

Marwood Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School, Great Ayton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121495
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292138
Inspection date	17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Keeler HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon P Peverell
Headteacher	Mrs Vivienne Smith
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2001
School address	Low Green Great Ayton Middlesbrough North Yorkshire TS9 6NN
Telephone number	01642 722389
Fax number	0

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Marwood is a smaller than average Church of England infant school. Most of the pupils are drawn from the village. The proportions of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who have learning difficulties or disabilities, are below average. The school has achieved the National Healthy School status.

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 outstanding school in every respect. It provides an excellent education for all its pupils and gives very good value for money. A typical comment from a parent of the school sums up how the school is perceived by the community: 'The school sets very high standards for its pupils which they never fail to meet and this sets them up for life.' This is a fair and accurate assessment. Marwood is an outstanding school because of the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher and, in particular, the partnership that she has successfully developed between staff, parents and governors.

Most, but not all pupils start school with skills that are typical for their age. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 because of excellent teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make excellent progress as a result of early intervention strategies combined with carefully crafted and well taught programmes of support. Very good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that the overwhelming majority of pupils exceed the nationally expected learning goals by the end of their Reception Year. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above the national average with many pupils attaining the higher Level 3. A distinct feature of this school is that these high standards have been consistently maintained over a period of many years.

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and form excellent relationships with their pupils. As a result pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. It is not surprising therefore, that their behaviour is excellent and attendance is above the national average. The curriculum is outstanding because it meets the needs of all learners. It is enriched by educational visits and a range of after-school activities. While close attention is given to the core skills of reading, writing and mathematics, the school acknowledges the need to provide increased opportunities for pupils to apply their recently acquired skills in other subjects. The advancement of pupils' personal development is given a high priority. As a consequence, pupils are secure and confident learners. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is another exceptional feature of this school and reflects the school ethos where 'spiritual development is promoted and Christian values are upheld'.

The quality of care, guidance and support is exemplary and is recognised as such by parents. Every child really does matter at this school and this is evident in the way that each individual is valued and looked after. The headteacher and staff know all pupils and their families well and parents are always welcomed into school to discuss and support their child's education.

The headteacher, subject leaders and governors work very well together and are forever seeking ways to improve the school while maintaining its core values and high standards. The school has continued to improve since the previous inspection and the capacity to continue in this vein is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Identify opportunities for pupils to apply recently acquired skills in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Most pupils start Reception with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. A minority, however, have skills in social and creative development that are not so well advanced. All pupils

make very good progress across the areas of learning because of outstanding teaching. As a result, when they start Year 1 nearly all pupils have attained the learning goals and many have exceeded expectations. In Years 1 and 2 pupils continue to make very good progress. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are well above national averages. A significant proportion of pupils attain the higher Level 3 in all subjects. High standards have been achieved consistently over a six year period. An indication of the school's success is that the amount by which Marwood's standards exceed the national average in the core subjects has increased over recent years. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make excellent progress due to outstanding provision.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school and feel that it is a 'happy place to be'. They have very good relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. The standard of behaviour demonstrated by pupils during lessons and at play is excellent. They are polite, courteous and respectful of others. There are no incidents of racism or bullying and pupils know exactly what action to take if any should occur. A notable characteristic is the way they are encouraged to care for each other especially those younger than themselves. The successful playground 'buddies' scheme is a good example of this. Pupils are given increased responsibility as they move through the school and this helps them to develop into confident, well rounded individuals. The excellent role models provided by all staff at the school makes a great contribution to pupils' personal development. Excellent teaching that inspires and motivates pupils helps to secure very good working habits and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and are able to talk about it enthusiastically. For their age, pupils are developing a very good awareness of other cultures and world religions. The school is very much at the hub of the local community and pupils take part in local events and celebrations on a regular basis.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding because of the direct impact it makes on the progress and high standards attained by pupils. Teachers have high expectations and this is evident in the detailed planning and challenging work they set. Good subject knowledge, very effective questioning that requires pupils to think and to articulate their responses, together with interesting and engaging activities, all contribute to the creation of a positive learning environment. Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and learning. Very effective teaching assistants play a key role in helping pupils to make progress, especially those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils are set individual targets to help them become aware of what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils know what they are and are able to talk confidently about the next steps in their learning. The school is currently looking at ways of ensuring that day to day marking is more closely related to even shorter term targets, such is their determination to bring about further progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils exceptionally well. There is a strong focus on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics as well as pupils' personal development and as a result these are major strengths of the school. Problem solving and investigative work are incorporated into a curriculum that is well balanced. The school rightly acknowledges that in order to sustain high standards in all areas of learning, pupils need further opportunities to apply their basic skills in other subjects. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is borne out of an effective early intervention policy and is tailored to meet the needs of the individual. This is one of the major reasons for these pupils making outstanding progress. A range of well planned visits and after-school activities help to enrich the curriculum. This helps to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning and fosters their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and appreciated by parents. Staff know pupils well and have established extremely good relationships with parents resulting in a partnership that benefits pupils in their learning. One parent encapsulated the views expressed by many when commenting, 'I am overwhelmed with the care shown by the school and the help and reassurance they are giving me.' Clear procedures are in place with regard to child protection and all staff have been trained to respond to such issues should they arise. Very good links exist with external agencies, ensuring that pupils receive the support they warrant. Pupils' progress is well monitored over time and the setting of individual targets helps pupils to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding. She has, over the years, successfully pursued a clear educational vision combined with a strong sense of care. The high expectations that she has set for both teachers and pupils has been the most influential factor in realising the high standards for which this school has become associated. This has been recognised by the local authority who has identified Marwood as a highly effective school for the past six years. The school has put into place good self-evaluation procedures; this means that the headteacher and the governing body know their school well. They have a good understanding of its strengths as well as areas for development. Subject leaders have a good grasp of standards and are involved in monitoring them to good effect. Governors take a keen interest in school affairs and regularly visit in order to monitor developments and to offer practical assistance such as hearing children read.

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Annex A

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?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know I came to your school recently to find out how well you are learning. You made me feel so welcome and I really enjoyed talking to you. I particularly enjoyed watching you work and play together. I noticed how you all got on and were kind especially to those younger than yourselves. You told me that Marwood Infants is a fantastic school and I agree.

These are the things I liked a lot.

- You read, write and do mathematics very well.
- Your teachers do a great job and care for each and every one of you.
- Mrs Smith, your headteacher is determined that you will do very well with your work and grow up into caring and responsible young people.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are very polite.
- You understand why it is important to take exercise and eat healthy foods.