



Marish Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134651
Local Authority Slough
Inspection number 282629
Inspection dates 9–10 October 2006
Reporting inspector Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Swabey Road
School category	Community		Langley
Age range of pupils	3–11		Slough SL3 8NZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01753 819900
Number on roll (school)	603	Fax number	01753 818996
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Geoff Hobson
		Headteacher	Mrs Stella Beardmore
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 9–10 October 2006	Inspection number 282629
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very large primary school opened in September 2004 as a result of the amalgamation of a junior and an infant school, which previously shared the same buildings. At that time, the majority of the teachers left, and the new headteacher opened the school with teachers who were, overall, very lacking in experience. There was little data available about the standards of older pupils, and initial assessments by the school showed that standards were low. The results of national assessments in 2005 confirmed that pupils had not made enough progress in the previous few years.

Just under a half of pupils are of White British origin, with others from a variety of other ethnic groups including Pakistani, Indian, Black African and, increasingly, pupils from Eastern Europe who speak very little English when they start. The proportion of pupils whose home language is other than English is higher than in most schools and is increasing. An above-average proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Marish Primary provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. It has largely eliminated the low standards that were apparent when the school opened. Good management and clear leadership over the last two years have resulted in significant improvements to pupils' achievement and behaviour. Standards have gone up throughout the school and are now broadly in line with national expectations. Consequently, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in writing are now above average, although standards in science lag behind those in other subjects, with too few pupils attaining the higher levels. This is because pupils have too few opportunities to work independently on investigative work. Too many pupils in Year 6 also fall just short of the expected standards in mathematics, because of gaps in their basic understanding and numeracy skills. Bilingual pupils make similar progress to their classmates, helped by the specific help they are given by specialist staff.

Pupils' improved progress is because a significant proportion of good lessons are now being taught. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and are good in the Foundation Stage, where children make good progress. All teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage classes well, so that pupils' behaviour is good and they get on well with their work. Particularly in English and mathematics, teachers take care to plan work that caters for the differing needs of pupils in their classes. The best lessons are exciting and interesting, involving all pupils and moving along at a fast pace, so learning is rapid. Conversely, lessons that are just satisfactory often suffer from too slow a pace or a lack of challenge.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well, enjoy school and get on well with staff and each other. Their motivation is increased by the good range of clubs and visits. Pupils have a sound understanding of keeping safe, and of healthy lifestyles. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school works very effectively to ensure pupils are safe and happy in school, and that their pastoral needs are met well. Procedures to support them academically are satisfactory and developing rapidly.

Good leadership and management are firmly based on good self-evaluation. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and standards leads to firm and successful action to address any weaknesses identified. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is strongly supported by hard work from all staff, and strong leadership from her deputies. The work of the subject and team leaders has contributed considerably to raising achievement in English and mathematics. The school's record shows that it is well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more good teaching, particularly by ensuring that all lessons have enough challenge and pace to keep all pupils involved.
- Raise standards in science by giving pupils more opportunities to plan and carry out investigations.

- Ensure that more pupils attain the expected standard in mathematics by Year 6, by remedying the identified gaps in their numeracy skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards were too low when the school opened but have risen and are now broadly in line with national averages. Achievement is satisfactory because pupils make satisfactory progress in their lessons.

Pupils in Nursery and Reception are now making good progress and most are on target to meet the expected standards by the time they go into Year 1.

In 2006, overall results of national assessments at both Year 2 and Year 6 rose significantly, eliminating two thirds of the previous gap between results at Marish and the national average. Standards in writing are above average following a focus on this by the school. Standards in science are a little below average, because insufficient work is done on investigations. Standards in mathematics are broadly average, except that too few pupils in Year 6 get to the expected levels. Standards in other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), are generally average.

Pupils who have learning difficulties make similar progress to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils proudly declare that the school has improved a great deal over the past two years and that they really enjoy coming to school. Behaviour has improved and is good overall. A small minority of pupils misbehave, and occasionally this slows progress in lessons as teachers deal with their problems. One girl said, 'It is only a few pupils who disrupt the learning of others but many of them are now gone.' Pupils appreciate the increasingly harmonious atmosphere in the school where they are able to work and play co-operatively.

Pupils enjoy learning about the range of different cultures in and outside the school. Older pupils take good care of younger ones. For example, pupils in Year 5 speak enthusiastically about the 'peer buddying system' for mentoring Year 3 pupils.

Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles but, whilst they undertake exercise enthusiastically, many still do not put their knowledge of healthy eating into practice at lunchtimes. They raise funds for charities and are developing sound citizenship skills through the personal, social and health education programme. The school council are proud of their contributions to the community, and feel they make a real difference. By the time pupils leave, their good social skills and satisfactory competency in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepare them appropriately for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have improved and are now satisfactory overall. There is some outstanding teaching from senior staff and teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. Very effective monitoring by the headteacher and clear feedback to colleagues have helped to maintain and improve quality. The large numbers of inexperienced staff have worked diligently to improve their practice to help their pupils learn better. Positive relationships with pupils throughout the school contribute well to learning. Pupils enjoy lessons and work conscientiously because they like their teachers and are keen to please them.

There is still too much teaching that is only satisfactory, and not enough good teaching to enable pupils to make up all the ground lost in previous years. Weaknesses that make lessons just satisfactory include lack of pace and challenge. There are sometimes missed opportunities to involve all pupils, particularly through giving them chances to discuss their work. Marking does not always show pupils how they can improve, and occasionally work is too hard or too easy for some pupils in the class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some strong features. A strong focus on writing has raised standards significantly. Pupils have well-structured opportunities to practise their ICT skills which are consequently developing well. The recent 'science week' stimulated pupils' interest in the subject although pupils do not have enough opportunities to undertake investigations. A sound personal, social and health education programme is having a positive impact on behaviour and increasing pupils' social awareness. Through it, and the many opportunities for physical activity, pupils are learning to stay safe and lead healthy lives. A strength is the wide range of visits, visitors and activities that enrich the curriculum. These include well-attended extra-curricular clubs, specialist sports coaching, and brass and guitar lessons. These make learning more relevant and exciting for pupils and add to their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. All adults show a high level of commitment and competence in promoting the health and safety of all pupils. Procedures for risk assessments and child protection are secure. Every pupil is known and treated as an individual and this contributes well to the welcoming atmosphere in school. Pastoral support for pupils is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school and that the infrequent incidents of bullying are dealt with well. The school works effectively with outside agencies and involves parents in supporting pupils'

learning. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are identified at an early stage and appropriate measures are undertaken to meet their needs.

Pupils' work is monitored regularly and systems to track individual progress have been established but, because the school has not been open for long, the data still covers a limited time-frame. Pupils are set some group and individual targets but many are not sure of these, or what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She is tenacious in seeking and obtaining school improvement and has rapidly established a clear educational direction. In this, she is ably supported by her senior team. Despite an earlier period of unsettled staffing, there is a strong sense of purpose and teamwork permeating the school that is firmly fixed on doing the best for pupils. Pupils appreciate this; one pupil said, 'The headteacher wants everyone to be happy, healthy and to do well.' Middle managers, some of whom are new to their responsibilities, are enthusiastic and contribute to school improvement through their action plans. Their impact is increasing as they begin to take on a more rigorous monitoring role.

The school has prioritised the need to improve teaching in order to further raise standards. Consequently, teaching is closely monitored and teachers' targets for improvement are closely linked to the school's priorities for development. School self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Increasingly effective use is made of assessment data and other information to identify strengths and weaknesses. This means that school leaders have a clear idea of what is working well and what needs to be improved. Carefully prioritised and effective action has already been taken to bring about improvements in pupils' personal development, the curriculum and standards in literacy. The need to make specific improvements in science and mathematics has also been identified.

Governors are supportive and provide appropriate challenge to the school. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development through close communication with school managers and their own effective monitoring. This allows them to play their full part in determining the school's strategic development.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. You told us that you enjoy coming to school, and that it has improved a lot recently. We agree, and think that you are now having a satisfactory education that is getting better all the time.

You are learning more in lessons and standards have gone up. You are doing particularly well in writing, but you are not so good at science because you don't have enough chances to do investigations. Most of you are doing better in mathematics, but there are still too many of the older pupils who don't get to the expected standard at the end of Year 6.

You get on well with your teachers and they are working to make lessons more interesting and exciting. There are still a few lessons where you find things a bit dull, or you don't work quickly enough.

The staff all work hard to take care of you, to make sure you are safe and happy. You seem to really enjoy school, and to get on well with each other. We thought your behaviour was good in class and in the playground, even though a few of you are sometimes a bit silly when you forget yourselves.

The headteacher, governors and other adults organise the school well, and are always trying to make sure that things get better. We have agreed with them that the most important things the school needs to do next are

- To make even more of the lessons interesting and exciting, so that you learn more.
- To give you more chances to do investigations, so that you get better at science.
- To make sure that more of you get to the expected standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

We hope that you will help them in this by working hard and keeping up the good behaviour. Keep on enjoying school.

Best wishes,

Steven Hill. (Lead Inspector)