

Marlborough Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100483
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	307402
Inspection date	28 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Sue Rogers

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Susan Anstruther
Headteacher	Ms Jessica Finer
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Draycott Avenue entrance Sloane Avenue London SW3 3AP
Telephone number	020 7589 8553
Fax number	020 7581 9374

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas:

- the quality of teaching and learning, and improvements since the last inspection
- the impact of improvement work done by leaders, especially in English and mathematics
- the quality of pupils' personal development and the school's provision for their care, guidance and support.

She gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, and school documents, parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Marlborough is an average sized school. The large majority of pupils are from a wide a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Seventy percent of pupils come from families who do not speak English at home. They speak 36 different languages in all. Nearly a third of the pupils take free school meals and the proportion of pupils who enter or leave the school over the course of the year is also higher than is usual. The number of children with special educational needs is average. Some manifest challenging behaviour, but the majority require extra help with their basic numeracy and literacy. The school holds the Gold Artsmark and the Healthy School award. Staff absence has necessitated the employment of several temporary teachers over recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Marlborough Primary is a good school where pupils make good progress in their learning and do well in their personal development. The school is well led and managed. Staff work very hard to make the school an inclusive, happy place to be educated and parents appreciate this. One wrote, for example that the school 'succeeds perfectly in making a real opening to the world for the children'.

Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are more limited than would normally be expected of three and four year olds. Their language and mathematical skills are especially weak, partly because so many are at the early stages of speaking English. The school is successful in overcoming these barriers, making particularly effective use of very well managed support for children who speak other languages. Classroom assistants are very thoughtfully deployed to work with pupils who struggle with numeracy and literacy. Consequently, all groups of pupils make good progress and standards are in line with national averages by the end of Year 6. They do better in reading, mathematics and science than they do in writing, because many pupils are hampered by a lack of understanding of aspects of the English language. The school recognises this and continues to focus on improving pupils' grammar and vocabulary.

There has been a little inconsistency in progress over recent years, because of the need to employ so many temporary teachers. However, staffing is now more stable and the leadership team have worked very hard with staff training. As a result, teaching is good and classes who were behind in their learning have caught up, particularly because of outstanding teaching in Year 6. The headteacher has introduced excellent systems to track assessment information and the staff therefore have very good knowledge of each individual pupil. Demanding targets are set and planned learning is generally very well matched to pupils' abilities.

Pupils enthused about school, saying they liked it '...very, very, very much'. They enjoy the thematic approach to lessons, which are underpinned by a very well planned curriculum. They also like the sports clubs and the range of visitors that come to the school. Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection, because of better provision. Pupils' excellent achievement in learning about health and participation in physical education is reflected in the Healthy School award. Outstanding cultural education is also a strength of the school and this contributes to good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils rated their international food festival, where parents brought foods from all round the world to taste, to be the social highlight of the year.

Pupils' involvement in their learning has also improved considerably since the last inspection. Staff have designed an excellent checklist matrix, which is used consistently for pupils to evaluate their own learning. Pupils know their longer-term targets and these are discussed regularly. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils with challenging behaviour are generally well managed, with minimum disruption to learning. Pupils feel safe in school and are well cared for. However, pupils, together with a few parents, expressed concerns about the levels of teasing, name-calling and friendship squabbles in school. The learning mentor has already been working with groups of pupils to address this and the number of reported incidents has dropped considerably from last term. The school does all that it can to encourage good attendance and this is satisfactory when compared to similar schools. Pupils are polite, work well together and are keen to take on responsibility, such as acting as monitors to organise equipment at playtime. They also enjoy learning about democracy through the work of the school council. The council,

in turn, is pleased with the part it has been able to play in school improvement. For instance, they interviewed an architect to help get ideas for the redesign of the school playground. The good progress pupils make in their basic literacy and numeracy skills helps them to be well prepared for the next stages in their education.

The headteacher is well-thought of by parents and has built an able senior management team. The governing body provide good support and challenge. Senior managers have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and therefore know what needs to be done to improve. At times leaders are not sufficiently clear about how they will measure the progress they make in tackling the areas they identify for improvement. Nevertheless, they have effectively dealt with the weaknesses raised in the last inspection. In addition, pupils' progress is accelerating due to better teaching and the good use of assessment information. The school therefore has a good capacity to improve still further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils get off to a good start. The Foundation Stage is a rapidly improving and well-managed area of the school. It is very well organised with a variety of activities that both interest children and deliver the required learning. For example, children were seen developing their language skills and their knowledge by role-playing spacemen gathering moon rocks. Good teaching results in children making good progress, such that they enter Year 1 working at levels that are in line with national averages for most of their areas of learning. They are still behind in aspects of English and mathematics, but they have done well taking into account their low starting points. The teachers have high expectations and plan adult-led activities extremely well. This leads to children making very good progress when working with staff. Although there is a great deal of choice for children working independently, at times these activities are not planned in enough detail to enable children to understand what they might learn from them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' behaviour and relationships on the playground.
- Ensure that plans for improvement are clear about how success will be measured.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marlborough Primary School, London, SW3 3AP

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I visited you. You were very helpful and I really enjoyed talking to you and seeing you in your lessons.

I think your school is a good school because your headteacher and staff work hard to look after you and to give you a good education. Many of you cannot speak English when you arrive and yet you reach average standards in your tests in Year 6. This is because the teaching is good and other staff support you very well. Some of you still struggle a little to do as well with your writing as you do with reading, mathematics and science. This is because you find English grammar difficult and you and your teachers will need to work even harder to improve your writing results!

Your personal development is good. You are polite and work well together. All the children I talked to told me that they loved school. However, some of you talked to me about some teasing and squabbling that goes on and I have asked the staff to work with you to try to stop this happening. I have also asked the staff to try to be more precise in the way that they measure what they are doing to improve the school. I think this will help them see more clearly if what they are doing is having an effect. I hope this will result in your school becoming an even better place to learn.

Best wishes

Sue Rogers

Lead Inspector