

# Marwood School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113161
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311130
<b>Inspection date</b>	29 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alex Baxter

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Dawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alun Dobson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	Whiddon Muddiford Barnstaple EX31 4HF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 850395
<b>Fax number</b>	01271 850395

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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.

Pupils' progress in mathematics throughout the school.

Pupils' progress in writing, especially by the more able.

How effectively leaders and managers evaluate the impact of provision to sustain strengths and, where necessary, bring about improvement.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. 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

Children's attainment on entry generally matches that expected for their age, but it can vary from year to year and encompasses a broad range of ability. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who find learning difficult and/or have disabilities is usually below average, but can be above average in some year groups. The school holds Healthy School and Activemark Awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Marwood is an outstanding school. It has a strongly welcoming sense of community. Parents value the first class quality of education their children are receiving. They are right to welcome the school's exemplary effort and equal success in ensuring that pupils both enjoy and achieve. One parent captured these views when writing, 'My son cannot wait to get to school in the morning and soaks up all it has to offer.' Others wrote appreciatively about pupils' qualities of 'high personal confidence and academic standards' and 'the introduction of innovative techniques whilst remaining compassionate and understanding' in support of pupils with emotional needs.

The headteacher provides a very clear lead and promotes excellent teamwork in an assured and well respected manner. He very successfully empowers staff and governors to make valuable contributions to the running of the school. Together they ensure that most aspects of the school's provision are outstanding. This high level of consistency feeds the momentum of improvement and results in pupils' exemplary personal development and outstanding well-being, high standards and first-rate academic achievement. As a result, by the time the pupils leave the school, they are extremely well prepared for their future economic well-being.

The staff provide excellent care, guidance and support. The pupils' well-being is safeguarded securely. The staff work very co-operatively with parents and this helps pupils to feel very safe and take a high level of responsibility for their behaviour and learning. The pupils receive very helpful academic guidance both orally and in teachers' marking and this is a key ingredient in promoting their exceptional progress. High quality support and guidance underpin the pupils' excellent personal development. Attendance is good and pupils' behaviour exemplary. Staff openly value everyone's skills and contributions. This has an infectious influence on the pupils and encourages their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is evident in the way pupils fulfil their duties diligently, for example, taking charge of the 'key fobs', the tags that entitle pupils to use items of play equipment. Pupils show a very good understanding of other people's needs and of the views of those from different cultures. Pupils also contribute wholeheartedly to the school and community through the school council and charitable fund raising.

Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers have established consistent and appropriately high expectations of work. Pupils know what is expected and because they respect all adults, they apply themselves enthusiastically to their work. The teachers work very closely with their assistants and provide interesting and varied learning activities. They ensure an optimum balance of discussion and practical activity. They do this, for example, by making best use of computers to stimulate pupils' interest and to promote independent work. Pupils also enjoy regular visits to places of interest, for example, to the 'Eden Project'. These visits relate to topics, link subjects together and give meaning and interest to pupils' learning. One pupil expressed his joy when saying, 'Everything we do, every lesson, is fun at this school.' As a result, pupils' achievement, including for those who find learning difficult, is outstanding in relation to their differing starting points and standards are very high by the end of Year 6.

Children start well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage, with most developing levels of skills above those normally expected. Children do exceptionally well in extending their personal, social and speaking skills because learning is enriched by strong teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistant. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. The pace of

learning improves as pupils sense their developing skills, especially in writing, for example, and gain confidence from supportive yet highly challenging teaching. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). By Year 6, standards are very high in English, mathematics, science and ICT and reflect excellent achievement. This is because pupils are encouraged to become very committed, independent learners, for example, when undertaking research and solving problems.

The curriculum, including for children in the Foundation Stage, is good. The way teachers link subjects together as topics to enthuse pupils in their learning is an outstanding feature. There is excellent enrichment from well attended clubs, visits beyond the school site and from very supportive links with parents and outside agencies. The teachers also ensure a highly effective emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT. These have a beneficial influence on pupils' academic and personal development, especially their enjoyment of school and excellent adoption of healthy living. The school has extensive outdoor facilities. These are used well to provide good experiences in physical and environmental education and this compensates to a good extent for the limitations within the very small school hall. A covered area for children in Reception is also used well for adult-led activities, but there is no access for children to choose when to learn outdoors for themselves.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The very capable headteacher promotes a strongly shared sense of direction and high staff morale. Staff and governors provide highly effective support. Purposeful teamwork and the sharing of expertise between staff and governors lie at the heart of the school's consistent provision. Excellent self-evaluation and target setting are based on precise information about pupils' needs and developing skills, and this is why the school has been very successful in the improvements it has made. Pupils' writing and mathematics have been targeted specifically this school year, with pupils of all abilities, including the more able, improving their skills. Both aspects have benefited from strong encouragement of pupils' speaking skills, the teaching of an understanding of letter sounds and words, and by the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. The school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve into the future. Although the school has not been successful in its strenuous efforts to obtain better accommodation, especially for children in the Foundation Stage, it remains strongly committed to this necessary objective.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Both this year and last year, the reception group had a wide range of abilities on entry to the school. Even so, in response to good teaching, children of all abilities make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, all children reach the standards expected and many exceed them. Leadership is effective and close links with parents enrich children's education, particularly their willingness to learn. Teaching is very good in developing the children's personal, social, emotional and speaking skills. Strong teamwork between the teacher and teaching assistant enables them to provide excellent care, support and guidance. Staff also provide a good curriculum and ensure that children enjoy work that is well matched to their needs. The children have very good opportunities to learn through making their own choices indoors, for example, during role-play in the 'Veterinary Surgery', and these enhance their self-confidence and enjoyment of school. Children also have beneficial opportunities to learn practically in a covered area and out-of-doors. However, the limitations of the accommodation mean that these can only be undertaken with close adult supervision and this constrains the children's ability to make their own choices.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Seek improvements to the accommodation to enrich indoor physical education opportunities and improve Foundation Stage facilities so that children can make their own choices about when to learn outdoors.

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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?	1
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marwood School, Whiddon, EX31 4HF

Thank you for welcoming me when I visited your school recently, and a particular thanks to those of you, including members of the school council, who helped by sharing your views with me. I have no hesitation in agreeing with you and with many of your parents, who feel that yours is an outstanding school. You yourselves make a very good contribution to how good it is. I especially liked the way you are all extremely polite and get on so well together. It really was a privilege to visit you and I can see why you love school so much.

These are the other main things I found.

- You make outstanding progress because you are taught extremely well and know exactly what you have to do to improve; as a result, you reach high standards in your work.
- You behave extremely well, feel safe and enjoy learning because you receive excellent care and support and have a stimulating range of activities.
- I was very impressed with the effort you put into your learning.
- Your headteacher provides outstanding leadership and receives excellent support from staff and governors; they work very closely with your parents to help you achieve your best.

Even an outstanding school can improve and so I have asked the headteacher and governors to continue with their efforts to improve accommodation for physical education and to improve the facilities for the youngest children so they can make their own choices about when to learn and play outdoors.

Keep helping each other and best wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter Lead inspector