

Marston Montgomery Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 112589 |
| Local Authority | DERBYSHIRE LA |
| Inspection number | 310935 |
| Inspection dates | 31 October –1 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Robert Drew |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 62 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Ken Bull |
| Headteacher | Mrs Judith Brown |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 November 2003 |
| School address | Thurvaston Road Marston Montgomery Derbyshire DE6 2FF |
| Telephone number | 01889 590 373 |
| Fax number | 01889 590 373 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average. It serves the village of Marston Montgomery and its surrounding, largely rural, area. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British. On balance, social and economic backgrounds are relatively affluent and pupils' attainment on entry is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school was awarded the Active Mark for its sports provision this year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It does many things well, particularly its promotion of pupils' personal development. Recent results have indicated satisfactory rather than good academic achievement but progress in lessons is now good. Self-evaluation is accurate and honest and the capacity for further improvement is good. Value for money is good.

Pupils make good academic progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 because teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Equally good progress is typical of Years 5 and 6, again reflecting strengths in teaching. Relatively weaker progress in Years 3 and 4, stemming from instability in staffing, has depressed overall standards and achievement. The school has now dealt with this by enlarging its teaching team and pupils are currently making good progress in all of Key Stage 2. There is well-organised support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which enables them to make good progress. More able pupils progress satisfactorily. Extension work and additional activities are present but less prominent than they might be. Standards at the end of both key stages are above average. Key Stage 2 targets have only recently become truly challenging and they are not yet influencing the expectations of staff consistently.

Good personal development is most evident in pupils' excellent attendance levels and healthy lifestyles. Their enjoyment of school is a further strength. They are mature for their age, taking initiative and contributing well to school assemblies and village life. Their spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is good, with the great majority polite and helpful. A minority are less swift to moderate their behaviour. Pupils show a good awareness of personal safety issues and make good progress towards their future economic well-being.

These strengths stem from good quality care, guidance and support. Personal and social needs are particularly well served, while the monitoring of academic progress is satisfactory and improving. Older pupils are not yet as clear as they might be about their current standards and how to improve them. Statutory safeguarding and child protection requirements are met.

Physical education contributes particularly well to the curriculum, giving pupils specialist teaching in gymnastics, swimming, hockey and cross-country. Extra curricular provision is excellent, with very high participation in sport and educational visits, and expanding music provision. The school is right to be improving the schemes of work for many subjects by building more practical activities for pupils into the curriculum.

Overall, the quality of teaching in the school is good and current learning reflects this. Reliable monitoring by the school indicates that outstanding practice is also present. Lessons benefit from very positive relationships and pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Teachers explain clearly and structure lessons well. The best lessons are well paced and tasks hold pupils' interest at a high level throughout. Occasionally in lessons with satisfactory teaching, the pace is too slow and a minority of pupils remain too passive.

Leadership and management are having a positive impact on pupils. Effective personal development is now matched by their good progress in lessons. The school's ability to improve is evident in many recent and successful changes initiated by the headteacher, for instance, in assessment arrangements, staffing structure and the expansion of links with other schools. Governors make a satisfactory contribution to the school's work. Subject leaders currently also operate satisfactorily. They are adopting new roles and accountabilities, but currently lack the opportunities and mechanisms for influencing their colleagues fully.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

