

Marden Lodge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125114
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340722
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Luker
Headteacher	Georgina Steinthal
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
School address	Croydon Road Caterham CR3 6QH
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Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, observed 11 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, and a group of pupils, and talked with pupils in lessons. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, school development planning, minutes of governing body meetings and pupils' work. Inspectors also scrutinised the 69 questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which higher expectations of academic performance are increasing the level of challenge, especially for the more able
- the degree to which developments to assessment have improved monitoring and extended the accountability of staff and governors
- the extent to which the recently formed leadership team, and the governing body, are influencing the school's direction and performance.

Information about the school

This is an average sized school. The very large majority of pupils are from families of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average, and in some year groups as high as 35–47%. The range of special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication, and behavioural, emotional and social needs.

The children's centre, located on the school site, is managed by the school's governors and was included in this inspection. This centre includes provision for 0–3-year-olds. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in Nursery and Reception classes. These classes have flexible arrangements to meet the particular needs of parents and carers. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in classes which contain more than one age group.

The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status, Artsmark, Activemark, and the Eco-Schools award. There have been a significant number of staff changes since the last 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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has a number of good features and a particular strength is its caring and supportive environment, which encompasses the children's centre. Together, the settings place a high priority on enhancing pupils' self-esteem and developing their confidence. Such positive features are reflected in several aspects of pupils' well-developed personal qualities, including their interest in what they do and enjoyment of learning. Pupils also have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. Parents and carers are supportive of the school and particularly good links have been established with the children's centre.

Through the tenacity of the headteacher, the school's leadership team is injecting the urgency needed to address the pockets of underachievement that have featured in the school's recent history. The work of this team is the key factor in driving improvement. A systematic approach to monitoring has been introduced and tracking systems have been established. However, monitoring procedures lack the rigour needed to ensure that the school's priorities are fully met. Staff have yet to be held accountable for standards in their subject areas. Senior leaders' awareness and vision are well informed by an increasingly accurate self-evaluation and, as a consequence, the school is soundly placed to move forward.

Teachers usually plan interesting activities that capture the pupils' interests and hold their attention. Recent improvements to performance levels in both English and mathematics reflect the good progress and effective teaching in some year groups. In a few lessons, however, assessment information and planning are not used as well as they should be to match activities to pupils' differing needs and consistently stretch the more able. Nevertheless, achievement is satisfactory, attainment broadly average and progress satisfactory overall. Intervention work, including well-tailored support for individual pupils, is successfully supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Clubs and sporting activities are popular and provide pupils with good opportunities to strengthen confidence and develop performance skills. While the school has good links with outside agencies, local schools and the community, it recognises the need to provide pupils with more planned opportunities to appreciate and value people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of this country and globally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring staff always:

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- use assessment information to adapt lesson content in response to pupils' differing needs
- provide challenging tasks that are pitched at the right level, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Strengthen the role of the senior leadership team by:
 - taking a more rigorous approach to monitoring
 - sharpening procedures to make sure staff are more accountable for standards in their subjects.
- Extend the strategy for promoting community cohesion by:
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to appreciate and value people from communities nationally and globally
 - ensuring that these are included in planning when linking subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

There are clear signs that the school's determined efforts are making a difference, resulting in pupils making better progress than they did before. Children join the Nursery with expected starting points and make satisfactory gains through to the end of Reception. In Years 1 to 6, the very large majority of pupils show willingness and pleasure in learning. These typical features are seen in their responses during English, mathematics and physical education and indicate the satisfactory, and sometimes good, pace of learning across the school. However, progress is patchy with some marked differences between year groups, in some subjects and for more able pupils who are not always fully challenged. Pupils enjoy success and most work well in small groups and independently of the teacher. Pupils also show great satisfaction in completing tasks and explaining the reasons behind their answers, in mathematics for example. There are no significant variations in the rates of progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Attainment is broadly average, as indicated by the improved results of the most recent national tests and assessments for pupils in Year 6. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach higher attainment levels than last year's cohort with particular strengths in reading.

Pupils say they feel safe and like coming to school. They show much enjoyment of sporting activities and singing during assemblies. Pupils report that behaviour has improved and talk appreciatively of the supportive and caring environment. They are well aware of dangers in and out of school. Pupils' good levels of understanding of living healthily are evident in the way they talk about the importance of eating different kinds of food and the need for regular exercise.

The large majority of pupils are considerate towards each other and their thoughtful behaviour is a key feature in their learning. Pupils are generally polite and courteous, and willingly take on responsibilities to help the school run smoothly, thereby enhancing their leadership qualities. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to

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represent the views of others. Pupils are also much involved in fund- raising events within the local community and in support of a number of national charities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching varies, but effective classroom management, well-paced activities and questioning that probes pupils' understanding are particular strengths. Topics, such as those that encourage pupils to write creatively and for different purposes, successfully capture pupils' interest and hold their attention. Almost all pupils are enthusiastic and willingly become involved in their learning. However, activities do not always expect enough from pupils, particularly the more able, and occasionally they become restless. Assessment procedures are not always used consistently to guide lesson planning. Marking is supportive but does not always help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum provides a carefully considered balance between basic skills in English and mathematics and the development of pupils' performance skills in subjects such as physical education. The school has rightly started to plan a programme to improve

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' writing skills further, building on the current strengths in reading. The teaching of Spanish adds an additional positive dimension. Pupils are given opportunities to reinforce their learning and develop skills through topics that link different subjects. There are clear signs that teaching pupils in similar ability groups is paying off. The curriculum is supported by a well-planned programme for personal, social and health education. It is also underpinned by the effective use of information and communication technology, which enhances independent learning and gives pupils access to a wide range of resources. Pupils' learning experiences are further enriched by a number of residential trips, popular clubs, visits to places of interest, and the use of subject specialists.

