



Marton Grove Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111577
Local Authority Middlesbrough
Inspection number 288990
Inspection dates 4–5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Stafford Evans

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Lambton Road |
| School category | Community | | Grove Hill, Middlesbrough |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 | | TS4 2RF |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01642 827808 |
| Number on roll (school) | 300 | Fax number | 01642 277010 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Rev. Sue Richardson |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs Carol Coleman |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 June 2001 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools nationally. It is located in an area that is socially and economically disadvantaged. Over half the pupils are entitled to a free school meal, very high in relation to the national average. Over a third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is also high, accounted for in the main by the infant assessment group and junior resource based pupils who attend the school from outside the area. There are a very small proportion of minority ethnic pupils; none speak English as an additional language. There are very small numbers of looked after children, much lower than in the recent past. The school has a history of staff absences.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an improving school that provides a satisfactory standard of education.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily to attain standards below national expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. In 2006, the national test results for Year 6 pupils rose significantly after several years of decline. Inspection evidence indicates that this is the beginning of an upward trend. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have put in place a very effective system of checking how well pupils are doing in lessons. This means that they very quickly identify pupils who need additional help. In Years 5 and 6, this is provided by skilled support and good teaching and as a result, these pupils are making faster progress which is leading to higher standards. The successful strategies for improving attendance mean more pupils are in school more often; consequently, their learning improves. Throughout the school, pupils feel better because of their success and enjoy their learning far more.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good and outstanding lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6 and with groups of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. These underpin good behaviour management and help create a good climate for learning.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and attain below nationally expected standards in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. In communication, language and literacy, their standards are well below those expected. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 4. This is slower than the good progress in Years 5 and 6 because work is not always matched accurately to pupils' varying needs. Throughout the school, more able pupils are not given hard enough work. This slows their progress.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development so that they reach satisfactory levels. This is because of the good level of care, support and guidance they receive from staff. Most pupils behave well but some find it hard to do so. The good support these pupils receive ensures that their behaviour improves. Pupils feel safe and relaxed in school. This is because they know that the school's good procedures for keeping them free of harassment are implemented rigorously.

The school provides a wide range of activities for pupils to learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles. This includes very good links with outside agencies. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to eat healthily and why it is necessary to take exercise. In practice, most are keen to exercise through sporting activities, but are less sure whether they eat healthily enough. The school and class councils provide pupils with a role in shaping the future of the school's community. They fulfil this role well but have less involvement in the community outside school. They have the skills and personal qualities that satisfactorily prepare them for the next stage of education and life in the workplace.

The curriculum is planned satisfactorily to meet the needs of most pupils. However pupils, particularly in Years 1 to 4, are not given sufficient opportunities to practise

their basic skills across the curriculum. Furthermore, pupils' progress slows in Year 1 because the activities planned are not closely enough matched to their skills and levels of maturity. The curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sports, provides good opportunities for pupils to take exercise and develop teamwork.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides very good leadership and management of the school. The governance of the school is good. The governors and the school's leadership team are working, with some success, to deal with the high levels of staff absence that create a barrier to the school improving more rapidly. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and determines what the school needs to do to improve. This is confirmed by the inspection findings. The leadership team has brought about substantial improvements since they came together 18 months ago. There is good capacity for continued improvement in order to provide better than the current satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Match work more accurately to pupils' varying needs and give them more opportunities to practise basic skills across the curriculum, especially in Years 1 to 4.
- Improve the curriculum for children transferring from Reception to Year 1.
- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve, particularly for more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are below average. Children join the nursery class with skills that are much less well developed than expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress to reach standards that are below average. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain standards below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons in Years 1 to 4. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make good progress in many lessons in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Vulnerable children and minority ethnic pupils make similar progress and attain standards similar to their classmates. There is no discernible pattern of difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

By the end of Year 6, standards in the 2005 national tests were well below average. This was part of a year-on-year decline since 2001. In 2006, the results of the national tests were significantly better showing a reversal of the previous trend. Within this improving picture, there are some weaknesses. Progress in lessons in Years 1 to 4 is not rapid enough to raise standards. Throughout the school, the progress of higher attainers is also too slow. The exception to this is in Year 6 mathematics lessons. In

these lessons, pupils make at least good progress because expectations of what the teacher wants them to do are very high.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils make good progress in their personal development and well-being, some from very low starting points. As a result, their personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. The behaviour of most pupils is good but there is a significant minority who have difficulty sustaining acceptable behaviour. Their behaviour is improving because of very good support systems to help pupils to come to terms with actions that cause themselves and others distress.

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. In many lessons, they are enthusiastic learners. They speak about the many lessons they enjoy and one pupil summed up the mood when he said, 'It is a great place to be'. They feel safe because they know that any incident of harassment is dealt with quickly and effectively by the staff. Pupils confirm that such incidents are rare. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and taking exercise. They say that they try to eat healthily some of the time and many take regular exercise, particularly when out playing.

