



Marsh Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106403
Local Authority Wigan
Inspection number 287505
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Ian Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kitt Green Road
School category	Community		Marsh Green, Wigan
Age range of pupils	3–11		Lancashire WN5 0EF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 222016
Number on roll (school)	250	Fax number	01942 216820
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs B Bourne
		Headteacher	Mr P Duffy
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007	Inspection number 287505
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This slightly larger than average school serves an urban area that has considerable social and economic disadvantage. About 4% of pupils are from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds, with no group of significant size. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A much larger than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities - more than double the national average - but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is about average. The school has had substantial staffing difficulties over recent years that have now been resolved. The school is part of an Excellence Cluster, a group of local schools working together to raise standards and achievement. The school has the British Council's International School Award for developing global citizenship education, an Activemark award and an Eco School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and satisfactory value for money. There are differences in the rates of progress between the key stages. Despite growing strengths, the overall impact of the education the school provides on achievement is satisfactory. Good Foundation Stage provision helps children to settle well and make good initial progress from starting points that are often low. Elsewhere in the school, effective professional development and better use of assessment and target setting have led to improvements in teaching and learning styles. These measures have had the most positive impact in Key Stage 1. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have shown a steady improvement, although it has been stronger in reading and writing than in mathematics. The improvements are not yet fully apparent in Key Stage 2 as teachers continue to address pupils' past underachievement. Although standards in Year 6 have been consistently below average, the school's national test results have shown a rising trend over recent years. However, results fell in 2006 with the sharpest fall being in mathematics. Despite the school's efforts, supported by the local authority and external agencies, the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils in this group disrupted the learning of all. The school has now established strategies to ensure that this position is not repeated, and current Year 6 pupils are making good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make consistently good progress. This is the result of the very effective support they receive from class teachers, the learning mentor and learning support assistants.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and leaders have made an accurate analysis of the school's needs. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, although there is still work to be done in raising standards and achievement, particularly in mathematics. Robust action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning through appointments, monitoring of lesson quality and professional development. These measures are paying off in rising standards and achievement and suggest a sound capacity to improve further. The decision by the school's management to devote resources to the provision of additional classroom support staff has been particularly effective. The impact is clear in the good provision for, and improved progress of, pupils with additional learning needs.

The quality of teaching and learning has been improving and is now good. This is better than the school's judgement of satisfactory, which was made some time ago. The improvements reflect a successful drive to link monitoring of classroom standards to professional development and training. Teachers are good at planning lessons that are well matched to pupils' needs. Consistent expectations of work and behaviour lead to the majority of pupils showing positive attitudes. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy learning; many make good progress in a purposeful working environment. A large proportion of girls lack confidence in the accuracy of their work and answers, although some teachers are adept at drawing them out. Girls do not push themselves forward to participate actively in lessons and tend to be overshadowed by boys who do.

The school takes good care of its pupils in a happy and supportive learning environment. Pupils feel safe and secure and know there is always someone to help them with any worries or concerns. There is an appropriate emphasis on healthy living and personal development. The school's international links are a strong feature that helps develop pupils' awareness of other cultures and the wider world. Opportunities are missed across the curriculum to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement, particularly in mathematics.
- Develop girls' confidence in their ideas and capabilities.
- Improve the use of ICT to support learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with well below average skills overall, with some having very low standards in communication and social development. Good progress is made in the Foundation Stage. The majority of pupils also achieve well in Years 1 and 2 as a result of good teaching, coupled with a high level of skilled support. In 2006, results in national assessments at the end of Year 2 were close to average with writing showing particular improvement, reflecting the school's focus on raising standards. Current standards in Year 6 are close to average in English but below average in mathematics and science. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are making improved progress overall as a result of changes in organisation of classes and the school's work on teaching and learning styles. Progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall and sometimes it is good. However, it is too soon for the impact of this to show in improved achievement and standards. Although girls generally have better results than boys, they do not consistently make as much progress as they should in relation to their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and promoted successfully through art, dance, music, personal, social and health education and circle time. Pupils are aware of how to live healthy lifestyles, encouraged by the school's focus on providing healthy lunch options and opportunities for physical activity. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' behaviour and has been successful. However, a minority of pupils display challenging behaviour during break times and require close individual support from staff. Pupils willingly take on responsibility, for example, as play leaders or members of the school council. They know how to stay safe. Links with the local fire and police services and the work of the road safety officers encourage pupils to think about their own safety and wider community issues. Throughout the school, there is evidence that pupils know about energy conservation and recycling. They show an awareness of the

