

Marpool Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113096
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311105
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	David Shears

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	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Dobbins
Headteacher	Rachel Pattison
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Moorfield Road Exmouth EX8 3QW
Telephone number	01395 263961
Fax number	01395 222342

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Marpool is a larger than average primary school. It has a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who have English as an additional language is low. There have been a number of changes of key staff recently. Currently, the reduced senior leadership team consists of an acting headteacher and an assistant headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Marpool is currently a satisfactory but improving school. Pupils generally start school with skills and knowledge that are often well below those that are typical for their age. Although they make up some ground and make good progress in the Foundation Stage, they leave with skills and knowledge that are below expectations for their age. In Years 1 and 2, their rate of progress slows, as teaching is typically satisfactory rather than good. Consequently, pupils finish Year 2 with standards that are still below average. In Years 3 to 6 the rate of progress accelerates although this is variable in some year groups. Nevertheless, they make good progress overall. As a result, they reach average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. The senior leadership team know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are ably assisted by governors who help them plan strategically, resulting in improvement to the provision.

Although there is no particular pattern in standards in national tests in Year 6, there has been a definite downward trend in tests at the end of Year 2. Standards have been falling since 2005 and although the school is seeking to halt the decline, they look set to fall significantly further this year.

Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory although variable between year groups and not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, make better progress. Lessons do not take enough account of pupils' past achievements and pupils are not involved sufficiently in their own learning.

Pupils enjoy lessons that are stimulating and fun because of the good curriculum provided. There are many opportunities for visitors to enhance the curriculum and pupils particularly enjoy school trips that give them first-hand learning experiences. There are good cross-curricular links between subjects, including literacy and numeracy. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their extended writing skills. The wide range of extra-curricular activities that extend learning for pupils is outstanding.

Pupils' rate of attendance is good and they enjoy coming to school because their personal development is effective. They have an excellent knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy. They behave well because they like to please their teachers. The skills to support their future economic well-being are currently satisfactory.

Although the care, guidance and support of pupils, including their academic guidance, are satisfactory overall, the pastoral care of pupils is good. Marking is inconsistent throughout the school and although there are often positive comments to praise pupils for their efforts, there are not enough to help pupils to know how to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a flying start in the stimulating environment of their first Foundation Stage classroom. In this safe and nurturing environment, children are encouraged to become independent. Great emphasis is placed on speaking and listening, and the children's personal development. Good teaching and learning ensures that children continue to make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. They use a well-planned daily curriculum, including the effective use of the outdoor classroom. Groups of children and individuals are well supported by learning support assistants. A relatively new Foundation Stage leader is looking at ways to interpret assessment information more securely to help spot those needing help more quickly.

The good relationships make learning fun for the children although the higher attainers could be better challenged.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly Years 1 and 2
- improve teaching to make it consistently good or better so that pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2, make good progress
- ensure that there is sufficient challenge for more able pupils throughout.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of pupils varies throughout the school. Although they begin with well below expectations, the good Foundation Stage enables them to make good progress. However, this slows down in Years 1 and 2 so that by the time they enter Year 3, standards are still below average. The good progress in Years 3 to 6 enables pupils to leave the school with average standards. The downward trend at Years 1 and 2 has not yet been addressed successfully. However, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. This is due to the careful management of their provision and the effectiveness of the teaching assistants who support them well. However, the progress of more able pupils is less secure. They do not make sufficient progress across the school, particularly in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. This is reflected in the good behaviour and mature attitudes of pupils. They enjoy their lessons and like their teachers and consequently attendance is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are often asked to reflect on any poor behaviour. The very attractive outdoor environment is often used by pupils for reflective moments during the day. There are some strong cultural links with schools in Denmark and Finland, which includes some video conferencing. However, the pupils' understanding of the multi-ethnicity of Britain is less well developed. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of healthy living. They clearly recognise the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. Pupils feel very safe and are helped by playground buddies. They know where to go for first aid and are confident to approach adults if they have any worries. Behaviour is good in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils are actively involved in their own school and in the wider community. They are presently raising funds to make their playground area even more attractive and their own ideas and designs are drawn in chalk on the playground. The positive contributions to the community, coupled with their level of basic numeracy and literacy skills, equip them satisfactorily for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching varies through the school, but is typically satisfactory. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in some classes in Years 3 to 6. Nevertheless, relationships between staff and pupils are good in all classes and this leads to good behaviour. Pupils enjoy their lessons and teachers work hard to make these interesting and exciting. The good use of the audio-visual

interactive whiteboard supports the teaching well. However, both the formal and day-to-day assessments of pupils are not used sufficiently to plan future work. This results in lessons that do not carefully match the needs of all the pupils, particularly for the more able who are not challenged sufficiently. In discussion with pupils, many expressed the view that work 'could be harder'. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to participate in their own learning in lessons, particularly during the teaching sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school because the curriculum is exciting. One pupil typically commented, 'All the teachers make it fun for us all of the time'. There are theme weeks that are used well to stimulate interest and address weaknesses in achievement. For example, during a week on forces, pupils practised their evaluative skills. Both visitors to the school and school trips support the enrichment of the provision. The very good development of pupils' social and emotional skills has been recognised by the local authority who use their expertise to support other schools. The curriculum is also used to practise key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, although there need to be more opportunities for extended writing. The school has started to provide more motivating activities, particularly for boys, such as inviting a world champion kite surfer to demonstrate power kites. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities to enhance the skills and knowledge of pupils and these are well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall. Pastoral care is a strong feature. All procedures are in place to keep pupils safe and secure within school and on any visits. All adults working in the school have been rigorously checked. A 'safe to school' initiative ensures pupils arrive safely and has had an impact on improving attendance. There are good procedures for looking after pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported within class and in small groups. Many initiatives to help improve their skills, such as the reading recovery scheme, ensure that this group of learners make good progress. The school recognises the need to involve pupils more in their own learning. Many pupils throughout the school are not familiar with their own learning targets and this hampers their progress. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Although there are many positive comments to encourage pupils, they do not provide enough guidance about what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Due to recent changes in key staffing, the significantly reduced senior leadership team are effectively leading the school through this transitory period. They are well supported by the governing body. Together, they know and understand the strengths of the school, making use of the school's self-evaluation information. They are beginning to remedy weaknesses in most areas. They are proactive in seeking support from outside agencies in helping improvement. The senior leaders collect information about pupils' progress but it is not yet analysed sufficiently to support development or guide improvements to the quality of teaching. These hamper the progress pupils make. Parents are very supportive of the school and recognise the dedication of all who work there. There have already been improvements such as the raising of attendance

levels and the continued developments both in the care of pupils and in the curriculum. These demonstrate that the leadership and management do have a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	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	1
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?	2
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	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

13th February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marpool Primary School, Exmouth EX8 3QW

Thank you so much for your lovely welcome. We really enjoyed meeting you all and finding out about your school.

You told us that you really enjoyed school and that the teachers make the lessons interesting, and we agree with you. You also told us about all the exciting things that you do in different subjects. We can see that you feel safe and happy and know that all the staff care about you very much. You know what to do if you are feeling poorly or worried. We were impressed with all the different activities that adults run at lunchtimes and after school that you enjoy. You know that getting exercise, drinking water and eating certain foods are good for you. We know that more of you are making sure that you go to school every day. Well done! Keep that up.

We have asked your teachers to help you to make better progress and reach higher standards in your work by making lessons really good so they give you work that is at the right level for each of you. You could help by letting them know if the work you are given is too easy or too difficult. Maybe, together, you could think of some good ways in which you could do that.

Thank you for a very happy two days.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Shears Lead Inspector