

Marldon Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 113465 |
| Local Authority | Devon |
| Inspection number | 311281 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | John Laver |

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 | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 184 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Douglas Pulle |
| Headteacher | Ruth Sheppard |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 October 2003 |
| School address | Marldon Cross Hill Marldon Paignton TQ3 1PD |
| Telephone number | 01803 557797 |
| Fax number | 01803 528354 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties, which includes problems with literacy and numeracy and some behavioural and emotional issues, is below average but increasing. There are two pupils with physical difficulties and two with impaired hearing. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. An increasing number of pupils join or leave the school part way through their education.

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

Marldon C of E Primary School provides a standard of education which is good overall, and has some outstanding features. 'It is very reassuring to know that the teachers care for the children as individuals, taking into account their needs.' 'The leadership is one hundred per cent focused on what is best for the children.' Inspectors agree with these two comments, which encapsulate what the great majority of parents feel about the school. The particular strengths are the high quality of personal care for pupils, the excellent provision for pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils' enjoyment and very strong sense of well-being in school, and the leadership's success in recent years in ensuring the good progress and achievement of all pupils.

Pupils join Year 1 with standards broadly in line with national expectations. Although the ability levels of small cohorts vary from year to year, current standards of pupils are above average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils of all levels of ability and irrespective of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Progress is good in English, mathematics and science, although it is more consistently good in reading and mathematics than in writing. Pupils who join the school other than at the usual transition times adapt and progress well. High expectations of what pupils can achieve are characteristic of most teaching. As a result of good teaching in nearly all lessons, pupils achieve well. Pupils also have a very positive attitude towards learning, and willingly talk about their enjoyment of particular subjects. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good when teachers are too controlling and do not encourage pupils to learn independently, although the most able pupils do flourish when given the opportunity to find out things for themselves. Although progress in writing is good, it could be even better: teachers sometimes miss opportunities to promote creative or imaginative writing in other subjects of the curriculum, and the marking does not give sufficient guidance on how pupils can improve still further.

Pupils develop well as mature, confident individuals. They are conscious of their role in the school and wider community and certainly enjoy opportunities to take on responsibility. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about helping younger pupils at playtime and helping them to feel very safe in school. They also enjoy helping individuals and charity projects outside school, and the chance to have their say in school, although the school council does not meet very frequently. Older pupils are certainly good role models and are very well prepared for the next stage of education. All pupils enjoy the range of activities in the curriculum and the after-school activities, which have suffered to some extent from recent building disruption.

The personal support for pupils has some outstanding aspects. This is very evident in the high quality progress reports to parents, and in activities such as small group conferencing to improve writing. Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully developed assessment systems to track progress. However, it makes less use of the extensive assessment data and pupil targets to promote learning in the classroom, especially in the larger mixed-age classes.

Inspectors agree with parents that the school is well led, and much of the credit for this belongs to the headteacher, who has a clear vision of a school in which both academic achievement and personal development are paramount. She works hard and successfully to develop a team of staff which shares this vision, evaluates the school's strengths and areas for development accurately, and translates these into effective planning. This is evident, for example, in the range of learning intervention strategies, often involving small group work, which enables pupils of all levels of ability to make good progress. The commitment to succeed and the record