Most pupils attend school regularly and are punctual for lessons. There is a small group of pupils who do not come to school often enough. This adversely affects the progress they make in lessons. Although below average, attendance is improving at a good rate.

Pupils have a satisfactory and growing understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Most pupils work cooperatively and collaboratively and have a satisfactory level of basic skills. Thus, they are satisfactorily prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good and outstanding lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well and learn new work at a good rate. This is because of the staff's expertise at handling challenging behaviour and their ability to find what motivates the pupils. Learning is interesting and pacy.

Throughout the school, lesson planning is good because it shows clearly what pupils are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. This ensures that both the teacher and the pupils are focused on what is important. This helps pupils make at least satisfactory progress.

Most pupils are attentive learners because the teachers provide interesting work. This makes them want to learn and they enjoy their lessons. Any unsatisfactory behaviour is managed effectively to ensure that learning is not disrupted. The very good

relationships between staff and pupils are the cornerstones of the behaviour management strategies. Skilled teaching assistants and other classroom helpers are well deployed to support learning.

Teachers have a wealth of information about the progress that pupils make. This information is used to match work to pupils' varying needs particularly well in Years 5 and 6, and satisfactorily in Years 1 to 4. This is an important reason why progress is slower in Years 1 to 4. Throughout the school, the level of challenge for the higher attainers is not high enough and this slows their learning. When it is high enough, as in mathematics in Year 6, this group of pupils make rapid progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides an adequate curriculum that caters well for pupils' personal development. For example, the work on dental health has increased pupils' understanding of the importance of keeping teeth healthy and how to do so. Their interest and enjoyment in the topic was heightened by visiting specialists. The extra curricular provision is good. It enhances pupils' learning. For example, they are learning to speak French. It also supports the school's drive to make pupils more active through a wide range of sporting activities. The inspectors agree with the school that the curriculum in Year 1 does not sufficiently meet the needs of all pupils. Less of a problem, but one that does slow some pupils' progress, is the curriculum in Year 3. It does not take sufficient account of the type of work some pupils in Year 3 are ready for. Furthermore, pupils particularly in Years 1 to 4 are not given enough opportunities to practise their basic skills across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures and routines to ensure pupils' health and safety are thorough and risk assessments are fully in place. Child protection procedures are in place and very good links with outside agencies and families ensure that the needs of pupils, especially those who are vulnerable, are met. Skilled and well-briefed learning mentors and teaching assistants ensure that vulnerable pupils and others who need additional help are supported effectively and make good progress. Considerable and successful efforts are made to improve attendance and a lot of effective work takes place with families. The school has very effective checking and recording systems to measure pupils' academic progress. Teachers are therefore in a position to provide good guidance on how most pupils can improve. The exception is that more able pupils do not always receive the benefit of this good advice.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together very effectively. They have very good leadership and management skills. This has helped them to develop a good team spirit in the school. In their drive for improvement, they are ably supported by other senior teachers, staff and governors. As a result, the recent decline in standards has been arrested and there are clear signs of improvement. This is because the leaders have evaluated very effectively the school's standards and provision through effective monitoring systems. They then put effective strategies in place to improve the weaknesses. For example, the behaviour management procedures have improved pupils' behaviour and increased the amount of time pupils spend learning.

The school's self-evaluation pulls no punches in an honest appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The inspection confirms the accuracy of the school's judgements. The effective self-evaluation is the basis for their good capacity to improve. Another important factor is good governance. The governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths of the school and areas for development. They are beginning to hold the school to account, whilst remaining supportive of the management team.

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Inspection judgements

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| 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

| | |
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| 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 | 3 |
| 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

| | |
|--|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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? | 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

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| 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 | 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 | 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 | 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

Marton Grove Primary School

Lambton Road

Grove Hill

Middlesbrough

TS4 2RF

6 October 2006

Dear Pupils

We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for giving up your time to talk with us. You provided us with a lot of valuable information about your school. Through your class and school councils you play an important part in the life of the school. Well done.

You go to a very caring school. Most of you are making steady progress in your lessons and in Years 5 and 6 you are making good progress. This means that the results of your tests are higher than they used to be. We saw lots of good behaviour but also a few pupils who did not behave as well as others. These pupils are doing well to improve their behaviour because of the good care and support the school gives you. You told us that you all feel safe and secure in school and there is always someone there to help you if you are worried about something. You take a lot of exercise and know about healthy eating.

Your school is well led and all the staff work hard so that you make at least satisfactory progress in your lessons. In Years 5 and 6, your work is very carefully set so that it is at the right level for you. We have asked the teachers to make sure that this is the case for all the classes. Throughout the school, some of you can do much harder work and reach standards that are much higher. In Years 1 to 4, you do not have enough opportunities to practise reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects.

You can help to make your school even better. Of course you need to work hard, but you also need to aim to do as well as you possibly can. You have a lot of talent. Behave well, come to school every day and set your sights high.

Best wishes

Stafford Evans

Lead Inspector