

Marchwood Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116073
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312169
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Gadd HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Hoare
Headteacher	Mr S Bassett
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Main Road Marchwood Southampton SO40 4ZH
Telephone number	02380 863105
Fax number	02380 872892

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Marchwood Junior School is a slightly larger than average school. More girls than boys attend the school. A small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is low, as is the number of pupils whose first language is not English. A larger than average percentage of pupils have statements of special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The main difficulties or disabilities are dyslexia and autism.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Marchwood is a satisfactory school, in which pupils achieve above average standards in their work and make satisfactory progress. However, many are capable of achieving more. The good teaching in English, the high priority given to writing, and the strong academic guidance in this subject have ensured that pupils achieve well over time. Consequently, a significant number of more able pupils have reached the higher level in this subject. This is not replicated in other subjects; in mathematics and science achievement is not as good, because these pupils in particular are not challenged sufficiently by sharp targets for learning.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. In mathematics and science, challenging targets are used, but inconsistently. This inhibits good progress in these subjects. Early indications are that the introduction of the International Primary Curriculum, which links learning in different subjects together, is having a positive effect on pupils' engagement and learning. However, it is too early to see its impact on achievement and standards. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of this curriculum and the extended project work. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits are valued by pupils.

The good teaching and strong pastoral care have a beneficial impact on pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to work cooperatively in lessons and many opportunities are provided for group and peer discussions. Positive relationships between pupils and teachers and among pupils are evident all around the school. There is a real community atmosphere in which everybody is valued. As a result, the vast majority of parents and pupils are supportive of the school. One parent stated, 'My child has gone from strength to strength emotionally. Her confidence has grown immensely.' Pupils are keen to come to school because they feel well cared for and enjoy their lessons.

Pupils feel safe in school and know there is always someone to turn to if they feel worried. Good links exist with outside agencies and these are used well to provide good care and support. The warm welcome that pupils and their families receive is evident from comments that parents make. One parent stated, 'The school is a welcoming, happy place and it is a pleasure to come into.' Pupils are actively involved in the local, European and international communities. They are aware of differing faiths and cultures through visits to and close connections with a school in Rwanda.

Teaching and learning are good overall although inconsistencies exist. Teachers have recently been introducing more challenging targets for pupils, which is leading to improved progress in lessons. Classes are managed effectively, and teachers use their good subject knowledge and a range of teaching methods to promote confidence among the pupils. Independent learning and group discussions are emerging as features of good lessons, as is consistency in ensuring that pupils always understand what they are about to learn. While good teaching is helping to sustain standards, it is not yet strong enough to challenge the more able pupils to work towards the edge of their capabilities. Work set in lessons does not always meet the needs of all learners. Teaching assistants are deployed well and, because of this, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve in line with their peers. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and around the school is mainly good. They are polite, articulate and keen to learn.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leaders have brought about changes since the last inspection, although these have not all been implemented at a rapid enough pace. For example, the use of challenging targets to improve pupils' progress is a recent introduction.

Where academic guidance is strong, it provides pupils with clear guidance in how to improve their work. However, this practice is inconsistent, both between subjects and across the school. Capacity to improve is satisfactory. Subject leaders have accurately identified areas for development and are putting actions into practice, although there has not yet been sufficient time for this to have an impact on pupils' progress.

The school assesses and records pupils' progress at an individual level but does not analyse data robustly enough. It is not clear how much progress groups of pupils make at various points throughout the school. The leadership team has rightly identified areas for improvement, and now needs to ensure that the planned changes occur rapidly and consistently across the whole school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that leaders at all levels use monitoring and evaluation outcomes rigorously to bring about rapid improvement in pupils' progress.
- Improve the quality and consistency of feedback to pupils about how to improve their work, particularly through marking.
- Ensure that work always meets the needs of all pupils, especially the more able.

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

Pupils start Marchwood Junior School with above average standards and leave with above average standards, so progress is satisfactory overall. Until recently, individual and school targets have not been challenging enough to ensure that pupils' progress occurs at a rapid pace. The focused work to improve pupils' writing over the last two years is reflected in significantly improved results and an increased number of pupils attaining higher levels by the end of Year 6. In mathematics and science, the more able pupils are not challenged consistently enough in some lessons, resulting in relatively few pupils attaining Level 5 by the end of Year 6. The school is aware of this inconsistency and has started to address this issue. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are proud of their school and know that they are valued. They are reflective in assemblies and are fully aware of the differences between right and wrong. The good links that the school has with a school in Rwanda provide a solid foundation for pupils to develop their understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn. As a result, their attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average. The school works closely with parents to encourage good attendance. A congratulations postcard can be issued to pupils to celebrate their good attendance, as well as for other reasons. Relationships throughout the school are positive because most pupils are well behaved, friendly, confident and polite. As one pupil said, 'Everyone

at Marchwood is friendly.' Pupils have a good understanding of safety and say they feel safe because they know staff are approachable and ready to help.

Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community. For example, the pupils' 'green team' promotes environmental issues, and others work with the parish council. Pupils are developing a strong commitment to healthy lifestyles through eating sensibly and using the many opportunities to take regular exercise at school. For example, the 'huff and puff' lunchtime activities are very popular, as are the games run by pupil play leaders. Through their involvement in charity fund raising and enterprise activities, and in other ways, pupils are well equipped for the next stage of their education and their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good use is made of specialist teaching in music and French to extend pupils' experiences and knowledge. Teachers are skilful at using questioning to check pupils' understanding of their work, to make them think carefully about their answers, and to ensure boys and girls are included during whole-class discussion. Most lessons make good use of time although occasionally teachers' introductions are overlong, or lessons finish early. Work is not always adapted to meet the needs of pupils with different levels of ability. A good range of resources is used as a stimulus for learning. Pupils sustain concentration well and most remain focused throughout lessons. The vast majority of pupils' behaviour is good. In a few classes, there is a low level of disruption when pupils are not fully challenged by their work. Such disruptions are always managed quickly and effectively.

Targets for work in the International Primary Curriculum lessons are used well in a minority of classes, but this good practice is not embedded across the school. Teachers use a number of strategies to assess pupils' learning in lessons, although they do not always use this to intervene swiftly to bring about improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school meets all statutory requirements and has improved the use of modern technologies to support the curriculum since the previous inspection. It has recently introduced the International Primary Curriculum, which brings a range of subjects together under one heading and encourages pupils to consider how they learn. Early indications show an increased excitement and interest in learning by all pupils. Planning is thorough and ensures that pupils have good opportunities to experience a wide range of subjects delivered through a central theme such as 'explorers and adventurers'. The school makes good use of its own grounds and locality to extend learning experiences outside the classroom.

The school provides a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities including visitors to the school. Pupils were enthralled by the visiting author who led pupils to create very imaginative story ideas and write interesting back page 'blurb'. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in house sports competitions, to learn to play the recorder, and to participate in a broad range of visits both in this country and abroad. They talk with enthusiasm about the number of activities that are on offer, and the opportunities to share achievements through the 'What have you done today to make yourself proud?' assemblies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The caring atmosphere makes a big contribution to pupils' enjoyment and is a strength of the school. As one parent wrote, 'with the support and guidance of the staff at Marchwood, my son has been transformed in his self-esteem.' Staff are especially thoughtful and caring in their induction of pupils to their new classes each year through the 'start right' week, which enables them to settle quickly. Pupils with specific learning difficulties and those with autism are well supported by the school, often in good partnership with outside agencies such as the local authority behavioural unit. A specialist in 'emotional literacy' provides valuable support for vulnerable pupils. Procedures for safeguarding all pupils are securely in place.

Academic guidance and support are not as well embedded as that for pupils' personal development. In English, consistently good use is made of pupils' targets, including in marking, and consequently pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve their work further. This is not always the case in other subject areas. Teachers' assessments in some areas are accurate. However, assessment procedures are not as effective as they could be in ensuring that pupils make good progress. The school is aware of this issue and has started to plan actions to tackle it. In addition, the school has rightly identified teachers' marking as an area that does not routinely provide pupils with good guidance to enable improvement. More able pupils benefit from 'booster groups' in lessons and from opportunities to extend their learning, provided by the local secondary school. However, these pupils are not supported consistently well and work does not always challenge them sufficiently to ensure they make good progress in relation to their capabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher promotes a caring ethos that ensures that staff feel valued and listened to. Together with the other managers, he has accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. The extent to which leaders at all levels are effective in addressing these areas is inconsistent. Governance is satisfactory. The governors are committed to the school, and fully discharge their legal responsibility. They provide good support, and show an understanding of the strengths of the school, but are at the early stages of holding leadership sufficiently accountable for pupils' progress. Where leadership is good, the outcome of recent initiatives is evident in improvements in pupils' progress, for example in English. Although the school is tracking the progress of individual pupils, there is still some work to be done in the rigorous analysis of this data to identify the progress made by groups of pupils against their capabilities.

Community cohesion is good. The school plays a strong role within the local community. For example, as a result of pupils' campaigning with the parish council, a play area for under-fives and seating for the elderly were installed locally. Internationally, the school has strong links with schools in Rwanda and Australia that are a strength of its work in enriching pupils' understanding of other communities.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	2
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	3

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marchwood Junior School, Southampton, SO40 4ZH

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave inspectors when we visited your school this week. You were very helpful and polite, and we very much enjoyed talking to you. You are proud of your school and behave well, and we can see that you enjoy coming to it. I am writing to inform you of our findings.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and you reach above average standards overall. The curriculum is good and includes some interesting new developments. You were especially pleased to tell us about all the different clubs that you can join and the many ways in which you have been able to help your local community. All staff work hard to make you feel safe. Teaching and learning are good, although some of you could learn even more in your lessons. We have asked your school to make sure that:

- you are set challenging targets that are checked on a regular basis
- the work provided for you in lessons is just right for all of you
- marking tells you more often how to improve your work.

Tackling these things will help your school to be even more successful and ensure that you make more progress in your lessons.

You can help by reading the comments in your books carefully and by trying your very best to achieve the targets that your teachers set for you.

We hope you continue to enjoy your education at Marchwood Junior School.

Yours sincerely

Susan Gadd

Her Majesty's Inspector