

# Marsh Hill Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103233
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	286599
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Walsh

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	390
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jerry Cregan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cate Ball
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2002
<b>School address</b>	Marsh Hill Erdington Birmingham B23 7HY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01214 642920
<b>Fax number</b>	01214 642718

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools and mainly serves the local community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. The headteacher resigned prior to the inspection and a new headteacher has been appointed to take up the post in September 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Despite recent improvements, the school is not providing an adequate education for its pupils. Significant improvements are required to provision in the Foundation Stage. The achievement and standards reached by pupils, especially in mathematics, the quality of teaching and learning, provision in the curriculum, and pupils' attendance and punctuality overall.

Achievement is inadequate and standards by the end of Year 6 are below the national average. Children get off to a slow start in the Reception classes because teaching, the curriculum and arrangements for assessing children's progress have significant weaknesses that impair the progress of the children. Achievement in Key Stage 1 has improved and is now satisfactory, and standards are rising. The school has worked well in partnership with the local authority to raise standards and boost achievement in English, and standards are now broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2. However, standards in mathematics are too low. Progress in mathematics is very slow and clearly reflects the inadequate teaching of this key subject. Although an increasing proportion of pupils are reaching the expected Level 4 in science, the school is aware that few pupils reach the higher levels in either science or mathematics.

A significant number of parents are rightly concerned about the high staff turnover and the number of supply teachers. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff have slowed improvements. Although staffing is more stable now than in the past, there are still two classes in Key Stage 2 without a permanent teacher because of late resignations. Some parents have also expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour. The inspection found pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, to be satisfactory. Behaviour is good in many classes but pupils sometimes lose interest when teachers talk for too long. Behaviour in the playground is boisterous but typically good natured. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory and this enables pupils to gain confidence and feel safe. A particularly positive outcome is the progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is better than that of their peers because of good quality support. Most pupils find school enjoyable. They are aware of how to keep healthy. Attendance rates are unsatisfactory. Despite the school's efforts, some pupils still take too much time off school and this holds back their achievement. Although punctuality has improved, too many pupils are still late for school.

Overall both teaching and learning and the curriculum are inadequate. The headteacher and senior leaders have carefully monitored the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum, identifying exactly where the weaknesses lie. Strategies to improve teaching and learning have resulted in important improvements in practice in Key Stage 1 and some very good teaching in Year 6. Nevertheless, there is still too much inadequate teaching and not enough good teaching in the rest of the school. Assessment information is not used effectively enough to make sure that work is well matched to pupils' needs. As a result there is insufficient challenge for more-able pupils, particularly in mathematics and science. The school has recognised that there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations. This has held back pupils' achievement in both mathematics and science but there are signs of improvement, especially in science.

Senior leaders work very well as a team, and together with governors have a steadfast commitment to improvement. This, together with secure self-evaluation, improvements to the quality of teaching and achievement in Key Stage 1, higher standards in English in Key Stage 2 and recent developments in the curriculum for science, demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 4**

When children start school their standards appear to be below what is expected for this age group, but when they join Year 1 standards are very low in most areas of learning. This reflects weaknesses in teaching, and a curriculum which does not adequately cover all areas of learning. Activities are insufficiently matched to children's needs and are often both prescriptive and repetitive. A lack of balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities restricts children's opportunities for developing creativity, imagination and independence. Children have insufficient opportunities to use the outdoor space to develop skills, knowledge and understanding. There are wide variations in the quality of teaching; some staff use good questioning skills and work hard to develop children's thinking and to model language, whilst others are less effective and ask closed questions. Relationships between staff and children are usually warm and supportive. Sensible induction procedures ensure that children settle fairly quickly.

The school's assessments are not reliable because they are not based on precise enough observations and information is not gathered together effectively enough. This makes it difficult for the school to have an accurate view of children's standards on entry to Reception, to measure their progress correctly or to plan work that meets their individual needs. School leaders are aware that urgent improvements need to be made to provision in the Foundation Stage but progress has been slow.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the Foundation Stage curriculum provides for all areas of learning, has a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, and makes effective use of the outdoor space.
- Make certain that assessment information in the Foundation Stage is accurate and is used effectively to plan activities that move children's learning on.
- Raise the quality of teaching, ensuring in particular that assessment information is used to plan work that more closely meets the needs of all pupils in mathematics and those of the more-able pupils in science in Key Stage 2.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Standards are below average and achievement is inadequate. The school is aware that children are not making enough progress in the Reception classes. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Although standards were below the national average at the end of Year 2 in 2007, they are now improving, particularly in reading and mathematics. Improvements to achievement in English in Key Stage 2 have been sustained and, although progress in English is very uneven in Years 3 and 4, it accelerates as pupils move through the Key Stage. It is particularly good in Year 6, where many pupils are producing well-presented, lively pieces of writing. In 2007 standards in mathematics were very low at the end of Year 6 and, although

