



Marston Green Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104073
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277062
Inspection dates 5 December 2005 to 6 December 2005
Reporting inspector Andrew Cook HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Elm Farm Avenue Marston Green Birmingham, West Midlands B37 7AA
School category	Community	Telephone number	01217 795 667
Age range of pupils	3 to 7	Fax number	01217 795 667
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mrs Lucile Green
Number on roll	279	Headteacher	Mrs Mary Parfitt
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one HMI and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Marston Infant School has 243 children on roll full-time and a further 80 children who attend a half day session in the Nursery. The school has daycare facilities and a before and after school club called Marston Green Leap Frogs which was inspected at the same time as this inspection and is reported on separately. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is about half that of the national average. Also well below the national average is the proportion of children with learning difficulties and those for whom their first language is not English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Marston Green Infant School is a good school led by a headteacher who uses her outstanding qualities to promote high expectations and standards. She is supported by an enthusiastic team of staff and governors who respect and value her leadership. The school is rightly confident in its ability to evaluate how well it is doing and was spot on in all the judgements it made about its strengths and where it can improve further.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make a good start to their education. Throughout the school, teaching is good and children make at least good progress. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics do not match the very high test results in reading and writing. Girls achieve better than boys. The school has a commitment to continuous improvement and recognises that it needs to have a more positive impact on standards in mathematics and the progress boys make.

Children enjoy their lessons and respond well to the enthusiasm and care that all staff show. The school looks after particular groups, such as those who are particularly able or those children with social, behavioural and emotional barriers very well. Everywhere around the school, exciting displays of children's work show how much the school values and celebrates what children achieve.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and it provides good value for money. The school's successes and the headteacher's commitment to lead her team to even better things show the school has good capacity to make further leaps to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress children make in mathematics so that standards are even higher.
- Ensure that effective strategies are used to improve the progress made by boys.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards throughout the school are above average and in some areas even higher. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery. They start with abilities that are broadly average but by the time they reach the Reception class, they are already achieving at above average levels. Most children continue to make good progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, children reach very high standards in reading and writing and above average standards in maths. Although this is an overall positive picture, some boys do not achieve as well as they could. The school is aware of this and has begun to use more effective strategies to help boys do better. The progress that children make is being helped by the use of learning targets which are challenging although more focused in English compared to mathematics. Children with special educational needs make good progress because teacher assistants effectively support them with their work which is matched well to their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Children learn to understand their own feelings and how their actions affect others. They develop a good understanding of difference between right and wrong through the school's system of rewards and sanctions. Children mention lessons, their teachers and friends when discussing how much they enjoy their schooling.

Children support a range of charities. They are involved well in the local community, and thank those who have helped them through invitations to the annual 'Strawberry Tea'. Children make a positive contribution to the school community through the work of the school council. Recently the school council has suggested ways to improve some over-boisterous behaviour at playtime, and the school is already acting on these.

Because of the good provision for personal development, children behave very well in class and this is a positive factor in their learning. Attendance is satisfactory and has been steadily improving over the last few years. Children are encouraged to stay safe and healthy, and are aware of the need to exercise and eat well. They know the dangers of smoking and how to be safe with medicines. Children's good achievement in English and mathematics sets a solid foundation for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, leading to effective learning. Lessons are planned well and teachers often make learning fun. For example in a good Year 1 mathematics lesson, higher attaining children rose well to challenging work, identifying the missing number in simple addition sums. In an outstanding lesson, children in the Nursery made very good progress because the teacher had very high expectations and her enthusiasm rubbed off on the children who retold a story about Father Christmas. Good relationships between adults and children encourage positive attitudes and a willingness to participate in the lesson. Teachers use resources, for example interactive whiteboards, very well to enhance learning. Teaching assistants provide a good level of support. Teachers plan work that matches children's needs and set challenging targets for their learning, particularly in English. These procedures are not as effective in mathematics because weekly targets, which are shared with parents and children, are not fine-tuned enough. Children with learning difficulties are well supported so they make similar progress to their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a curriculum which is holistic, interesting, well organised and accessible to all. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are catered for well

because the starting point is based on effective observations and strong links with parents and other agencies. The outdoor learning areas for these classes provide exciting opportunities for learning. Personal, social, and moral development and the health of children are of central importance to the whole curriculum and permeate everything that is taught. Provision for literacy is good throughout the school and supports learning in other subjects. Good additional support is provided for those for whom English is not their first language and for children who have learning difficulties. The provision for those with special talents helps them make good progress. The wide range of clubs and activities, including cookery and gardening, add richness and variety to children's experiences. The curriculum is further enriched through strong links with the local community, and trips to historical and geographical sites. Assemblies, work in religious education lessons and visits from the local vicar, artists and musicians all successfully contribute to helping children understand different cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Statutory requirements are met and the school's procedures for child protection and identifying and dealing with potential risks are good. These procedures help to ensure that children are kept safe and healthy and are supported well by the work children do in lessons and the school's provision for their personal development. The school keeps detailed records of children's progress and use these well to guide children's learning by giving them targets to aim for. Guidance and support for children with social, behavioural and emotional barriers to learning are exemplary and help these children to enjoy school and improve their progress. Similarly, the school provides very good support for children who have been identified as being particularly able.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's passion for, and commitment to, the school are outstanding. She is determined to drive expectations and standards higher and higher and is relentless in motivating her staff to do their best. With her team of staff, she has created an exciting environment for children where their achievements are displayed and celebrated. Underpinning her work is regular monitoring of teaching and children's work which helps the school make appropriate plans to improve further. The headteacher effectively involves other staff with subject leadership responsibilities in this monitoring. They write high quality reports outlining strengths and areas for development. Much of the work done by those with leadership responsibilities is good but some of it is only satisfactory and needs to have more impact on teaching.

The school is entirely accurate in the way it evaluates how well it is doing. The school actively encourages parents to help them make further improvements by regularly asking them to use the effective 'Compliments, Comments and Complaints' cards. The

school also values what children say. Children in the school council said that they are proud of the work they do and are fully confident that their views and opinions matter.

The governors are aware of the positive impact the headteacher has on the whole school. They effectively involve themselves in checking how well the school is doing and because of this they know the school well. Governors ensure that they offer both support and challenge.

The inspection team have every confidence in the headteacher's ability to lead the dedicated school team on to further success.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Marston Green Infant School Elm Farm Avenue Marston Green Birmingham West Midlands B37 7AA

7 December 2005

Dear Children,

The inspectors who recently visited your school would like to thank you all for talking with us and showing us how well you are doing.

We thought there are lots of good things about your school. Some of the main ones are:

- Mrs Parfitt is a super headteacher who works very hard to make your school a great place to be in.
- The teachers and teacher assistants are very good at looking after you and making your lessons exciting and interesting.
- You read and write very well.
- You behave very well in class.
- Your school has lovely displays of your work.

We have asked Mrs Parfitt to improve two things:

- Make sure you all do better in maths.
- Make sure boys do as well as they can.

When we were with you, everywhere we looked we saw frogs! We hope that you can now try even harder, just like when a frog tries to make their biggest ever leap!

Best wishes

Andrew Cook HMI