

# The Marlborough Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111027
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	288831
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Johnson

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	398
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs P Gilbert
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr C Bates
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2002
<b>School address</b>	Tytherington Drive Tytherington Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 2HJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01625 423938
<b>Fax number</b>	01625 612918

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Marlborough is a larger than average primary school in a semi-rural suburb of Macclesfield where the vast proportion of housing is privately owned. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the number of pupils who have more complex learning needs is increasing. A small number of pupils learn English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The Marlborough is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils are happy at school because they know they are well cared for and they feel safe. Their personal qualities are excellent. Pupils' attendance is very high, they very much enjoy learning and they show great respect for each other by behaving extremely well. They are clear about what is considered acceptable behaviour and are quick to support one another on the very rare occasions when relationships need to be restored. There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities such as serving on the school council, leading Reception children through physical play activities at lunchtime or being ambassadors for the school when they represent Marlborough in sports tournaments and community projects. The school has overwhelmingly won the confidence of parents and in particular the appreciation of those who nominated the school for a special achievement award because of the way it supports pupils who have additional learning needs.

The curriculum is vibrant and challenging and encourages pupils' achievements because there is so much to interest them. Teachers capitalise on the first-hand experiences which pupils gain from the exceptional range of enrichment activities by using them, for example, to inspire writing, enhance geographical skills or promote personal development. Consistently good, and sometimes better, teaching keeps pupils' interest and enthusiasm buoyant. Pupils enjoy challenges, especially when they are the ones who make up the mathematical problems for others to solve. Nevertheless, there are not enough strategies to enable pupils to assess their own progress, or consistent clear guidance given through marking to denote the step-by-step improvements necessary in pupils' learning.

Pupils achieve well. They have typical abilities for their age when they enter the Reception year, and because of consistently good teaching throughout the school, standards in Year 6 in the 2006 national tests were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 2 are improving, especially in reading and writing, because of new arrangements to boost pupils' understanding of letter sounds.

Leadership and management are good. A very high level of morale among all staff and a sense of teamwork influence pupils' attitudes very well and encourage their enthusiasm for school. Effective evaluation of the school's performance has led to good improvements, for example in mathematics. Senior and middle managers share the task of monitoring subject developments but this lacks some rigour so the quality of marking and expectation of what pupils can achieve are sometimes inconsistent. Skilled and committed governors challenge and support the school very effectively and contribute strongly to the overall vision and direction the school takes. A written plan clearly identifies the routes to improvements. Although it provides a useful guide to monitoring progress it does not link the effects of actions to learning outcomes for pupils. There are good structures in place to sustain and build on the qualities of leadership and management and a good capacity for continued improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of marking so that it is a more effective aid to learning for all pupils.
- Add more rigour to monitoring and evaluating impact by linking planned actions more explicitly to outcomes for learners.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is average. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children reach expected levels for their ages and many exceed them in all areas of learning. Although standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were broadly average in 2006, assessment data indicates that current standards are higher and that a larger proportion of pupils are working at a higher level in all assessed subjects. Standards at the end of Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science in 2006. Standards in mathematics and science showed a significant improvement on previous years. Current standards remain above average overall, though because of variations between cohorts a lesser proportion are expected to achieve the higher levels in each subject. Nevertheless, the school continues to set and meet its challenging targets, and value-added has improved steadily over the past three years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the successful extra programmes planned for them and the quality of support they receive. Those learning English as an additional language are also supported well and make good progress.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is rooted in the school's belief and practice that, 'if you get it wrong someone will help you to get it right'. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are exemplary. Pupils are extremely supportive of one another and there is a very strong sense of teamwork both in and outside of lessons. Their thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their well above average attendance. For them, lessons are fun and the vast range of visits and clubs outside of lesson time creates even more enthusiasm for school. Pupils understand the importance of a sensibly balanced diet and exercise routines, or as some put it, 'don't get too thin or you might die'. All pupils, because of their excellent attitudes, help to create a supportive school community where all-round achievement thrives. They even nominate one or another of their classmates for the weekly 'golden book' special achievement awards. Their economic well-being is very strongly provided for through their good grounding in basic skills and the opportunities they have to work with business partners, take part in community events and ensure that their voice is heard in the day-to-day running of the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have a good rapport with pupils and lessons are often punctuated with humour. Pupils enjoy this: it makes learning fun and strengthens relationships so that pupils feel confident, valued and willing to 'have a go'. Teachers' lively classroom presentations combined with good subject knowledge and creative use of resources ensure that pupils, whatever their abilities, progress well in lessons. The pace of learning and the way teachers engage pupils in activities that encourage collaborative work contribute well to the good and at times outstanding teaching and learning. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They are particularly skilled at supporting those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and at times

