



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 111329
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278658
Inspection dates 25 April 2006 to 26 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Marguerite McCloy HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Marton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 9HD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01260 224482
Number on roll	225	Fax number	01260 224629
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Paul Moulton
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr Timothy Newbould

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Marton is a Church of England Aided school. It is an average sized primary school with 225 children on roll, which includes 30 in the Nursery who attend part time. The school is situated in a rural area between Congleton and Macclesfield in Cheshire and serves seven ecclesiastical parishes. Many of the pupils are brought to school by local authority transport as they live in a number of surrounding villages.

Pupils come from generally favourable social and economic backgrounds and a much lower than average proportion claim free school meals. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The majority of pupils are from white British families and there are no children currently learning English as an additional language.

Children's skills on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes represent the full range of ability. A good proportion of children enter with skills which are above those expected for their age, although this varies from year to year.

The school has achieved an Activemark Gold award and has received Healthy Schools accreditation in the past.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides good value for money. The school's view of its overall performance is accurate, although effective procedures for self-evaluation have only recently been introduced.

The school has a positive, calm and caring ethos and is held in high regard by the community it serves. The great majority of parents responded very positively in the questionnaires returned to the inspection team.

Good quality provision in the Foundation Stage gives children a positive start to their education. Pupils reach above and sometimes well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Pupils make good progress overall, especially in English. Progress in mathematics in the 2005 national tests was only satisfactory and the school has implemented plans to improve this.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good and they enjoy their learning, particularly in the best lessons where interesting activities motivate and engage them fully. Teaching is good overall, as is the quality of the school's curriculum, although on occasions too much time is allocated to teaching literacy, limiting opportunities for other subjects. Recently developed assessment procedures are enabling teachers to set targets for pupils to improve their work, although this is not yet consistent across the school.

The new headteacher took up his post at the start of the academic year. The leadership team work well together and the pace of school development and improvement have accelerated recently.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and recent developments indicate very good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Apply assessment and target-setting systems more rigorously across the school in order to improve pupils' rates of progress further, particularly in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well. A number of children enter the school with skills which are just above the expectations for their age, although this fluctuates from year to year. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage and by the end of their Reception year, the majority are meeting and many are exceeding the learning goals expected of them.

They make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 indicate standards which are above average. Although the Year 2 results in 2005 were below those usually reached by the school, they remained just above the national average overall. However, this represented

satisfactory or better progress for those particular pupils based on their attainment at the time they entered school.

National test results for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science have been consistently high for a number of years and the 2005 results confirm that these standards are being maintained, particularly in English and science. Mathematics results in 2005 were nearer to the national average and fell short of the school's own target, although more than a third of pupils achieved at the higher level. Attainment at the higher level in science was well above average. The school has identified factors which contributed to the differential between attainment in English and mathematics, and actions have been taken which are having a positive impact on the achievement of Key Stage 2 pupils in mathematics.

The school has successfully improved the progress made by pupils in English, where the 2005 results were very high when compared with those pupils' previous attainment, and more than half achieved the higher level. This was as a result of the school's focus on improving the quality of writing, thereby reducing the gap between achievement in reading and writing.

The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good due to the help they receive from teachers and support assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school modestly judged this aspect to be satisfactory because there is still work to do in developing pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles. Whilst recognising this, inspectors found it to be good overall.

Children really like their school and told the inspectors that they enjoy learning. They respect their teachers and their behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Children are confident, courteous and friendly when talking to adults. They contribute to school development through an active school council whose current priority is to encourage more healthy snacks. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The ethos and distinctiveness of a Church of England school is evident and the curriculum provides some opportunities for the exploration of other faiths and cultures. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 displayed their enthusiasm and excitement about forthcoming residential trips to Wales and the Isle of Man. Attendance is only just above the national average. Punctuality is good.

Children have a good awareness of safety issues and understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, whilst not always making the healthiest choices, for instance, in breaktime snacks. The school makes a positive contribution to the community through charity and fund-raising events and distributing harvest gifts. Children represent the school well in community events. They show environmental awareness by recycling paper and printer cartridges. Older children enjoy being given responsibility for a range of tasks around the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are generally well structured and planned to meet the different needs of pupils in the class. Pupils' very good behaviour ensures that they gain the most from their lessons and the majority make good progress. The positive relationships between staff and children ensure that pupils respect adults, respond well and have good attitudes towards their learning. They listen attentively and concentrate well.

