

# Marlborough Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113306
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	311198
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Laurie Lewin

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	159
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	J M W Griffiths
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Morice Square Devonport Plymouth PL1 4NJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 567681
<b>Fax number</b>	01752 605280

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The attainment of children is very low when they start school. Most of the pupils are White British, with a few from a range of other cultural backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average. The school has the following accreditations: Healthy School, International Award, local authority Inclusion Kitemark, Active Mark and Artsmark.

## 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 and improving school. Good leadership and management have helped staff engage strongly with the local authority's intensive support programme, the local area regeneration scheme and initiatives from the local excellence cluster. The work done using this support is now paying off so that pupils' standards and achievement have improved and continue to do so in the current year. As a result, although standards remain well below average by the end of Year 6, the achievement of the pupils is now satisfactory overall and there are many signs of emerging good progress across the school. For example, recent reorganisation in the Foundation Stage now enables staff to make good provision that ensures children get off to a strong start in school and make good progress.

Teaching has improved significantly over the last 18 months and is satisfactory overall, with pockets of good and occasionally outstanding teaching across the school. At the heart of the success in improving pupils' progress has been the improved use of assessment information by teachers to ensure that tasks more closely match pupils' needs. However, there remain occasions when work provided in lessons does not sufficiently match the needs of higher attaining pupils. As a result, the progress of these individuals is not always as rapid as it could be. Teachers monitor the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very carefully and ensure that individuals receive the right kind of support to help them progress. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in helping these pupils make satisfactory progress. Appropriate records are kept to show the overall progress that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make. However, these records do not always show enough detail about short-term progress made to help teachers plan activities as precisely as they could do for these individuals.

The curriculum provides a wide range of activities, trips and visitors that enlivens pupils' learning and ensures that they enjoy their time in school. The school has excellent systems to ensure the pupils are well cared for at all times. The welcoming, friendly and nurturing atmosphere throughout the school ensures that all individuals feel safe and become confident learners. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is good. They behave well and are usually very supportive of one another. Good relationships flourish throughout the school. Pupils have an excellent understanding about how to keep themselves fit and healthy, with healthy eating apparent at lunch and snack times. Pupils are given satisfactory academic guidance. Good work has been done by staff to establish targets for pupils. However, the targets set for their performance in end of year national tests are not as challenging as they could be.

There is a strong feeling of camaraderie between staff and a high level of commitment and enthusiasm to improve the school as much as possible. As a result, the school is now beginning to move forward at a good pace with improving standards and educational provision. The senior management team are working very dynamically alongside the headteacher to keep the momentum of recent initiatives flowing and to maintain the clear direction of improvement. The headteacher has done an excellent job of tapping into all possible external support. He ensures that the school engages as much as possible with the parents, the local community and all partnership organisations. This has resulted in boosting relationships in the community strongly and maximising chances to get parents involved in their children's learning. The school accurately evaluates its own performance and the recent trend of good improvement along with clear development plans indicates that there is much potential for this improvement to be sustained.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception classes because of the wide range of interesting practical activities provided for them. Recent reorganisation of this part of the school has improved the provision. Staff work very well together as a team. They provide a good balance between activities that allow children to explore independently and activities that are led by an adult. Staff have established good systems to track children's progress and they use the information well to match tasks closely to the needs of all individuals. The improvements made in this part of the school mean that the current cohort of children are on course to achieve below the expected level by the end of the Foundation Stage, representing significantly higher standards than have been achieved in recent years. Also, this marks significant improvement from their very low attainment when they started school. However, the progress of higher attaining children is not as rapid as it could be. This is because not enough emphasis is placed on extending their literacy and numeracy skills before they start Year 1.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work is always pitched at the right level for higher attaining pupils.
- Set more challenging targets for pupils to aim at.
- Develop clear systems to show the short-term progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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

Over the last 18 months, a raft of initiatives based around the school's involvement in the local authority's intensive support programme has brought about significant improvements to standards and achievements. Test results and work in pupils' books this year show that standards and achievement have improved and continue to do so. More and more good progress is becoming apparent across the school in lessons and pupils' work. Nonetheless, although standards are improving they remain well below average by the end of Year 6, reflecting previous underachievement that is now being tackled rigorously. While much good work has been done to improve the progress of lower attainers, standards are depressed overall because higher attaining pupils do not always reach the levels of which they are capable. The good achievement now established with children in the Foundation Stage provides a strong platform for staff to continue the drive to raise standards further across the rest of the school.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

'I like school' ... 'It's good here' ... 'everyone tries to help you' ... 'there is always interesting stuff to do'. These were just a few of the comments from pupils that reflected the very positive feel that most of them have about school life. All of those spoken to said that they feel happy to talk to someone in school if they have a problem. Most pupils behave well. A few individuals sometimes struggle with their behaviour, but respond well to the help and support given to

them by the staff. Pupils enjoy school and most of them have a good attendance record. However, attendance is satisfactory overall because of a few families who do not ensure their children attend as regularly as they should do. The school does all that it can to improve the situation in these cases.