provide outstanding support to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. The skills of the teachers are not always matched by other aspects. For example, there are not enough opportunities to help pupils to evaluate their work so that they are able to develop a clear understanding of how well they are progressing. The quality and effectiveness of teachers' marking also has shortcomings in that it lacks consistency between classes and seldom refers to pupils' targets or gives clear guidance about how work can be improved.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is planned very creatively. It is particularly broad and vibrant, enabling all pupils to achieve well academically and very well in their personal development. There is a very clear emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, and this promotes their basic skills. Strengthening links across subjects enable these skills to be practised widely. Pupils achieve well in sports, music and the arts because of the richness of opportunity which the curriculum provides.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children are challenged by the exciting range of activities provided and consistently achieve well. The introduction of a new programme for teaching phonics is having a very positive impact on early reading and writing skills. Provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship is good, ensuring that pupils are well prepared to make informed choices about their personal well-being outside of school. The range and quality of enrichment activities is also outstanding. All pupils from Years 3 to 6 have opportunities for residential visits. Outings are planned to support learning across the curriculum. The extensive programme of after-school clubs is very well supported, giving ample opportunities to those who wish to nurture their various skills and interests.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

There is overwhelming agreement among parents that The Marlborough provides 'an excellent balance between academic, pastoral and social care'. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well provided for with regard to their emotional needs through mentoring and peer counselling. Pupils feel safe and value highly the trusting relationships they have with adults and each other. Some aspects of care are exceptional and the provision of horse-riding sessions to help pupils with additional learning needs gain in confidence and self-esteem shows how the school is prepared to go 'the extra mile'.

Pupils who learn English as an additional language receive extra support because the school has secured necessary funding through sponsorship from local business. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Systems for tracking pupils' progress against predicted attainment levels are effective but day-to-day academic support and guidance has some weaknesses, leaving some uncertainty about the point at which pupils reach their targets and, consequently, when these need to be reviewed.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Through inclusive leadership and a deep regard for the welfare of all staff and pupils the headteacher has established a thriving school and won the respect of the whole community.

Despite its good performance there is no complacency. With good support from senior leaders the school accurately analyses its work and resets priorities where needed. For example, weaker aspects of mathematics were identified and tackled vigorously, resulting in improved standards. A newly introduced phonics programme has had a significant impact, especially on boys' reading and writing. The school's focus on personal achievement has raised self-esteem and improved pupils' attitudes and relationships to an outstanding level. Curriculum leaders are confident in their roles. Subject knowledge is good and they introduce well chosen initiatives to enhance pupils' learning. However, they are aware that more rigour is needed in measuring how effectively achievement and standards are promoted within different subjects. This is echoed in the school improvement plan, which identifies clearly the actions to be taken but does not always link them explicitly to improved outcomes for pupils. Governors, because of extensive training, have a very thorough knowledge of how the school works. Their range of expertise enables them to contribute significantly to the vision and direction for the school. With senior leaders they have established a clear framework for future progress and development. The school's capacity to improve is evident in the standards and qualities seen in leadership, teaching and pupils' personal development. Finances are finely balanced but managed astutely to provide good value for money.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	1
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of The Marlborough Primary School, Macclesfield, SK10 2HJ

As you know, Mrs Ravey, Mr Wainwright and I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. We all agreed that everyone made us feel very welcome so thank you for making our visit so pleasant. We enjoyed talking to you about your school and finding out how much you enjoy all the things your teachers plan for you. Please share this letter with everyone else in school.

Marlborough is a good school because your teachers make lessons fun and help you to make good progress. Your behaviour is outstanding and your attendance is much better than in most schools. The adults in school take good care of you and help you to feel safe. It is good to see how healthy you all are. No wonder after all the sporting fixtures you take part in, not to mention those super healthy lunches!

Before we left we discussed with your teachers a couple of things we think will make your school even better. We have asked them to mark all of your work more clearly so that you always know exactly what to do to improve. We also asked school leaders to keep a closer check on how well their plans will help you to do better work.

You can help by continuing to enjoy school and being happy and helpful.