

Marsham Primary School

High Street, Marsham, Norwich, NR10 5AE

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching across the school varies in quality and not enough of it is good. Aspects that need improvement include the checking of progress in lessons and setting work that is hard enough for more-able pupils.
- There has been underachievement in the past, particularly for Year 5. Pupils' progress has been too slow and they have much to catch up on, especially in mathematics and writing.
- Teaching assistants have not had enough training to ensure they can make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The teaching of early reading skills using letter sounds is not consistent and sometimes the progress of the youngest children is slow.
- Senior leaders' checking of pupils' progress and teaching has lacked precision in the past. They have not picked up exactly where improvements are needed in these areas.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and senior leaders have taken steps to address identified areas of weakness. As a consequence pupils' progress is now improving.
- There are excellent relationships between children and adults and children themselves.
- Pupils behave well and are positive about learning.
- All parents and carers who voiced their views agree that their children are happy and safe at school.
- Partnership arrangements between Marsham and Hevingham schools are having a good impact on pupils' learning. There are good opportunities for shared extra-curricular activities such as trips and residential visits.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection of Marsham Primary School was carried out at the same time as the inspection of its partner school, Hevingham Primary School. In order for the inspections to run smoothly and to involve senior staff as closely as possible in the process, the lead inspectors for each school ensured that, where suitable, joint meetings were held with staff and the governing body.
- The inspector observed seven lessons, as well as groups of pupils or individuals working with teaching assistants. Almost all the observations were undertaken jointly with the assistant headteacher. The inspector observed pupils at break times.
- The inspector looked closely at pupils' work in all year groups and heard some pupils from Years 1, 2 and 5 read.
- At the time of the inspection, Year 6 pupils were being taught at Hevingham.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, assistant headteacher and senior staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector had meetings with groups of pupils from Years 5 and 6. She spoke informally with many pupils during lessons and at break times.
- The inspector looked carefully at safeguarding documentation, information about pupils' progress, self-evaluation documents and development plans.
- There were insufficient responses recorded on the online questionnaire (Parent View) to make this method of taking parents' and carers' views into consideration available to the inspector. However, the inspector was able to take note of letters sent in by parents and carers and speak with seven parents and carers at the end of the school day. Questionnaires completed by 10 members of staff were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This smaller than the average sized school has worked in partnership with nearby Hevingham Primary since 2000. The schools are federated which means they have the same governing body but separate budgets. They share the same executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. There are numerous opportunities provided for pupils of both schools to learn and play together and share visits.
- The number of pupils in each year group varies considerably, ranging from three to nine. For the past two years, there have been more boys than girls on roll; in one year group there are no girls.
- There is a much higher than average proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part-way through their primary education. Around three out of every five pupils do not start and finish their primary education at the school.
- The school has two classes. Class 1 has children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) plus pupils in Years 1 and 2. Class 2 has pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. At the time of the inspection Year 6 pupils were at Hevingham School as part of their preparation for national tests for their year group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average at approximately a third of the school population.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average at approximately half the school. This extra funding is for looked-after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- In the last year and a half, there has been a complete change of full-time teachers, including a newly qualified teacher and assistant headteacher. There has also been a new executive headteacher.