needs of others through charitable contributions and have an understanding of different cultures and traditions as a result of the active links with schools in other countries, such as Romania. There has been a recent improvement in attendance in response to new incentives and awards.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning are leading to improved progress at Key Stage 2 as teachers build on the improvements brought about in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Teachers have good subject knowledge and adopt a range of teaching styles to maintain pupils' interest. Basic skills are generally taught well with opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy clearly identified in planning for all subjects. Assessment data are generally used well to set targets in English and mathematics and to support planning of work to match pupils' needs. Teachers' marking provides pupils with good guidance on how to improve. Breaking lessons down into smaller, more manageable parts is helping boys to learn better. However, in some Key Stage 2 lessons, girls are not given enough opportunities to improve their confidence by contributing their ideas, for example, in question and answer sessions. Consequently, teachers miss opportunities to check their understanding and support better progress. Opportunities are also missed to use ICT resources to support learning and to develop pupils' independence. A strong feature of lessons is the way that teachers throughout the school work with classroom support assistants to promote pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Recent changes to the structure of curriculum leadership are leading to the identification of ways in which work in different subjects can be linked to help pupils make sense of their learning. However, this work is in its early stages and has yet to have an impact on achievement. Similarly, the available ICT resources are not consistently used to best advantage to broaden the curriculum. A wide range of after-school and enrichment activities enhances the curriculum. These provide additional opportunities for success, particularly in dance, drama and sport. Satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education encourages pupils to be healthy and stay safe. Pupils' understanding of the world of work is enhanced by the school's involvement in the Wigan Enterprise Business Partnership. An industry day for Year 6 pupils provides the opportunity to work with members of the local business community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Child protection and all other checks to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place. New strategies are improving pupils' behaviour and few pupils are troubled by the behaviour of others. Pupils say they are confident that teachers will deal quickly and effectively with any bullying or other incidents that occur. The school and other agencies provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support staff are well trained and skilled at supporting pupils with complex behavioural and emotional needs. Pupils' academic progress is monitored effectively, enabling teachers to identify where extra support or challenge is needed. The school is working hard to involve parents more in their children's learning but with limited success. Few returned questionnaires but those who did showed they were pleased with the care that their children receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and largely matches inspection findings. The school's leaders know what needs doing and have developed appropriate plans for improvement. Restructuring senior staff roles has led to better monitoring and increased accountability for performance. There are signs of improvement but it is too soon for these improvements to have a full positive impact on standards. Specialist expertise is being used to advantage in providing curriculum leadership, for example, in driving up standards in literacy and science, but the development of ways to use ICT to support learning is lagging. Good use is made of partnerships with other schools, businesses and outside agencies to support the school's work by providing additional opportunities and helping to develop good practice. Governors are active in their support for the school. They are well informed and understand the challenges facing it. Nevertheless, they are not sufficiently involved in the self-evaluation process to hold the school rigorously to account for its performance

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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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	2

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	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2
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?	2

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?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, a team of inspectors visited your school to check on how well it is doing.

Thank you very much for the way you made us welcome. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and your life in the school. We were impressed by the courtesy and help you gave us. We agree with you that the school is a safe place where everyone can enjoy learning.

During our time in the school we particularly liked the way:

- younger pupils make good progress and how the quality of work across the school is improving
- teachers plan interesting lessons that help you to learn
- everyone in the school makes sure that you are looked after well
- your teachers and the classroom assistants give those who find learning difficult a lot of help
- most of you behave well in lessons and help each other
- work around the school shows that you take healthy living, recycling and saving energy seriously.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to improve some things to make your school a better place to learn. These are to:

- help you to do better in your work, particularly in mathematics
- help girls to have more confidence in themselves
- make more use of ICT to help you learn.

You can help by making sure that you behave well in lessons and concentrate on your work. Thank you for being so helpful when we were inspecting your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning at Marsh Green and wish you well for the future.