



Marnel Community Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116023
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290398
Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Paula Protherough

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Shetland Road
School category	Community		Popley Way
Age range of pupils	4–7		Basingstoke RG24 9PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01256329521
Number on roll (school)	160	Fax number	01256477325
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Geoff Warmington
		Headteacher	Mrs Bernadette Cole
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007	Inspection number 290398
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small urban infant school with 160 pupils on roll. Attainment on entry is below average. The school has a small proportion of children from minority ethnic groups. Over a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties but at present there are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. There is an Early Years Centre on the school site which is managed by the school. This offers a range of opportunities for families from within the school and the surrounding area. Pupils enter from a range of early years providers.

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 increasingly effective school which provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Strong and determined leadership from the headteacher has set in motion many initiatives designed to improve provision for the pupils to ensure that they all achieve as well as they can. This vision is fully supported by a highly committed team of teachers and support staff who work hard for their pupils.

Children get off to a sound start in the Foundation Stage where they make satisfactory progress from a low starting point. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress so that by the time they leave the school, standards are only slightly lower than the national average. This is reflected in the recent improvement in the attainment of pupils of average and above average ability in the last year, especially in writing. School tracking, targets and pupils' work show that this trend is likely to continue. The special needs co-ordinator monitors effectively the support and progress of pupils with learning difficulties, which contributes to their good progress.

Although teaching is at least satisfactory and often better, there are some inconsistencies across year groups. As a result, pupils do not always have similar educational experiences. For instance, the pupils' action group, supported by the co-ordinator for able children has developed an eco school project. Here pupils achieve well because they are given the opportunity to develop their own ideas and use their initiative. However this style of working is not yet established throughout the school and, in too many lessons, activities are adult led.

Thorough assessment of pupils means that lessons and activities are organised to support learners at all levels. The high staffing levels enable many small groups to work on personal targets with adults who can support and extend them. However, on some occasions, pupils are not given enough opportunity to be independent. Precise use is made of data to set targets about what pupils should learn but pupils are insufficiently involved in assessing their own learning on a daily basis.

The curriculum has been reviewed to excite and motivate pupils. This has been a successful initiative and pupils are enthusiastic about their work. Pupils are well behaved and relationships in school are good. Pupils are kind and considerate and understand how to treat each other. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are good and they are well cared for in lessons and at playtimes. They understand how to live healthy lives and how to stay safe.

The school has strong and productive links with the wider community. Parents appreciate their welcome into the school and the vast majority are very pleased. As one parent said 'The headteacher and all the staff have always gone that extra mile.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Share good practice to ensure that teaching is consistently good throughout the school.

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to become independent learners.
- Ensure teachers provide consistent opportunities for pupils to assess and evaluate their own progress to become more closely involved with their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's focus on raising standards through rigorous target setting and monitoring of progress is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. This is especially effective for pupils with learning difficulties. The skills, knowledge and understanding of the children entering the Foundation Stage are below average and particularly so in communication, language and literacy. Progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving due to a closer match of the curriculum to the needs of the learners. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have good attitudes to learning, but few have reached the learning goals in early literacy. At the end of Year 2 standards are still slightly below the national average, but the latest results show that more pupils are achieving the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The recent focus on more able pupils is helping more of them to achieve the levels of which they are capable. There has also been successful action to improve boys' writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their activities and, particularly, their work. and;quot;I like writing fairy storiesand;quot; was the comment from one boy. The school takes effective steps to improve attendance, which is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They understand the school rules and play and work together happily. Pupils care for each other, their surroundings and the environment. There is a strong sense of moral responsibility, demonstrated in their fund-raising for charity. Behaviour in lessons and around school is consistently good; pupils are calm and responsive to each other and to adults and work well in groups and teams. Inspection evidence shows that pupils can be confident and independent but are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop these attributes. The School Council takes its role very seriously and representatives enjoy offering ideas about how to improve their school. Pupils appreciate the opportunities to meet as a community and celebrate their achievements in assembly. Pupils understand how to keep healthy through healthy eating and exercise. Productive links with the junior school help pupils prepare effectively for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships are good and teachers work hard to create positive attitudes to learning. Most lessons are well planned and managed, with work that is well matched to pupils' needs. As a result pupils are engaged and motivated. Lively activities, discussions and questioning develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and raise self-esteem and confidence. However, some important features of effective teaching are not yet consistently in place in all classes. Most teachers are careful to explain what it is that pupils are expected to learn in lessons, but this is not always the case and so pupils are unable to assess their own learning. In some lessons pupils have to sit for too long and too much time is spent listening to the teacher, this limits opportunity for independent working. Teachers are conscientious in providing pupils with oral feedback and in marking their work but current approaches vary in quality between classes.

Pupils with learning difficulties receive effective support from teaching assistants and make good progress. A recent transition project with the local junior school has successfully focused on improving the teaching of writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because there are a wide range of opportunities for pupils throughout the school. The staff have reviewed their planning of subjects so that pupils are engaged and motivated by more exciting activities. For example, the science week was appreciated by both pupils and parents. The school is now beginning to establish a clearer curriculum overview that sets out the links that can be made between subjects. For instance, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been improved since the last inspection and now supports pupils' learning across the curriculum. The Foundation Stage planning is also good with improving opportunities for these pupils to initiate their own learning. The curriculum is effectively enriched by a good variety of visits, visitors and special events. Similarly there is a wide range of extra-curricular provision including French, sports clubs and art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Inspectors agree with the many parents who feel that the school takes good care of their children. There are effective and thorough procedures for keeping pupils safe and, consequently, they feel well cared for. Academic guidance is good because of thorough assessment and target setting which ensures that pupils' progress is tracked effectively. Strong links with other schools and outside agencies ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and other needs are well supported. However, at times, adults step in too quickly and this is at the expense of encouraging

pupils' independence. Projects, such as 'Social and emotional aspects of learning' (SEAL), and circle times help pupils to understand their feelings.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and deputy have a clear vision of what they want to achieve for the school which is shared by staff and governors. They are very well supported by talented and efficient administrative staff. The school knows how to improve its performance because its approach to self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Monitoring has identified aspects of teaching which are effective but good practice is not yet consistently shared across the school. Subject leaders work effectively in the development of their areas of responsibility.

The governing body is a highly motivated and increasingly effective group which fulfils its statutory duties. Governors are very committed to the school and are proactive within their committees. They visit the school regularly but, as yet, monitoring is not systematically recorded to help them to offer appropriate challenge to the school.

The school seeks and acts upon the views of parents and has successfully improved the partnership between home and the school. Standards are rising, there has been a thorough response to the previous inspection report and the school is well placed to continue to improve.

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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	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	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	2
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

We visited to inspect your school last week and were made to feel very welcome by you all. Your school is a happy place where your headteacher and all of the adults work hard to make you feel safe and looked after. Your behaviour is good at playtimes and in lessons. You are kind to each other and work and play well together. The school council makes sensible suggestions about how to improve the school. You understand about how to lead healthy lives and show that you are proud of your achievements in assemblies.

You are enthusiastic about activities such as science week and after school clubs. You work hard in your lessons which you enjoy because the teachers make them interesting. As a result your work is getting better, especially writing. In order to make your school even better we've asked your teachers to make all their lessons as exciting as the best ones and to give you all opportunities to be more independent. We've also asked them to help you all to understand exactly what it is you are learning every day.

Thank you for all your help last week.

Yours sincerely

Paula Protherough

Lead Inspector