This well-organised and well-led phase gives pupils a good start at the school. Standards are above average, teaching and learning are good and pupils quickly adopt the positive attitudes and good behaviour typical of the school as a whole. Plans for increasing outdoor play facilities are being implemented.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make all staff fully aware of school's new and challenging targets so that they can all contribute fully to raising standards and ensuring good overall achievement
- Raise teaching quality by ensuring that it all reflects the very good pace, expectations and pupil involvement seen in the school's best practice.
- Enhance the role of subject-co-ordinators so that post-holders gain greater accountability for standards and scope for monitoring them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points. Results for English, mathematics and science exceed national averages at both key stages, but dropped noticeably at Key Stage 2 in 2007. The school took action as a result and current progress in lessons is good. Discontinuity of teaching has hindered achievement but the school has successfully countered this problem by restructuring its staffing. Progress in Key Stage 1 is good because teaching is consistently effective and expectations high. Progress in Key Stage 2 has been inconsistent in recent years, with pupils making less progress in Years 3 and 4 than other years. Staffing changes have already created greater stability so that current progress is good in Years 3 and 4. Standards in Year 6 are above average, but targets for academic performance have been less demanding than government recommendations. The school has now raised these but they are not yet consistently known and acted upon.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is good and some aspects are excellent. Attendance levels, for instance, are excellent. They reflect the real enjoyment of school by pupils, as well as very strong commitment from parents. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are reflective, show good self-awareness and are equally alert to the needs of others. Pupils make an excellent contribution to village life and wider concerns, from local 'well dressing' to support of the 'shoe box' appeal for children in poverty abroad. Overall behaviour is good, with the vast majority polite, lively but mature. Awareness of personal safety is good and pupils have an excellent approach to healthy lifestyles. Their preparation for the next stage of education and later economic well-being is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching's impact on long-term achievement has been satisfactory in recent years, but the progress pupils now make in lessons is good. This reflects the improved stability of staffing and teachers' expertise. Lessons are overwhelmingly good in quality with instances of outstanding practice. Good relationships with pupils are standard; teachers make objectives clear and structure lessons well. Pupils apply themselves positively and show a great deal of enjoyment in their work. In the best lessons, the pace is very good and pupils find themselves engrossed in their work. Teachers allow pupils to make major contributions to the lesson and provide well for different ability groups. The small minority of satisfactory teaching tends to lead to adequate rather than good progress, because pace slackens, with some of the class overly passive at times.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In addition to its established range of subjects, the curriculum now includes French in several classes and specialist music provision from local authority staff. Sport plays a prominent role because the school makes good use of nearby specialist facilities and can provide expert coaching in many disciplines including gymnastics and swimming. Links with these providers also promote access to local sports tournaments. Additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Extra-curricular activity is highly developed especially for such a small school. For instance, over half the number on roll regularly joins in lunch-time football. The school is right to be reshaping its curriculum to give even more scope for active involvement by pupils and more continuity in acquiring skills. Where this has already happened, it contributes well to lesson quality.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know pupils particularly well and provide very effective pastoral support. Their strongly caring attitudes are underpinned by good policies and systems. All statutory requirements are met. Links with home are strong so that the personal and social needs of pupils are quickly identified and addressed. Attendance is promoted well and rewards and sanctions procedures are closely followed. Allowing pupils to reward each other for good behaviour has a positive effect. The headteacher gives a clear lead promoting the school's key values and, as a result, collaboration, mutual support, honesty and a willingness to contribute all flourish. Monitoring of academic progress is satisfactory. Pupils still show inconsistent awareness of the levels for which they are aiming, but monitoring has helped staff clarify targets and identify areas of underperformance. The school is already taking steps to use this even more effectively.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Clear leadership from the headteacher has ensured pupils' good personal development. Leadership's impact on achievement was satisfactory for some time, but it is now ensuring

good progress. Action has been taken to improve the use of assessment data, the monitoring of teaching and the choice of demanding targets. However, not all staff know and use the school's most recent targets sufficiently well. Governors make a satisfactory overall contribution to the school. Their decision to restructure staffing to counter the impact of any prolonged absences has been beneficial. Subject leadership is satisfactory. They have a clear grasp of their accountability and new roles. The school is aware of the need to provide time and opportunity for them to perform effectively.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

5 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marston Montgomery Primary School, nr Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 2FF

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school last week, especially those who came and talked to me at lunch time. You are lucky to be in such a lovely setting! I enjoyed my time with you because many things are working well:

- You say you enjoy school - and it shows in lessons and at play time.
- School helps you mature and develop well: your behaviour is good and your attendance is excellent.
- Standards are higher than average.
- The headteacher leads the school well.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding.
- Sport is a strength of the school.

If the school is going to be even more successful, it needs to:

- Make sure all teachers know that more challenging targets have been set for you recently, and help them use these regularly in their lessons.
- Make sure teaching in all lessons gives you the variety, level of interest and scope for getting involved that the very best ones already offer.
- Allow the staff in charge of literacy, numeracy and science more time to help and encourage teachers across the school, so they all pull together well.

I hope you enjoy the rest of your time at Marston Montgomery,

Yours sincerely,

Robert Drew (Lead inspector)