

Marlpool Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112561
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310923
Inspection dates	10–11 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Bond
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Hill
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Claramount Road Heanor Derbyshire DE75 7HS
Telephone number	01773 712505
Fax number	01773 712505

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Marlpool Junior School is smaller than average. The attainment of pupils joining the school is broadly average and almost all pupils are White British. A few pupils have a learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, of these, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The school serves a socially diverse community in which there is some socio-economic disadvantage.

The school federated with Marlpool Infant School in September 2006 with the headteacher of the junior school leading both schools. The schools are on separate sites and the headteacher divides her time between the two schools.

The junior school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2000, 2003 and 2007.

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 harmonious school, whose overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness agrees with inspection findings. Most parents hold positive views about the school's contribution to their children's personal development and progress. Pupils, likewise, think highly of the school, saying they feel safe and valued. Attendance is good and pupils enjoy school considerably, particularly the many after-school activities on offer. Their good participation in sports and physical activities contributes well to a healthy lifestyle. Physical education is a major strength of an otherwise satisfactory curriculum, despite the limitations of accommodation for gymnastics.

The school is led and managed satisfactorily and provides satisfactory value for money. The headteacher leads and manages the provision of good quality care for all pupils and effective promotion of their welfare. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well at all times and act with their own, and others', safety in mind. Good links with support agencies ensure vulnerable pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported satisfactorily. Partnerships with feeder infant schools are not used effectively enough to gather information about pupils' capabilities before they start school.

The headteacher and other leaders have not made as good a success of promoting higher standards and supporting pupils in their achievement. This is because of limitations in their monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. Checking pupils' progress and the analysis of their results have helped leaders identify those who have been coasting. Nevertheless, this has not always led to timely interventions. The monitoring of teaching has not been extensive enough to ensure that learning improved at an appropriate pace. However, improvements in teaching and the curriculum are now taking place. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, they are not consistently effective across the school, especially in Years 3 and 4. Teachers in these year groups do not provide pupils with sufficiently clear advice on what they must do to make their work better. The school has not been setting challenging enough targets but these are now being raised in order to improve pupils' progress. The school's leadership demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to bring about further improvement.

The standard of pupils' work is broadly average but in some areas it is too low. In 2006, significant proportions of pupils made inadequate progress in mathematics and science. Those of average ability, boys in particular, were most affected. Results in 2007 indicate an improvement in standards, including that of boys. Improvement is greatest in mathematics because of the action taken by the school to raise attainment here. However, standards in English have dropped because of the poor results of the average ability pupils in writing. More able pupils performed much better than other groups in 2007, and particularly in writing. The school's data indicates that in Years 3 and 4 the progress of too many pupils is unsatisfactory, although it improves in Year 5 where it is satisfactory. In Year 6, the rate of progress is good, reflecting the fact this is where the best teaching occurs. By the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving satisfactorily.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the achievement of pupils with average ability in writing by the end of Year 6.
- Improve teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 by checking more regularly and thoroughly the quality of lessons, marking and feedback to pupils on how to improve their work.

- Take more timely action to support and improve the progress of pupils who are underachieving.

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

Standards are broadly average and have been so for several years. The provisional results for 2007 demonstrate that pupils' achievement was satisfactory overall. The results were an improvement on those of 2006 and standards were in line with national averages in mathematics and science. However, standards in English dropped because of some poor performance in writing by pupils of average ability. The most able pupils achieved well in mathematics and English, particularly in writing. The unevenness of the results highlights the inconsistencies in teaching and in tracking pupils' progress through the year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are encouraged consistently and well to gain in self-confidence and respect for others and their surroundings. Daily assemblies contribute much to pupils' spiritual and moral understanding. Pupils' are aware of the cultural diversity of Britain through, in particular, visits to places of worship and meeting Chinese and Indian visitors.

