

Marlborough School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111978
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310749
Inspection date	22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Turner
Headteacher	Richard Gambier
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Ferndale Road Falmouth TR11 4HU
Telephone number	01326 314636
Fax number	01326 211826

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: confirming children's attainment when they start school and their progress from there on; the use of assessment to guide planning and target setting; the rigour of systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. 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

The school is of average size. It draws pupils from the local town area. The vast majority of pupils are White British, with a very small proportion coming from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most other schools nationally. However, the proportion varies significantly from year group to year group. When children start school they usually attain levels that match those expected for their age. The maintenance of the school grounds and building is currently contracted to a private company as part of the government's Public Finance Initiative.

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 a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly. It has some excellent features. Parents are very happy with the work of the headteacher and staff and feel that their children enjoy school and are very well looked after. They are right. The headteacher has created an atmosphere in which staff work together as an enthusiastic and effective team. Together they have worked hard and successfully revitalised the curriculum in recent times. Work is now carefully tailored to pupils' interests and ensures that there is a very wide range of extra activities. In addition, pupils get to experience a very wide range of sporting activities across the year. Their learning benefits from the excellent range of links that the school has established with partner organisations and the local community. These links draw on much additional expertise to support the work of staff in the school. The rapid development and expansion of the curriculum provision is beginning to make a strong impact on helping improve standards and achievement through pupils' increased levels of motivation and interest in what they are doing.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a great start in the Foundation Stage, where outstanding provision enables them to reach above the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. Sound teaching in most classes ensures that pupils progress satisfactorily but excellent teaching in Year 6 significantly boosts progress. As a result, pupils usually attain above-average standards in national tests. Year 6 test results dipped to average levels in 2007, but this was due to a larger-than-usual proportion of the pupils having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the year groups where teaching was noted as being only satisfactory, boys do not always achieve as well as they could. Lesson observations indicate that they sometimes do not apply themselves to tasks as diligently as do the girls. Also, in these year groups, tasks are not always matched as closely to pupils' needs as they could be. This is because the school's very good assessment information is not used with sufficient accuracy to inform the planning of work. The exception to this is work planned for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support for these pupils is planned carefully to ensure they make good progress. The school's special educational needs coordinator works very effectively with staff to enable this strong support.

As a result of very effective pastoral care, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The majority behave well, have very positive attitudes to school, are friendly and relate well to each other and the staff. A few boys are sometimes restless and fidgety in lessons and do not always listen as well as they should. Pupils enjoy school a lot and this was illustrated during discussion with some older ones, who said things such as 'It's really brilliant the way the teachers get you ready for secondary school... we have lots of fun on school trips... we get to do cool stuff like making our own films!' Pupils especially enjoy the weekly mixed-age group activities staff organise for them. Through this and the wide range of charity work they do, they gain a good understanding of the importance of contributing to the immediate and wider community. The good range of responsibilities they are given and the involvement of older pupils in learning about handling personal finance mean that they have good skills to help ensure their future well-being. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy with, for example, a strong involvement for them in a wide range of different sporting activities. While they generally get satisfactory academic guidance, the school rightly identifies the need to ratchet up the targets set for pupils as part of its drive to strengthen progress and achievement. Work in this area is already impacting

well on the quality of teaching and the achievement of children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 6. The school has well-laid plans to spread this good practice to all year groups.

The headteacher, very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher, has worked very well to ensure that the school has a clear vision and direction. The school has an accurate view of its own performance and good plans set to move ahead rapidly in the future. The headteacher regularly checks the quality of work in lessons. However, he identifies rightly the need for this monitoring to happen in a more systematic way so that clarity on how teaching can be improved is fully identified. Too much of his time is currently absorbed in handling issues connected with maintenance of the building because of difficulties experienced with the private company contracted to carry out this work. The headteacher and governors are working effectively together to find a resolution to this difficulty in the near future. The staff show good commitment, enthusiasm and teamwork and together they have assembled good quality action plans. The very good work they have done together in recent times to improve the curriculum provision is a strong platform for pushing ahead with improving achievement in all classes. Their success here also signals a good capacity for them to sustain the current rapid pace of improvement in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Each day is full of exciting and interesting activities for the children in the Foundation Stage. Outstanding and finely tuned curriculum planning ensures the children have an excellent range of activities to explore. This, plus the high quality teaching and excellent care, support and guidance, ensures that children reach standards that exceed the expected levels. Also, the top-notch provision means that all individuals acquire a very wide breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding. The touchstone of success here is the very skilful way that the Foundation Stage teacher organises the provision so that all sessions and activities flow seamlessly through a range of class-based activities and intensive group activities. As a result, children develop a highly confident approach to learning and are very well prepared for the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of boys by ensuring that they always apply themselves with full energy to the tasks they are given to do.
- Ensure that teachers always make full use of assessment information to plan lessons that precisely match pupils' needs.
- Introduce systems to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated in a systematic way.

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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?	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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	2

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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

23 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Marlborough School, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 4HU

- It was really good fun coming to see you at your school! Thank you for making me so welcome, talking to me and helping me during the school's inspection. I especially enjoyed the good discussion I had with some of you from Year 6. I learned a lot. I think you would all make very good future inspectors! Your school is doing a satisfactory job and it has some excellent features. Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about:
- You work satisfactorily in lessons and make sound progress as you move through the school. You reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Your personal development is good. You clearly enjoy your time in school and I was very impressed by how much you know about the need to keep fit and healthy.
- Your teachers work hard to make your work as exciting and interesting as possible.
- You told me how well you get on with your teachers and teaching assistants. They provide satisfactory teaching for you, although the children in the Foundation Stage and the pupils in Year 6 progress particularly well because of the excellent teaching they receive.
- The school works well to make sure you are properly looked after and there is always someone available to help with any problems.
- Your headteacher does a good job of helping everyone work together to make sure that the school keeps improving.

To improve further the school should now:

- Help boys to achieve better by ensuring that they always work as hard as they can.
- Ensure that teachers always make full use of information about how well you are progressing to plan lessons.
- Introduce systems to check that lessons are always as good as your teachers would like them to be.

Laurie Lewin (Lead inspector)