Through activities such as the well acclaimed dance performances, charity fund raising work, and the good work of the school council, pupils gain a good awareness and experience of contributing to the immediate and wider community. Through the wide range of responsibilities they are given and the strong encouragement and guidance they receive, pupils develop a good level of independence and confidence. Although they have good team building experiences and develop good social awareness, the current low level of basic skills achieved means that pupils are not sufficiently prepared to ensure their full success in the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Through lots of opportunities for training, teachers have improved their skills over the last 18 months. This has helped them to improve the learning opportunities and accelerate the progress of pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants are especially good at managing pupils' behaviour in order to get the best out of them. The nurture class is a good example of this, with a very caring and understanding approach successfully applied to help pupils with behavioural difficulties recover their self-esteem and get back on track with their learning. Teachers plan lessons carefully to make sure that tasks are interesting and engaging for pupils. The good work done with implementing assessment systems and using the information gained has helped them improve the match of work to pupils' needs. However, there remain occasions when expectations for higher attaining pupils are not set high enough. Staff have worked successfully to implement projects that engage lower attaining boys to a greater extent, for example, by working alongside the education facilities offered by Plymouth Argyle Football Club.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum helps pupils to build steadily on what they have already learnt, although there are some missed opportunities to extend the learning of the higher attaining pupils. Nevertheless, from the Foundation Stage through to Year 6, staff give full coverage to all of the required areas of learning. In addition, a good range of extra activities is provided to boost pupils' learning and interest. A well embedded programme for covering pupils' personal, health and social education promotes pupils' personal development very effectively. There are not enough clear planned links between different areas of the curriculum. As a result, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend pupils' English, mathematics and information and communication technology skills in other subjects.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school is extremely vigilant in all areas connected with ensuring pupils' safety. The pastoral care of all individuals is excellent with the staff having a very perceptive understanding of pupils' individual needs and strong skills in catering sensitively for these. Staff establish excellent relationships, not only with the pupils, but also with their parents and carers and, in this way,

give good support for pupils' personal development. Appropriate systems are in place to ensure that all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the right kind of support, with the teaching assistants showing good skills in working with individuals and groups of pupils. Very effective use is also made of outside support agencies as required. However, the current system for recording how well these pupils are getting on does not show enough detail about short-term progress to help staff give precise academic guidance for these individuals. Also, targets set for the achievement of higher attaining pupils are not always as challenging as they could be.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher does a very good job of providing an atmosphere in the school that gets the staff working together as a strong team. He is also very good at encouraging individual members of staff, thus enabling them to make the best use of their skills and expertise. Drawing on a wide range of external support, he has galvanised staff into action in recent times to move forward with initiatives to improve teaching and pupils' standards. The staff have been inspired by their recent success in improving pupils' standards and achievement. Clear plans for the future keep the focus very firmly on continuing this progress. English, mathematics and science coordinators have done a good job in formulating action plans and supporting their colleagues with school improvement initiatives. All staff are very well deployed to maximise their effectiveness in supporting pupils' learning. The recent reorganisation of provision and staffing in the Foundation Stage is a good example of how the school is deploying staff very effectively to improve standards and achievement. The school's journey in recent times has seen improved use of performance data to help ratchet up expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, targets are still not set high enough, particularly in terms of ensuring that higher attaining pupils reach the levels of which they are capable. Governors carry out their roles satisfactorily. They are well informed and provide full support for the headteacher and staff. However, their roles in monitoring the school's work on a regular basis, through lesson observations, for example, are not as well developed as they could be.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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	1
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	4

### 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

<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>	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

1 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Marlborough Primary School, Plymouth PL1 4NJ

- It was really good fun coming to see you. Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the inspection. I especially enjoyed the good discussion I had with some of you from Year 6 – wow, what a bunch of chatterboxes! I learned a lot. I think you would all make very good future inspectors! Right now your school is doing a satisfactory job and has improved a lot recently. Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about.
- You work hard in lessons and make satisfactory and sometimes good progress; your achievement by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory.
- Your personal development is good; you clearly enjoy your time in school and get on well together and with all of the staff.
- The school's curriculum is satisfactory and you have lots of extra activities, visitors and visits that make it interesting for you.
- You told us how well you get on with your teachers and teaching assistants; they provide satisfactory, often good and occasionally excellent teaching.
- The staff do excellent work to make sure you are properly looked after.
- Your headteacher does a really good job of helping everyone work together to ensure that things keep improving.

To improve further the school should now:

- make sure that activities are always challenging enough for those of you who sometimes find work easy
- make sure targets set for your progress are high enough
- provide clear ways to show the small steps of progress made by those of you who sometimes find learning difficult.

Thank you again for all of your help.

Laurie Lewin Lead inspector

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Lead inspector