



Marlpool Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112562
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278962
Inspection dates 25 May 2006 to 26 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Joyce Cox LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Prospect Road
School category	Community		DE75 7NF
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01773 717647
Number on roll	46	Fax number	01773 717647
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms.B. J. Facey
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Susan Newell

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 25 May 2006 - 26 May 2006	Inspection number 278962
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small infant school situated in Heanor in Derbyshire. The number of children eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all the children are from White British backgrounds. A below average number of children have learning difficulties or disabilities. When children start in the Reception class their abilities are generally at the levels expected for their age but are below in communication skills. The headteacher retired at Christmas 2005 and the school has an acting headteacher. Governors are working closely with the Local Authority to determine the most appropriate steps to take in relation to the school's future. The school is part of Derbyshire's 'Firm Footings' project, which helps Reception children get a good start to their education. It is part of the 'Health Promoting Schools' programme, and has also achieved many awards including Investors in People (twice) Basic Skills Quality Mark (three times) a technology award and an initial award for Anti-Bullying Commitment.

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 with an accurate view of how well it is doing. It gives good value for money. In this very inclusive setting all children flourish and make good progress from an average starting point. As there is a small number of children staff know them exceptionally well, understanding their needs and how to meet them. Children make good progress in Reception because the teaching is good. The majority enter Year 1 with slightly above average standards in all areas of learning. Teaching in the Year 1 and 2 class is also good so that children continue to make good progress. Standards in the Year 2 assessments have risen year by year since 2001 and are above the national average. In 2005, results were exceptionally high, particularly in reading. Assessment procedures are good and children's progress is effectively tracked through the school. The way Reception children's progress is recorded is cumbersome and the school is correctly working on ways to simplify this. Children's personal development is good and their behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Attendance is above average. Those with leadership and management roles carry out their responsibilities effectively and the school successfully focuses on raising standards and promoting children's personal well-being. Parents feel consulted and supported and are very happy with the school. One writes 'I feel that my child has had the best possible start to its education'. Governance is good. Governors are currently very active in working with the local authority to secure the school's long-term future. The school has improved standards as well as successfully tackling the issues for improvement from the last inspection and shows a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Simplify the way Reception children's achievements are recorded so that information can be used effectively to evaluate progress and inform lesson planning. - Continue to work closely with the local authority to maintain and improve current provision especially until the school's future is secured.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children's achievements are good. From an average starting point in Reception they make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in writing and mathematics but they are not quite as high as in reading. Over half of the children attain the higher Level 3 in reading because of the school's strong commitment to hearing all children read daily. The school keeps a watchful eye on the progress of children with learning difficulties and disabilities and the very small number of children whose first language is not English. As a result, they also achieve well. A recent emphasis on improving children's communication and investigative skills resulted in a considerable rise in the number attaining the higher Level 3 in mathematics in the 2006 assessments.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good. They have excellent relationships with staff and one another. As a result, the school is a very happy and caring place in which all children make good progress in acquiring the numeracy, literacy and social skills, which will help in later life. Children effectively learn how to stay safe and they say that there are many people they can go to in school if they are unhappy or frightened. They love coming to school and this is reflected in the high attendance figures. Behaviour is excellent and children have good manners and learn to respect themselves and others. Children know that it is important to eat healthy food and to take regular exercise. The school has no hall or field but compensates by providing sports clubs and daily playtime fitness activities for the children. Year 2 pupils have enjoyed football training with Alfreton football club coaches and all children benefit from regular aerobic sessions. Older children happily take responsibility for younger ones by being playground friends. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to think of others by supporting several charity collections each year. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They flourish in this warm, supportive environment where their achievements are valued, recognised and praised on all occasions and particularly in the weekly 'STAR' assemblies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some very good features. Adults have established excellent relationships with children. Children enjoy learning because teachers make sure that lessons are planned very carefully and presented in varied and interesting ways. Staff succeed in matching activities to children's needs and abilities. They manage children's behaviour well and there is a very positive and supportive atmosphere, which helps children to feel secure and keen to learn. The Reception teacher successfully provides a good balance of child selected and teacher led activities. All teachers work hard to develop children's speaking and listening skills. For instance in a good literacy lesson the teacher was skilled in getting the children to use precise language such as contents and glossary when describing the features of non-fiction texts. The school has focused on improving teachers' questioning techniques which are now very good. Adults have high expectations and children respond well; for example more able children give very full and extended answers to questions asked. Teaching assistants are talented and valued members of the school team. They make a strong contribution to all pupils' good achievement and are particularly effective in supporting those children with learning difficulties. Outcomes of assessments of children's progress are used well to ensure that future lessons are pitched at the right level to match their learning needs. The school recognises that the way in which Reception children's achievements are recorded is currently very detailed and too time consuming to be fully effective.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of learning activities to ensure that all the required subjects are taught. Staff are becoming increasingly skilled at using a range of ICT equipment effectively to enhance children's learning in all subjects. Good adaptations have been made to meet children's needs and particularly to boost progress for those with learning difficulties. The lack of a hall and a field makes teaching the full physical education curriculum challenging but staff work hard to make sure children have a good variety of physical activities. Reception children get off to a good start because they learn through a wide variety of practical and purposeful experiences. There is a strong focus on children's personal development through learning to share and take turn. The Reception classroom has no easy access to the outdoors but staff successfully compensate for this by taking children outside everyday to engage in a good range of physical and creative activities. For instance children have planted beans and, during the inspection, were very proud of their newly acquired skill of learning to successfully hoola hoop. Year 1 and 2 children enjoy their learning because their curriculum is planned carefully to be relevant, practical and interesting. It builds well on their previous learning and staff are developing good links between subjects. For such a small school staff provide a very good range of enticing enrichment activities and clubs such as playing the ocarina, creative dance, computer club and football coaching. These together with a good number of visits and visitors, bring children's learning to life and have a very positive impact on their personal and social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's own view is that this aspect of its work is good. Inspection findings indicate that it is excellent. Every child is exceptionally well cared for in this happy, friendly school which prides itself on welcoming everyone. Staff know children very well and are very quick to notice any worries they may have. The school works very closely with other agencies to make sure that all children and families in need are supported sensitively and effectively. Children with learning difficulties are identified quickly and given very good support, which means they can take a full part in school life. Child protection procedures are thorough and quickly instigated if necessary. Health and safety and arrangements for protecting children are good and all adults are made aware of their responsibilities. Children say they feel safe in school and love all aspects of their learning. Their progress is monitored carefully and they have good group targets for literacy and numeracy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher has continued to implement and develop plans based on the established clear vision for the school that is shared by all staff. Consequently all adults go out of their way to ensure that children,