Pupils enjoy school a lot and attendance is above average. Behaviour is good. Pupils act safely and they know the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The physical education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution. An active school council enables its members to exercise good levels of initiative and responsibility. Pupils' contributions to the community, in school and beyond, are good, especially their fund-raising support for a school in Kenya. Through enterprise projects, pupils acquire some useful financial and business skills that contribute satisfactorily to preparation for the next stage in their education and their adult lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Some teaching incorporates well-planned and effective methods that contribute effectively to pupils' learning, in Year 6 in particular. These combine good use of clear aims for the lesson, success criteria and targets. These methods give pupils a clear idea of what they must achieve and promote a busy, purposeful atmosphere in some lessons. However, such well-planned teaching does not feature in all classes, although teaching is mostly satisfactory. There is occasionally too much reliance on talking to pupils and not enough on creating opportunities for them to think and solve problems independently. In most lessons, the pupils' work matches their capabilities reasonably well. However, the use of assessment has not reached the point where appropriate targets are identified consistently. The level of challenge pupils experience is occasionally set too low, as a result, although the pace of lessons is usually sound. Classroom assistants support pupils who have learning difficulties effectively. Pupils are keen to learn and

are well behaved in lessons. They are sometimes not well engaged in learning, as their interest is not stimulated sufficiently by their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements but seldom goes beyond this. It makes a satisfactory contribution to challenging pupils and stimulating interest but, overall, provides insufficient activities where all pupils can solve problems and work on their own. The provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. However, the planning of opportunities to promote literacy, numeracy and computer skills across the curriculum is at the very early stage of development. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities satisfactorily.

The curriculum is occasionally enlivened, for example in weeks when it focuses on themes in art and drama. Stemming from this, pupils have given performances at local hospitals and homes for the elderly. The school has introduced the teaching of French and Japanese. Out-of-school visits to the theatre, arts centres and local parks extend pupils' learning opportunities satisfactorily. The broad range of after-school activities is good and very popular with pupils. Most are oversubscribed, sports options in particular, which is the result of the energy and enthusiasm with which the physical education curriculum has been developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory but good in relation to promoting pupils' welfare and personal development. The school is kept secure and safe and this is valued by pupils. All the checks required for safeguarding pupils have been carried out. Behaviour is managed well. Pupils are confident that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Support and guidance are not as effective in promoting pupils' achievement. The limited extent of the tracking of pupils' progress and use of assessment means that many are not helped sufficiently to improve. While there is some exemplary marking in Year 6, the way pupils' work is marked is inconsistent across the school. As a result, too many pupils are unsure about what they need to do to improve. Some parents have commented that communication, especially about their children's progress, could be more effective. However, annual school reports for parents provide a satisfactory account pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and other school leaders have a sound grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This allows for a broadly accurate self-evaluation, which has helped identify the important priorities for improvement. However, the amount of monitoring and evaluation is modest, and the use of pupils' performance data is limited. These shortcomings have made the pace of change sometimes slow in relation to a few of the issues linked to pupils' achievement. The underperformance of some pupils has stood out in data for at least two years but the school has only got round to tackling this recently. In the past, the school's targets have lacked real challenge. However, the targets for this year are more ambitious. Where the school has acted it has been successful and demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. For example, an

initiative introduced a year ago to improve standards in mathematics has produced better results in 2007. Similar initiatives are now in place to improve writing and the progress of average ability pupils.

The checking of the quality of teaching and learning is not extensive. While the headteacher has an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching, overall, subject leaders have not been sufficiently involved in ensuring that teaching of their subjects is effective

Governors function in their role satisfactorily, using their considerable experience and skills to gain an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they are not challenging school leaders sufficiently about the pace of change and the standards that pupils are reaching.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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 the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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	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

12 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marlpool Junior School, Heanor, Derbyshire, DE75 7HS

Many thanks for your warm welcome and help during our inspection of your school, especially the members of the school council and many other pupils we talked to. I am writing to tell you about what my colleague and I found out about your school.

We were impressed by your good behaviour and with how friendly and helpful you are to each other. You have positive attitudes to school and your attendance is good. We were pleased that many of you are learning and making progress but had a concern that some, in Years 3 and 4 in particular, needed to make more progress. In addition, whilst writing was of a high standard for some, it was too low for others. We have asked your teachers to help you to improve progress, especially in writing, by ensuring you are always being challenged well by the work you are set.

We have asked the headteacher and school governors to make sure you are given challenging targets to help you improve your work and have also asked them to keep regular and close checks to ensure your lessons are helping you to progress, especially when you are in Years 3 and 4.

You can all play your part by continuing to attend well and work hard.

We greatly appreciated your friendliness and helpfulness.

Alan Lemon

Lead Inspector