standards have improved, they are still not good enough. Presentation of work remains an issue in mathematics and science. Some of the more able pupils make slow progress in mathematics and science, with too few reaching the higher Level 5s.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Although most pupils say they enjoy school, some miss too much school or regularly arrive late, leading to gaps in their learning. Relationships between pupils are usually constructive. When they have the opportunity, they work well in groups but are also happy to work independently. Pupils know how to keep fit and healthy but do not always make healthy choices.. However, pupils really enjoy sport and exercise. The school's programme of personal and health education is helping pupils to learn to manage the risks they may come across in everyday life. Bullying is not common but pupils say there is some name calling that is dealt with effectively by teachers. Pupils are actively involved in fundraising. They want to make a positive contribution to the local and wider community. The school council is working hard to make the school a better place but there are limited opportunities for more pupils to develop initiative and take on responsibility. The way pupils are prepared for their secondary education and later life is restricted by inadequate achievement, and particularly by their slow progress in developing mathematical skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Although there are an increasing proportion of interesting, lively lessons that enthuse pupils, there is still too much inadequate teaching. Teaching is most effective in Years 2 and 6 and helps pupils to make good progress in these year groups. Although teachers have recently been provided with clear guidance about how to teach calculations in mathematics, their explanations are sometimes still not sufficiently clear and this leads to misunderstandings amongst pupils. Teachers do not always use questioning effectively to check pupils' learning. Most teachers manage behaviour effectively and as a result behaviour in most lessons is good. Occasionally teachers' expectations of standards of behaviour are not high enough which means that behaviour overall is satisfactory. Planning is sometimes not sufficiently precise and the work set does not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

There are serious shortcomings in the curriculum for the Reception class which limit children's achievement. Provision for supporting pupils' personal development, including their knowledge about how to keep healthy and safe, is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 a strong focus on speaking and listening and the development of writing has had a beneficial impact on standards in English. Opportunities for investigation are improving in science but the lack of opportunities for investigation remains a key weakness that contributes to pupils' underachievement in mathematics. The curriculum for mathematics and science provides insufficient challenge for more-able pupils. A satisfactory range of clubs, visits and visitors helps make learning more interesting and relevant. Good links with other local schools have enhanced pupils' opportunities, especially to take part in sport.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Effective pastoral care contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and personal development. Health and safety and child protection procedures are robust. The school works efficiently with external agencies to provide extra help for vulnerable pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well. High quality marking which tells pupils very clearly how to improve their work has been central to improving standards and achievement in English. However, the marking of mathematics and science work is not of such a high calibre. Pupils' knowledge of their targets is variable. The school has extensive information about pupils' progress which is presented in a wide variety of ways. Although it is used effectively by senior leaders to identify where pupils are underachieving, the data is not easy for teachers to access and understand. This lack of understanding and use of data by teachers does help them plan their effectively to meet the needs of all pupils.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The school has accurately identified its weaknesses through good quality monitoring of teaching and effective analysis of data, including information about pupils' progress. However, improvements to achievement and standards and teaching have been slow as the headteacher, the leadership team and governors have had to work steadfastly to overcome staffing issues. The successful leadership of literacy and science has raised standards in these subjects. The senior leadership team has recently been strengthened and this is already having a significant impact on the quality of teaching and the curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 2. Work has started to raise teachers' skills and expectations when teaching mathematics, and already the presentation of pupils' work is starting to improve.

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## Annex A

## 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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	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	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marsh Hill Primary School, Birmingham B23 7HY

Thank you for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you. We are pleased that most of you like school and we know that many of you work hard. We were happy to hear that you enjoy after-school clubs. You told us that you especially like the sport.

At the moment your school is not providing you with a satisfactory education, but the staff at your school are trying to improve the situation. That is why we have given your school a Notice to Improve. This means that inspectors will come back in about a year to check that you are getting a better quality of education. We know that many of you are trying hard to improve your school work, and your standards in English are now similar to those of other children. We were very impressed by some of the lovely writing in Year 6. Although you are developing more skills in mathematics, standards are still too low in Key Stage 2. You are not making enough progress because teaching and learning are not good enough. We have asked your teachers to improve teaching by making sure that the work you are set in mathematics and science is not too easy, especially for the more-able pupils. Some of you do not attend school regularly enough and this is holding back your progress. You could help by coming to school every day and by being on time.

We have also asked your teachers to make sure that children in the Reception classes have interesting things to do that help them learn successfully, and to make better checks on children's progress. Managers in your school are working very hard to make your school much better and your school is already starting to improve. Thank you again for being such good company.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely Susan Walsh Lead Inspector

## Annex B



24 April 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Marsh Hill Primary School, Birmingham B23 7HY**

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Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh  
Lead Inspector