



Marnel Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116017
LEA Hampshire LEA
Inspection number 279725
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Parker AI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Shetland Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Popley
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Basingstoke RG24 9PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01256328670
Number on roll	230	Fax number	01256346891
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Caroline Griffiths
Date of previous inspection	13 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Alison Baron

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a large municipal housing estate. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well above average. A quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties, which is much higher than usual. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. Five pupils are at an early stage of learning English and six who are 'looked after'.

Following the last inspection the school suffered a lengthy period of significant disruption to its leadership and staffing which resulted in a reduction in the number of pupils on roll. A new leadership team took control of the school in September 2003. Almost all of the teachers have been appointed since then and the number of pupils has risen and the school now has a waiting list.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'There is a really good feeling about this school that travels from teachers to children and then on to parents.' This is one parent's view of the school that encapsulates the opinions of many others. They recognise and appreciate the extent and impact of the many improvements the school has made over the last two years.

On the basis of its extensive self-evaluation the school judges its effectiveness to be good. Inspectors agree and echo parents' sentiments that the school exudes a positive ethos and high expectations. The school's performance, when compared to all other schools, has risen from a very low position three years ago, into the top third last year. Pupils' personal development has also improved and is now good. They behave well and have positive attitudes to learning.

The teaching is good and the curriculum is varied and interesting. The headteacher has focused all who work in the school on raising standards and ensuring all pupils have the skills they need to succeed. As a result, the pupils are now achieving well but, although improving, they are not yet reaching the standards they should in writing. The teachers cater well for the needs of most groups of pupils although the more able are not always given enough opportunities to work independently.

The strong leadership of the headteacher and senior managers has transformed all aspects of the school's provision. One Year 6 pupil when explaining how the school had changed in the last few years commented, 'The school was going downhill, now it's soaring.' The school provides good value for money and has a strong capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Raise standards in writing.
- * Extend the range of opportunities for more able pupils to work independently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Efforts to raise standards are coming to fruition. The pupils are now achieving well in English and mathematics and are on course to reach challenging targets this year. Very comprehensive tracking and extensive analysis of the pupils' performance provides strong evidence of the good progress they are making. Pupils are now doing well in lessons in reading and in mathematics but, although considerably improved, standards in writing are not yet as high as they should be. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are benefiting from the school's current drive to extend all of the pupils' speaking and listening skills. As a result, they achieve as well as their peers.

Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 dipped significantly in 2005. Nevertheless, this group of pupils did well from a very low starting point. They made better progress

than might have been expected given the considerable disruption to their earlier learning.

Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and often work in small groups on tasks that are carefully tailored to their needs. They make good progress towards the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they enjoy being at school and this is overwhelmingly confirmed by parents and good and much improved attendance levels. Behaviour is good and pupils are confident, friendly, helpful and courteous. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and how their behaviour affects others.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Racial harmony is strong and the different religions and cultures are celebrated. The development of relationship building, teamwork and co-operative skills through lesson activities and initiatives such as the 'buddy system' are effective. In a mathematics lesson, one pupil said to her partner who was experiencing some difficulty, 'let me show you how I did that'. Pupils have good opportunities to explore their feelings and have good awareness of themselves as individuals. The school and class councils take their responsibilities seriously and contribute their own ideas.

Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and how diet and exercise affect their well-being. Pupils make a good contribution to the community and have a good understanding of how they can play a part in waste recycling and environmental projects. They make good progress in acquiring many basic skills and in developing a very good work ethic. This prepares them well for future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The new teaching team makes a strong contribution to the school's drive to raise standards. The teachers share high expectations of what the pupils can achieve in English and mathematics. They use their good subject knowledge effectively to plan lessons that interest and engage the pupils who respond well. In a lesson in Year 3 the teacher maintained a good pace to learning by dividing the activity into short and sharp tasks that ensured the pupils remained interested and involved. In Year 6 the pupils enjoyed the opportunity to perform a poem because the teacher generated an enthusiasm for the task in a very lively and engaging lesson. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress particularly those with learning difficulties.

The teachers are spreading the drive to improve standards across the curriculum. The pupils know it is important that their writing is as interesting and accurate in all subjects as it is in English. To help the pupils to achieve consistently well the teachers match

the work they set to the needs of differing abilities but the more able pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to explore and investigate independently. For example, in science their work shows an over-reliance on teacher-directed activities and work sheets.

The pupils' work is thoroughly marked and they are encouraged and enabled to assess their own success. The teachers make extensive and helpful comments that are linked to the targets that are always on hand to remind pupils of what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides a broad range of experiences. It meets the needs of pupils, enables them to make good progress and makes learning interesting and enjoyable. Literacy and numeracy are well established and provide a consistent approach to learning. There is good coverage of all subjects, progression in learning and good first-hand experiences. Links with the adjoining infant school are good and as a result pupils settle quickly into school.

The school is developing many opportunities for pupils to use literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to support learning across the curriculum, although there remains scope to extend these further. Education for safety and health is good. There is a wide variety of curriculum enrichment activities including well attended after school clubs and visits and visitors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There has been a significant improvement in the development of an ethos where achievement is celebrated in a caring and supportive environment. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and bullying is now rare and dealt with well. Parents who responded to the questionnaire confirm this. Pupils say that they are confident that there is always an adult they can talk to if anything is worrying them.

There are good systems for child protection and requirements regarding risk assessments are met. Monitoring of pupils' progress is good and individual target setting is used well to support and guide the personal development of all pupils. Academic targets now provide pupils with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve but these have yet to make a big impact on standards, particularly in writing. Cared for pupils are sensitively supported and their progress is carefully monitored.

Visits from the Fire Service and Police help the pupils to understand risks and how to deal with them. A group of pupils were invited to perform a drama production for community wardens on safety on the building sites.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior managers have transformed the school by creating very good conditions for learning and concentrating the efforts of all who work in the school on raising standards. The classrooms are well organised and have attractive displays that remind the pupils of, for example, important things to remember in their writing. In the corridors and hall there are constant reminders to the pupils that their efforts and their views are highly valued. The names of all pupils who have received an excellence award are prominently displayed. Consequently, an ethos of high expectations and good behaviour has been established that results in the pupils' good personal development and positive attitudes to learning.

Over the last two years the teaching team has undergone many changes and now shares the vision and determination of the leadership team to raise standards and ensure pupils achieve well. The school improvement plan and subject leaders' action plans map out the school's continuing drive to raise standards further through a strong commitment to training and professional development.

All aspects of the school's provision are extensively monitored. The quality of teaching is checked frequently. The pupils' progress is rigorously analysed and is central to the school's evaluation of its own performance. Parents' views are sought and valued. Subject leaders continually review progress in their subjects. As a result, the leadership team has a very comprehensive knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The governing body plays a full part in evaluating the school's performance and actively supports the drive for further improvement.

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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	NA	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	3	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	2	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

Children

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to the inspectors. You go to a good school. You told us that you liked the many changes made by your headteacher and teachers. You particularly like being able to learn in attractive and well organised classrooms. You feel safe, behave well and know it is important for you to work hard and learn new things. The members of the School Council represent your views well so that the teachers know how you want to help the school to continue to improve.

You are doing well in lessons. You listen carefully, concentrate on your work and most of you are making good progress. Although standards in writing have improved you can do even better. We have asked the teachers to help you to become really good writers so that you get better results in English. The teachers make lessons interesting and lively for you. However, some of you could be given more opportunities to explore and investigate problems with less help from your teachers.

We enjoyed being in your school and hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector