

Marlborough Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103232
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308256
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	322
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	142
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Abdul Hamid
Headteacher	Evelyn Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Marlborough Road Small Heath Birmingham B10 9NY
Telephone number	01214 645363
Fax number	01217 530526

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Inspection number	308256

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large infant school where all of the pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being Pakistani-Asian and Asian-British. Some pupils are from Bangladeshi families and an increasing number are of Somali origin. Virtually all the pupils are from communities where English is an additional language in the home and over a third of the children are at an early stage of speaking English. A slightly larger proportion of pupils than normal join the school during the year. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average and an average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The main needs are speech and language, and specific learning difficulties.

The school provides a daily breakfast club and twice weekly stay and play sessions for children aged 0 to 3 years and their parents and carers.

The headteacher took up her post in October 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. There are particular strengths in the strong pastoral care, the good curriculum and in the pupils' good personal development. Parents and the local community are extremely supportive of the school. One parent captured the views of many in commenting, 'This is a friendly school, the headteacher and all the staff are very approachable and nothing is too much trouble.' There is a good team spirit amongst the staff and many parents praise the new leadership. One wrote, 'Since the new headteacher started the school has become more focussed and has improved in many areas.'

The headteacher is a good leader and together with the deputy headteacher has quickly established a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Wasting no time, she has implemented highly effective actions to improve the planning and organisation in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Staff, parents and children are very pleased with the transformation and enjoy the new layout of the rooms and the freedom of the open door to the outside play area to explore and learn. Children in the EYFS make satisfactory progress from low starting points. Whilst standards at the end of Year 2 in 2008 are well below average, this still represents satisfactory achievement. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory and they receive appropriate support from the learning mentors and the inclusion leader.

The school's curriculum is good and the learning environment is vibrant with high quality displays which are relevant to the pupils' interests and which sustain their motivation to learn. A wide range of visits, visitors and after school clubs all serve to broaden pupils' experiences and enrich their learning effectively. Pupils say they love school and enjoy learning because their teachers are kind. Behaviour is good and pupils know how to stay safe and keep healthy. The school is a highly caring community and the relationships between adults and pupils are very good. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure. Systems for checking pupils' academic progress have improved considerably over the last year and as a result, the school is beginning to identify more effectively where pupils need more support. However, assessment information is not always used effectively by all staff to ensure the needs of all pupils are met.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although some good teaching and learning were observed during the inspection. This good teaching is not sufficiently widespread to ensure that all pupils make the best progress possible. On some occasions, tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the differing abilities of pupils, which inhibits their progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher knows precisely what the school needs to do to improve further. The use of data by senior staff to check the school's performance has improved considerably. Consequently, the leadership team is starting to adopt sensible strategies to bring about improvements in order to raise standards and achievement. These strategies have not had sufficient time to impact fully on pupils' achievement. The school's self-evaluation is good and there is a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The governing body's monitoring role is improving and they have a satisfactory picture of how well the school is performing.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Very young children and their parents and carers thoroughly enjoy the twice-weekly stay and play sessions led by a learning mentor. The warm friendly atmosphere and bright, colourful resources provide a good introduction to school.

Children make satisfactory progress in the EYFS although standards are well below average in all the areas of learning at the start of Year 1. Children achieve well in their personal development because of good provision. A very good partnership with parents and carers is quickly established through home visits, sensitive induction procedures and parent workshops. Good emphasis is paid to the development of basic skills, such as phonics to help children's early reading and writing skills. The school is correctly establishing ways to assess children's level of spoken English so that teachers and the talented bilingual staff can make sure children learn to speak English as quickly as possible. Parents like the way their children settle quickly and happily. This is because the care and attention given to children's welfare are good. Good improvements have been made to the planning and organisation of the EYFS this term. There is now an improved balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. Children are starting to experience a lively, exciting and interesting curriculum both indoors and outdoors. Interesting role-play areas such as a skilfully designed baby clinic, promote children's language skills effectively. Teaching is satisfactory and improving as staff become increasingly confident with the new organisation. Assessment is accurate and firmly rooted in observations made by all staff who are starting to use this information effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory and characterised by a shared sense of purpose, supportive teamwork and a constant drive to improve all aspects of the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring work is well matched to pupils' ability.
- Ensure that teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan work.
- Ensure school leaders monitor more rigorously the quality of teaching and learning and take appropriate action where necessary to ensure that a greater proportion is good.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' attainment and achievement have been below or well below average since the last inspection. This represents satisfactory achievement from pupils' low starting points in the Nursery. The new leadership team is committed to raising standards and achievement and has introduced many strategies to do this. All pupils, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnicity, make satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make sound and occasionally good progress due to well-organised support from the staff who speak a wide variety of languages