- The assistant headteacher teaches in the school and is responsible for the day to day running of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to a consistently good level by making sure that all teachers:
 - check how well pupils are getting on with their work in lessons and adjust their teaching in the light of pupils' progress
 - always provide the more-able pupils with work to make them think hard and make good progress
 - set high expectations for pupils to work at a good rate and present their work neatly
 - provide pupils with time to respond to teachers' marking.
- Increase the consistency in pupils' progress and raise standards further by:
 - placing greater emphasis on developing pupils' early literacy skills and equipping teaching assistants with the skills needed to make an effective contribution to pupils' learning, especially the teaching of phonics
 - teaching handwriting skills systematically and giving pupils time to practise these skills regularly
 - finding out precisely where the gaps in individual pupils' mathematical knowledge are and making sure that they have the right sort of work and practical experiences in mathematics to help them catch up.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders check rigorously and regularly on the quality of the teaching, especially that undertaken by additional adults in the class
 - in their checking, leaders focus on the impact of all adults' teaching on pupils' learning and whether it is good enough
 - leaders use the information gathered from their checking to give teachers and teaching assistants precise points for improvement.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- There is significant year-on-year variation in children's attainment on entry to the school. Additionally, those who join the school part-way through their primary education have wide-ranging levels of attainment, with a high proportion having special educational needs. Results of national tests and teacher assessments indicate that, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment is broadly average.
- Pupils' achievement in Reception and Years 1 and 2 requires improvement because not all children and pupils are making consistently good progress. When being taught by classroom assistants, children in the Reception group make slow progress in developing their knowledge of how to use letter sounds to help them read and spell. The proportion of Year 1 pupils doing well in the 2012 phonics screening check (which tests pupils' understanding of the links between letters and sounds) was below that found nationally.
- Scrutiny of Year 1 and 2 pupils' work and the school's data indicates that progress is now more rapid. Pupils who have arrived in the class this term have settled in well but have yet to make good progress.
- The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 also requires further improvement. Standards of handwriting and presentation are sometimes poor. In mathematics, past underachievement has left significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding which slows their progress. As a consequence of action taken by the school, pupils' rates of progress are now improving in both mathematics and writing. Their progress in reading is good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. The special educational needs coordinator has made changes to the way individual support is planned. These changes are beginning to have a good impact on the pupils' progress. Pupils who join the school part-way through their primary education also make similar progress to their peers.
- Approximately half the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, but with marked year-on-year variation. The numbers in the year groups taking part in national teacher assessments or national tests in 2012 were small; therefore, it is not possible to comment on their attainment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because differences remain in the quality of teaching across the school. Teachers do not routinely set high expectations such as tight timescales for written work, or make it a requirement that presentation is neat.
- Teachers do not always check frequently enough how well the pupils in the class are progressing, for example, by asking quick questions in order to check on any misconceptions or challenge pupils to do even better.
- In mathematics, especially for Year 5 pupils, there is a legacy of underachievement to deal with. Although progress is improving, it is still held back where teachers have not identified the precise gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge that need to be remedied before they can tackle

