principles might support the development of community spirit.

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.



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marlpool Junior School, Heanor DE75 7HS

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful during my visits to your school. It has been very useful to watch you learn and to hear some of you read. It was interesting to hear what you had to say about your school. I am particularly impressed with how hard you work and how much you enjoy reading.

I am delighted to report that Marlpool Junior School is now a satisfactory school and no longer needs special measures.

The school is improving because teaching is much better. Topic work is helping to make lessons more interesting and help you to learn independently.

Your headteacher and all the staff in the school want the school to be even better so I have asked them to do the following things:

- improve your progress and make sure no one gets left behind
- make sure all teaching is good or better
- analyse information the school has about you, such as the behaviour ladders and the clubs you attend, so that they can continue to improve the school.

You can all help to improve the school too by continuing to work hard and earn steps up the behaviour ladder.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt
Her Majesty's Inspector

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