of sustained success show that the school has a good capacity to improve further and become a centre of excellence.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress in an attractive learning environment. They reach the expected levels for their age in all areas of skill and knowledge. The Foundation Stage is well led, and teachers plan a range of structured play opportunities. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities, laying the foundations for independent learning. Experienced support staff make a strong contribution to children's progress, and a system of home visits contributes to good links with the home and children's feelings of security in school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teaching makes full use of assessment information and always develops independent learning skills.
- Raise the standards of writing by improving marking and taking advantage of more opportunities to promote writing in subjects other than English.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils join the school with broadly average standards, and reach above average standards by the time they leave. All pupils achieve well, including the most able and those with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including hearing impairment and literacy, numeracy or behavioural problems. Pupils in recent years have made consistently good or very good progress, and boys have done particularly well. The pupils in the current Year 6 contain fewer higher attaining pupils than in 2007, and there has been considerable movement of pupils in and out of this year group at different times. Nevertheless, the inspection confirmed that these pupils continue to make good progress. This is the result of good teaching, pupils' positive attitudes towards learning and the school's provision of extra learning support. Pupils are well on track to meet or exceed challenging targets, as they have consistently done in recent years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well and very much enjoy coming to school. They show an impressive ability to share responsibility for regulating their own behaviour and in sorting out their own problems through peer mediation. Pupils' enthusiasm for most lessons and curriculum enrichment opportunities such as after-school clubs is reflected in above average attendance. The school provides a good range of cultural activities, for example in music. Older pupils have a good awareness of the importance of healthy food. They also appreciate the school's emphasis on an extensive physical education programme as a means of encouraging a healthy lifestyle. A strength of pupils' personal development is their confidence and articulation when speaking in class or individually to adults. These qualities, combined with good progress in developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations, and in most lessons use questioning well to further pupils' understanding. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to speak clearly and confidently, and learn independently. Teachers match activities well to the learning needs of different ability groups. These qualities were very evident in a lesson for older pupils in which they were all encouraged to debate their response to a novel, responding very articulately at length and listening intently to each other. Very occasionally, lessons are satisfactory rather than good; then learning is more passive because teachers control pupils' responses too much and spend too much time talking so pupils begin to lose their concentration.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of opportunities, such as after-school clubs, booster classes for less able pupils and extra activities for the most able. These contribute to pupils' great enjoyment and good progress. Specialist music tuition is a strength of the curriculum, and French has recently been introduced successfully. Provision for physical education has improved considerably. Pupils are enthusiastic about the ICT provision, which has improved considerably in recent years, and the school is further developing its comprehensive provision for personal, social and health education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils confirm that they feel very safe in school and can happily approach each other or adults to sort out any problems. The personal care of pupils is a strength, and the school is meticulous in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being, with all safeguarding procedures rigorously enforced. Pupils with learning difficulties in basic skills, or with emotional problems or disabilities such as hearing impairment, receive outstanding levels of support and make good progress. The school has developed comprehensive but manageable assessment systems and tracks pupils' progress thoroughly. The school gives informative progress reports to parents, a process to which pupils contribute. The next stage of translating assessment data into classroom guidance is less well established. Although teachers and pupils review and modify targets regularly, not all pupils know them, and some teachers do not make full use of the targets to boost learning. The marking of work is variable in quality.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership at all levels, supported by experienced and knowledgeable governors, is committed to working towards excellence. The headteacher is rightly respected for her vision and has made successful attempts to empower other leaders and managers, including subject coordinators. These are increasingly prominent in monitoring, analysis and evaluation. Accurate self-evaluation of strengths and areas for development has resulted in good strategic planning. This has led, in turn, to rising standards and achievement. The school is already beginning to reap the benefits

of the recently completed building and the refurbishment. The leadership also makes good use of its links with other local schools, for example, by sharing expertise in how to maximise the learning of the most able pupils.

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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 |
|---|----------------|

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marldon C of E Primary School, Marldon, TQ3 1PD

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. You talked to us very openly about your school, and we enjoyed seeing you at work and at play. We admired your new school buildings, but above all we were very impressed by the way in which you showed yourselves to be very good ambassadors for your school.

Your school provides you with a good education, and the good leadership of Mrs Sheppard has a lot to do with this. We also know that your teachers and other staff look after you very well at school, so that you feel safe, happy, and like coming to school. You behave well, and we know that you enjoy opportunities to take responsibility, for example when you serve on the school council, support charities and help children in the school who are younger than yourselves.

Your teachers help you to make good progress in lessons. As result, you do very well in tests, better than pupils in many other schools. Your school is particularly good at providing you with help so that all of you equally have the chance to improve. By giving your best most of the time, your work is often very impressive and well presented. We saw this when visiting lessons and watching activities such as a discussion on 'what makes a novel interesting?'

We have asked your teachers to make more use of your targets in lessons, to provide more helpful comments when they mark your books, and to encourage you to learn even more independently in lessons. Most of you have the ability and confidence to work well independently, and by doing this, you will help your teachers. We have also asked that you have more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English. Because you learn well, these changes will help you make even more progress in your writing.

Once again, thank you and good luck for the future.

John Laver Lead inspector



28 February 2008

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John Laver
Lead inspector