regardless of background, gender, ability or disability are included in all school activities. Standards and attendance are above average and the school has successfully tackled the issues for improvement from the last inspection. It shows a good capacity to carry on improving even further. The school has very good, established systems for checking how well it is doing. These ensure it has an accurate grasp of how good it is and how to get better still. All staff are fully involved in reflecting on what is going well and what could be improved. Staff regularly seek and act upon the views of parents and children through surveys and through 'circle time'. As a result of a parental survey, a good range of after school activities has been successfully established. There is a very clear and detailed school improvement plan outlining priorities and how these will be tackled. Governance is good and the school has a team of dedicated and supportive governors who have been working very hard to secure the school's future by carefully considering the options of amalgamation and federation. The school makes good use of the support provided by the local authority and values the guidance offered in this interim period. The school maintains very close links with other local schools and in particular with the nearby junior school to ensure that the move from one to the other is as easy for children as it can be.

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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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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?	1	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

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to your school recently. This letter is to tell you what I think about your school. I think you go to a good school. All the grown ups look after you extremely well. You always have someone to take care of you if you are upset. Your behaviour is excellent and you get on well with each other, so everyone is happy. You really enjoy your lessons and work very hard. Your teachers make lessons fun and interesting and help you to learn many new things. All the adults work hard to run after school clubs which you all enjoy going to. Your headteacher leads the school well. She has lots of ideas for making it better still. I think one good idea would be to make the way teachers write down all the great things that the Reception children do a bit easier. Another good thing would be if everyone carried on helping your headteacher to make the school even better. It was brilliant to see that you are all so happy at school and doing so well and that your mums and dads are very pleased with the school too. Keep being good and working hard at Marlpool.