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils love school and develop positive attitudes to learning because the staff make it enjoyable for them. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They happily celebrate different faiths and customs. For instance, pupils in art club are currently making attractive clay divas. Behaviour is good and pupils state that they feel safe and happy in school and agree there are many adults they could talk to if they were worried. They are aware of the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Pupils like the school dinners and the meals and drinks provided because they are healthy and nutritious. Those who attend breakfast club happily tuck in to boiled eggs and toast and love the fact that many of the staff join them for breakfast. They enjoy collecting money for local and national charities. Older pupils maturely help younger ones by being playground pals. Despite the school's excellent efforts, pupils' attendance remains broadly average. Attendance figures are depleted because many young children contract childhood ailments and a small number of parents take their children out of school during term time to go on extended holidays abroad.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Very good relationships with pupils, including good use of praise to provide encouragement, is a consistently strong feature of learning and teaching. Other strengths include well-devised activities to involve all pupils, such as pairing pupils to share their ideas, and the effective use of the interactive whiteboards. Teaching assistants and learning mentors provide good support, ensuring that all pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included well in lessons. Although lessons are planned carefully, insufficient use of available assessment information means that tasks are not always matched closely enough to the full range of pupils' needs. As a result, teaching is not consistently challenging for all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is devised carefully to provide many practical experiences. This helps to ensure engagement and enjoyment and equally sound achievement by boys and girls. The school is currently reviewing its curriculum to ensure even more effective links between subjects. Strategies introduced to engage boys more, particularly in reading, have had a good impact on pupils' achievement. Planning for pupils to learn how to stay fit and healthy is successfully woven into lessons and clubs. Learning is extended well through a good range of extra-curricular activities, including residential experiences and a wide range of clubs and visitors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The warm and welcoming environment helps pupils to develop good social skills. This is evident during breakfast club where staff and pupils happily share news and food. The headteacher and her staff are dedicated to the welfare of their pupils and families. Rigorous safeguarding and effective welfare procedures are in place. Consequently, pupils are happy and secure, and they quickly gain in confidence and self-esteem. There are good procedures to track pupils'

progress. Many pupils know their improvement targets but the quality of teachers' marking varies and does not always tell pupils the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is a good leader and together with the senior leadership team has put many strategies in place to improve the school. Many of these are fairly new and have yet to have a full impact on pupils' achievement. Through its very good relationships with parents, local organisations and other schools, the school is contributing well to the promotion of community cohesion. A governor commented that, 'The school is pivotal to the local community.' Senior leaders have taken good decisive action to improve standards and progress in boys' reading. Although self-evaluation is good there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the use of assessment information to ensure all pupils make good progress. Governors are supportive and offer a satisfactory level of challenge in identifying the implications of data analysis and the school's self-evaluation.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

16 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Marlborough Infant and Nursery School, Birmingham, B10 9NY

We enjoyed our visit to your school. You were friendly and smiley and you and the staff made us feel very welcome. It was great to talk to some of you and it was good to see Year 1 pupils doing their brain gym activities in the hall. We found that Marlborough is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the things we discovered.

- You enjoy school, feel safe and your behaviour is good.
- Teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.
- You have very good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- Anyone who needs help with speaking English or with their work, is always given it.
- You go to a caring school; everyone wants you to be safe and happy and to do as well as you can.
- The headteacher is a good leader and staff are working very hard to make sure the school gets even better.

We have asked the school to do three main things to help it improve further.

- Make sure you do really well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Help teachers to plan work that is just right for you all and is not too easy or too hard.
- Improve teaching so that it is good in all lessons so that you all do well and reach even higher standards in your work.

You can help your teachers by always working hard and behaving well.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox Lead inspector