The good support for pupils' personal development and pastoral care is recognised and valued by parents and carers. The good work of the children's centre is integral to the 'wrap around care' that features strongly. Attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected not just in opportunities for physical activity, but also in the provision of healthy school meals. Individualised programmes of support are made for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement, covering a broad range of personal and learning needs. Individual achievement is now effectively managed through detailed tracking of attainment and progress. Evaluations lead to timely intervention, which reinforce pupils' literacy skills and build confidence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the last inspection, the headteacher, and with support from governors, has strengthened the senior leadership team and sharpened the focus on key priorities. These changes are leading to a systematic approach to monitoring and a greater awareness of the road the school needs to follow to address patches of past underachievement. The school's collective leadership is developing a school that is committed not only to strengthening each pupil's self-esteem, but also to raising achievement. Systems that are more secure are starting to ensure that this ethos can be maintained even through staff changes. Improvements are already happening with more rapid progress in some lessons and year groups. However, monitoring has not yet had sufficient impact to ensure improvements to teaching are consistent - for example, ensuring that lesson content is based on what pupils have shown they need. The promotion of equality and approaches to tackling any form of discrimination are

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satisfactory. As a result, groups of pupils make similar progress, although there are some limitations for the more able in some classes.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are visible in the school and the governing body readily challenges the school's work. Reliable information about pupils' progress is now available to them, but its analysis sometimes lacks sufficient clarity. The governing body ensures that policies are systematically reviewed and resources are closely targeted at educational need. Attention to pupils' safety is integral to the school's work and safeguarding procedures are securely established. Local services and agencies are used to enhance the safety and well-being of pupils experiencing difficult circumstances and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Community cohesion is strongly promoted within the school and in the community, and the school demonstrates a secure understanding of local needs and challenges. However, the school knows that it must do more to help pupils understand about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of the United Kingdom and beyond. Parents and carers are supportive of the school, although they do not always play an active part in school events such as meetings to explain their children's planned learning experiences.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

A particular strength of the overall provision is evident in the way that the children's centre works very closely with the school. The centre complies with the requirements for registration. It is well managed and key staff have developed close relationships with

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parents and carers. The centre's provision is good. Knowledgeable and caring staff have successfully established a calm and welcoming environment in which children are nurtured and cherished from the start. As a result, children settle quickly, are eager to learn and make good progress. The success of the provision's integrated approach is reflected in the children's smooth transition into the school's Nursery and Reception classes. Here, from expected starting points, children make satisfactory progress. They make good progress in several areas, including creative and social development, but slower progress in writing and physical development. Robust assessment procedures provide accurate and reliable information about children's progress. This information is used to pitch planning at the right level, although it is not always used by all staff. However, support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who are more vulnerable, is good.

Children listen attentively and chatter happily about their work. The school makes effective use of the indoor and outside areas, which provide a wide range of stimulating activities. Children happily move from one activity to another. On most occasions, adults give closely-targeted support to activities directed by the teacher as well as those which children choose for themselves. Strong relationships reflect those seen in the children's centre. Questioning is often used well to probe children's understanding and capture their interest, although opportunities are not always taken to accelerate progress during a few activities that, as a result, lack sufficient purpose. Themed topics ensure all areas of learning are covered, with a particular focus on early reading, writing and number skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of the school's parents and carers returned the questionnaires. The very large majority of responses were positive. A few of the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. These included positive remarks about the caring and supportive environment and the quality of the staff. However, a very few questionnaires recorded reservations over a small number of issues. These included: the amount of progress their children are making in mixed-aged classes; behaviour; and the support given to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These reservations were not reflected in the very large majority of comments. The inspection found evidence to indicate that pupils are making better

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progress than they did before, although more able pupils are not always challenged enough. Behaviour has improved and most pupils respond well, although there is room for improvement. Inspectors found that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given close and sensitive support and the school is strengthening procedures to help identify their needs earlier.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	61	27	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	61	25	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	46	32	46	2	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	42	31	45	6	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	42	37	54	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	33	36	52	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	39	36	52	2	3	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)	23	33	38	55	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	39	38	55	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	36	34	49	5	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	38	36	52	3	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	30	43	35	51	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	48	34	49	2	3	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 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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 pupil's 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.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marden Lodge Primary School, Caterham, CR3 6QH

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you. Your school is a place where you feel safe and benefit from good care and support. You told us it is also a school where you want to be, make friends, and enjoy taking part in the many interesting clubs and activities.

Here are some other important things about your school:

- you make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in lessons
- you respond well to interesting activities
- those in charge of the school are making improvements that are helping you to make faster progress
- you have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

To make things even better for you, your school has been asked to:

- help you to make faster progress, especially those of you who learn quickly, by giving you more challenging activities
- ensure that those in charge of the school keep a closer eye on how you are doing
- help you to understand more about people's backgrounds and communities in other parts of this country and the world.

We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now. You can all help the school by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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