new learning.

- The teaching of phonics for the Reception group requires improvement. This is because the secure methodology including the correct enunciation of letter sounds practised by the class teacher is not replicated by the teaching assistant, who needs more training to teach this group effectively.
- The help provided for pupils who need extra support is sometimes inappropriate. For example, unsuitable methods were used with small groups of pupils by learning support assistants and the spellings for pupils to copy were incorrect. Where pupils were given individual support, it was seen to be well organised to suit the pupils' particular needs.
- Recent improvements to teachers' planning are having a good impact, with the identification of pupils who need extra help and those who need greater challenge. However, there is more to do to make sure that the tasks set for pupils are always sufficiently demanding so pupils are expected to think hard and come up with solutions at a good rate.
- The teaching of reading in Years 1 to 6 is now good. The introduction of daily reading sessions has had a good impact on pupils' progress. These well planned and organised sessions ensure that pupils develop good comprehension skills, read widely and often. Older pupils can name several favourite authors and discuss why they like the authors' styles. The school's efforts to involve parents and carers in helping their child's reading have been successful. The great majority of pupils read regularly at home which has a good impact on their progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, telling pupils what they need to do to improve and setting targets are for improvement. However, not enough attention is given to handwriting and presentation and pupils are not given time to read and respond to teachers' comments, so reducing their impact.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are proud of their school community and enjoy taking on responsibilities within it. The parents and carers who spoke with the inspector have positive views about behaviour in school. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations set for them to be kind, courteous and respectful.
 - Relationships within the school are outstanding. It is a very friendly community. Pupils arriving part-way through their education are welcomed and soon find friends.
 - Pupils are positive about learning. Pupils of all ages work sensibly together and respect each other's ideas and opinions. Behaviour in lessons and at break-times is good.
 - The introduction of a commercial programme to promote pupils' thinking has a good impact. Pupils consider how to deal sensibly with minor conflicts and, for their age, show mature thoughts as to how to do this.
 - Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a clear understanding of what constitutes the various forms of bullying, including through mobile phones and e-mails. Older pupils take a responsible approach to keeping themselves safe, and prevent or deal with any such bullying.
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- Pupil premium funding has been used by the two schools jointly to pay for the provision of a full time nurture play leader. This provision has a good impact for pupils and their parents and carers, particularly those joining part-way through their education. Pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are given strategies for doing so and parents and carers are helped to know how to reinforce these strategies at home. As a result of this support, these pupils have developed their social skills and rate of learning.
- Attendance is average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and assistant headteacher have a successful working partnership, which provides continuity in leadership and management at Hevingham and Marsham. The significant changes of staff and to leadership have slowed improvement since the last inspection. Rapid action is now being taken to address identified weaknesses. For example, senior leaders recognised the need to improve standards and progress in reading and good strategies are in place, particularly the well organised reading groups.
 - Senior leaders check on the quality of teaching regularly. There is more to do in increasing the rigour of the checks so that leaders can provide teachers and teaching assistants with precise areas for improvement that focus on pupils' learning, rather than general teaching points.
 - The school's self-evaluation is reasonably accurate. However, it does not routinely take into account pupils' starting points in the school as the point from which pupils' progress should be measured. In the past, this has led to some underachievement not being spotted as quickly as it should.
 - There is a much more systematic approach this year to assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers now record their assessments in each half-term and meet with leaders to look at how well each pupil is doing. If slow progress is identified then prompt action is now taken to tackle any gaps in learning pupils may have.
 - The roles and responsibilities of the newly formed senior team are closely defined so that all work effectively to ensure the smooth running of both schools. The school's development plan identifies the most important improvement priorities. Senior leaders for English and mathematics and the special educational needs coordinator have recently put strategies in place which are beginning to have a good impact on increasing pupils' rate of progress.
 - The special educational needs coordinator and administration staff are resolute in requesting information about a pupil's special work programme or reports from outside agencies from previous schools. This ensures that the provision can be continued for those pupils starting part-way through their education.
 - The school provides an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils to develop personal qualities that contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, through having to apply for 'jobs' around the school, they develop an understanding of the qualities such as perseverance and integrity.
 - Learning activities are carefully planned in themes to take account of pupils' views and interests. A particular feature is the 'Forest School' initiative where pupils pursue outdoor activities. This
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has had a good impact on boys' ideas for writing, for example.

- At the request of the school, the local authority has provided good support to help the senior team make more precise use of data about pupils' progress. This support has also ensured that in school improvement planning there are now easily measurable targets for pupils' progress in mathematics and writing.
 - The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced a system of termly 'learning conversations' between teachers and parents and carers. These provide parents and carers with a detailed understanding of how well their child is doing and the targets for improvement. Parents and carers say they appreciate these conversations because they know how they can help reinforce their child's learning at home.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are systematic in making sure that they perform their legal duties, including the safe recruiting and vetting of staff. They know both schools well and make appropriate use of their individual professional expertise in supporting them and asking searching questions. They share a strong commitment to making sure that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to do well and there is no discrimination. Governors visit both schools regularly and have a reasonable understanding of what performance information tells them about pupils' progress compared with schools nationally. They have noted that pupils' progress has dipped and have taken steps to secure improvement. They are aware of the quality of teaching and the strategies used for helping teachers to make further improvement, such as linking pay closely to pupils' achievement, how the school rewards good teaching and deals with any underperformance. They are not afraid to take tough decisions about staffing. They check on spending decisions carefully, including the use and impact of pupil premium funding.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120831
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	411725

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Simmonds
Headteacher	Karen Hutchison
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2010
Telephone number	01263 732364
Fax number	01263 732364
Email address	office@marsham.norfolk.sch.uk

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