

Marsh Gibbon CofE Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110411
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288664
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Jeffrey White

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Robinson
Headteacher	Mrs Louise Metherell
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Castle Street Marsh Gibbon Bicester OX27 0HJ
Telephone number	01869 277268
Fax number	01869 277268

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average. About a half of pupils live outside the school's catchment area. No pupil takes a free school meal. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average but is increasing. Very few pupils are of minority ethnic origin. Attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year but is broadly average overall.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an excellent school that is highly regarded by parents. Leadership and management are outstanding and the headteacher, staff and governors work exceedingly well together to foster pupils' personal and academic development.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and underpin the daily life of the school. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent and consequently they are ready to learn and highly enthusiastic. They are very knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles and know how to stay safe. Pupils throughout the school thoroughly enjoy their work and especially enjoy the sporting opportunities that are provided. They are very actively involved in the local community and, because of their fundraising for charities, are well aware of people less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are developing very good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) which prepare them well for their future life. Pupils enjoy talking about their life in school and making decisions. However, they don't make decisions regularly enough.

Pupils' achievement and progress are excellent because the teaching is exemplary. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they have reached well above average standards. Pupils are enthused by the stimulating curriculum, particularly in music and ICT. The outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that the children make excellent progress overall and particularly in personal, social and emotional development.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Parents comment very positively on these aspects of the school's provision. The headteacher and staff have made excellent use of targets to improve the standards of writing, especially in the case of boys. Consequently pupils are very aware of their progress and what they need to do to improve. They are less sure of their progress in reading because they are not given targets for this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils targets for their reading so that they can be more aware of their progress.
- Ensure pupils have more regular opportunities for decision making.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The outstanding teaching enables pupils to achieve extremely well and make excellent progress over time and in lessons. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 4. Although boys do less well than girls in writing, they are catching up. Pupils' progress is enhanced by their excellent attitudes and levels of concentration. Several children enter the Reception class with below average social skills. The very effective teaching helps them to settle happily and gain in confidence. As a result they now participate well in group work, indoors and outside, and choose activities for themselves. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are above average in all the areas of learning. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's Christian values permeate its work and have a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes towards each other. Pupils discussing the school's buddy system commented 'We look after new children and make sure they are not lonely'. Pupils respond extremely positively to opportunities to reflect on their own behaviour and on values such as fairness and respect towards others. Attendance is excellent and illustrates pupils' keenness to learn. Pupils enjoy using their initiative. For example, a group wrote to parents asking them to donate cakes for a cake sale in aid of charity. They then organised the sale themselves. Pupils have opportunities to give their views, for example in circle time, but don't do this regularly enough. Pupils respond very well to the school's celebration of diverse religious festivals, and a link with Gambia is developing their understanding of cultures different from their own.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

A significant strength of the school is the outstanding teaching that ensures the great consistency in pupils' progress over time. Lessons are planned extremely well and, consequently, the range of pupils' needs is met successfully. High expectation is a significant feature of the teaching so that pupils work hard and do their best. In a lesson in mathematics, Year 4 pupils made excellent progress in mental calculations because the challenge in their work increased as the lesson progressed. Teachers' exposition is very clear and precise so that pupils know exactly what they have to do. The excellent quality of the teaching means that pupils' learning is also outstanding. They are highly diligent learners and sustain their concentration. They also work very harmoniously in pairs and groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum not only meets requirements but is also enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Improving boys' writing has been a whole school focus, because they have not performed as well as girls, and is meeting with success. A specialist teacher teaches music throughout the school. Boys and girls thoroughly enjoy the music because the teaching is excellent. French is taught in Year 3 and Year 4 and much appreciated by the pupils. Good links are made between subjects such as literacy, history and geography. ICT is well used especially in developing pupils' research skills. Pupils' work in art and design is very creative. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the range of clubs available after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is very strong and ensures that pupils know that they are valued and work in a safe environment. The high level of care begins in the Foundation Stage where children are helped to become confident learners and to enjoy what they do. Links with parents of children in the Foundation Stage are highly productive and contribute to the children's personal and academic progress. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils'

learning. Links with outside agencies are very good. Parents and friends of the school volunteer help as much as they can, for instance, some of them regularly visit the school to help with pupils' reading. Academic support for pupils is highly effective because it helps them know what they need to do to improve. Precise targets have helped pupils, especially boys, to improve their spelling and development of ideas in writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Working in partnership, between the headteacher and staff, is a key reason why leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher and well established staff enjoy taking on new initiatives but only after careful consideration of the benefits to pupils' learning. They cope extremely well with accommodation that has several disadvantages. Since the last inspection, a significant improvement has been made in facilities for the Foundation Stage.

Parents comment that the headteacher '...knows all the children very well'. This is because the headteacher not only teaches very regularly but is also active in and around the school so that pupils can approach her with confidence if they want to talk to her. Equal opportunities are promoted very effectively. Rigorous analysis of data on pupils' performance has been used very successfully to set challenging targets. Effective action is taken to deal with any weaknesses in provision. A good example is the headteacher's leadership in improving the use of ICT not only for pupils but also for staff. The school runs very smoothly.

Governors discharge their responsibilities very well. They are involved early in the strategic planning and regularly review the progress of the school development plan. They are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The school has improved very well since its last inspection and, because of the strong leadership and exemplary teaching, has excellent capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

15 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Marsh Gibbon CofE Infant School, Castle Street, Marsh Gibbon, Bicester, OX27 0HJ

Thank you for your help when I visited your school. Your school is excellent and your headteacher and staff make sure that you work hard and they take great care of you. You told me how much you enjoy your school life and I know that you are learning a lot about how to be healthy and safe. Your behaviour is excellent and you are kind towards each other and look after new children. You are very keen to learn and I was very pleased to see you reaching very good standards in your lessons. Your teachers and learning support assistants give you excellent guidance and as a result you make extremely good progress. You talk very well about your targets for writing which have helped you to know about your progress. I have asked your headteacher also to give you targets for your reading. I know you enjoy giving your views and I have also asked your headteacher to let you do this more regularly.

With best wishes

Jeff White,

Lead Inspector