In the best lessons, teachers used practical activities and resources well, including interactive whiteboards, to enthuse and motivate pupils. Clear objectives were explained to pupils and their learning reviewed at the end of the lesson. The brisk pace and high expectations of pupils' work ensured that good progress was made. Questioning skills were used well to give pupils opportunities to explain their thinking so that teachers could assess their understanding.

On occasions when teaching is satisfactory and the pace slows, pupils are not as excited or involved in their learning because activities provided are not as stimulating. In these lessons, there is a heavier balance on teacher talk and less opportunity for pupil interaction and discussion.

The use of assessment to track pupils' learning is developing, although inconsistent at present. Where it is working well, assessment enables not only the school but also individual teachers to identify targets for pupils to improve their work. Many pupils are clear about what they know and what they need to do to improve. Classroom assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and matches the needs of pupils well. In the Foundation Stage, the learning environment has been greatly enhanced by a well-planned, safe and stimulating outdoor learning area which complements the very good indoor environment in providing for all the required areas of learning.

Work across the school is enhanced by good opportunities to take part in educational trips. Pupils have enjoyed recent visits to the Clonter Opera, Manchester's Library Theatre, Macclesfield Silk Museum and Eureka! Science Museum. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are also popular with the pupils. Good partnerships support the school's quest to provide its pupils with rich and diverse opportunities to develop their talents effectively. These include opportunities to learn a musical instrument, working with the local Gifted and Talented Cluster and initiatives with Eaton Bank High School.

On occasions, too much time is allocated to teaching literacy as a discrete subject. This can limit the opportunities to teach literacy skills through a wider range of subjects or ensure that creative and physical activities are given sufficient emphasis. The school is aware of this and has plans to develop the curriculum in a more imaginative and flexible way.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Positive relationships between children and adults ensure that children feel safe and there is someone to whom they would turn if they needed help. Most children know how to improve their work from teachers' comments and from their individual or group targets, particularly in writing. However, they are not given consistently clear guidance about exactly what they need to do in order to reach the next level in the three core subjects.

Under the guidance of the headteacher and leadership team, the school has made recent improvements to the safety and security of the school environment. Risk assessment procedures are robust and policies for child protection and health and safety are well established. Staff have received relevant training on child protection issues.

There are good procedures for helping pupils to settle into school and effective links between the Nursery and Reception classes support this. Good links with the secondary school prepare Year 6 pupils well for the next stage in their education. There is a strong, caring ethos which is evident in all aspects of the school's work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall with some particularly positive features which are ensuring that the school has very good capacity to improve further.

The new headteacher has been successful in lifting the morale of staff and ensuring that a strong team and community spirit are in evidence across the school. He has a clear vision for the development of the school which is shared by staff and governors. The headteacher has actively sought the views of all concerned with the school since taking up his appointment and these views are taken into consideration when planning for the school's future development. The parishes served by the school appreciate recent efforts to develop stronger links with the whole community, despite the difficulties posed by their wide geographical positions.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory with some strengths, such as in improving the quality of pupils' writing. Although high standards have been maintained, the pace of improvement since the last inspection slowed in recent years and the quality of school development planning and self-evaluation was weak.

Staff are professional, aware that their contribution is valued and feel more empowered to take on leadership roles. Key subject leaders are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of progress in their subject. The leadership team work well together and are making good use of information from monitoring procedures to provide a clear picture of the school's strengths and priorities for development. Although this self-evaluation is accurate, it is not yet as clear and concise as it could be in explaining the reasons for and the impact of actions taken to improve standards. A good range of data on pupils' standards and progress is collated. The consistent use of this in target setting and tracking of pupils' progress is at an early stage.

Governors are interested and involved in the school and have an awareness of its strengths and areas for development. Through planned training they are keen to develop their monitoring role in order to increase their ability to challenge the school further and hold it to account for its performance.

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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	3	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	3	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	3	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	3	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

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed joining your lessons and were very interested to hear about all the things you do and what you thought about your school.

There are a lot of good things in your school. Here are some of the things we found:

- you reach good and sometimes very good standards in your work
- your behaviour in lessons and around school is very good, and you get on well with each other and with the adults
- you really enjoy the after-school clubs and visits that the school provides
- the school takes good care of you and you tell us that you feel safe and happy
- teaching is often good so that you enjoy your lessons and make good progress
- the new outdoor learning area is a very good facility for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes
- your teachers and other adults are working well together as a team and Mr Newbould is a good headteacher. They are all keen to make the school the best it can possibly be.

We have asked the headteacher and his staff to make sure that everyone uses the school's assessment and target setting systems well. This will mean that each of you will know exactly how well you are doing and what you need to improve in order to reach even higher levels in your work, to the best of your ability.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful.