

Marchwood Church of England Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116299
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312249
Inspection date	22 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	215
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	74
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Carter
Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Green
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Twiggs Lane Marchwood Southampton SO40 4ZE
Telephone number	02380 868819

Age group	4–7
Inspection date	22 September 2008
Inspection number	312249

Fax number

02380 663723

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the rate of progress for all pupils and particularly boys and the higher achievers;
- how effective leadership and management have been in identifying issues, accelerating progress and evaluating the impact of their actions;
- the apparent strengths particularly relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS);
- how good is pupils' personal development and well-being, aspects of the curriculum and care, support and guidance.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work, discussion with pupils, staff and the Chair of Governors, the school's documentation and assessment information and inspection questionnaires returned from the parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

This average size school admits pupils from a variety of backgrounds including the local military port and a local static traveller site. There is provision for the EYFS and a breakfast club and after school club not managed by the governing body. There are few pupils for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and who find aspects of English, particularly writing and mathematics challenging is less than in most schools. The school has been awarded the Healthy School's Award (enhanced status), Investors in People and the Activemark. It is currently working towards the Artsmark Gold Award and the Becta Information, Communication and Technology Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and her senior leadership team, the school provides a good education for its pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. 'We are impressed not only by the quality of care and teaching but by the extra-curricular activities and opportunities presented to the children. The school is very well led and maintains strong links with the community.' This is representative of the comments received.

Pupils build well on the extremely strong start they make in Reception. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress through Years 1 and 2. Standards have remained broadly above average in reading, writing and mathematics since 2003. Standards attained in 2008 were slightly lower but evidence confirms that this outcome was related to the particular Year group. A higher percentage of boys did not attain the higher levels in writing and more pupils failed to attain expected levels of attainment in reading. A very small minority experienced emotional and behavioural problems that adversely affected their progress. In the past two years, the percentage attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics remained broadly average. The school has identified the need to target higher achievers and planning confirms that these pupils are targeted well with appropriately challenging work set. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties who find aspects of English, particularly writing and mathematics, challenging and the very few pupils for whom English is not believed to be their first language, make good progress. This is because of the support they receive from a range of adults including a team of skilled learning support assistants. A recent focus on writing, in Year 1, has seen an improvement in standards in that Year group. Recent efforts to further motivate boys, for example by organising the very successful Dads in School Day, promoting books that would appeal and also providing relevant writing opportunities have been successful. As a result boys now make similar progress to girls. As one boy said, 'I like Big Write because now we can write three or four pages.'

The school has an ethos that is conducive to learning. Bright, colourful and often interactive displays help motivate the pupils. All adults are very good role models and listen very carefully to what pupils have to say. Unauthorised absence is well below average because pupils want to come to school and attendance is closely monitored and encouraged. Authorised absence, mostly granted on compassionate grounds to pupils whose parents serve in the military, is above average. Personal development and well-being is outstanding. The school provides a safe environment. Although two parents expressed concerns about safety, the school was already aware of these issues and had put appropriate plans in place. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils really enjoy all that the school has to offer. They play very well together using the extensive range of equipment in a range of imaginative ways. The extensive grounds are utilised successfully with quiet areas and areas for science exploration. Pupils have a thorough understanding of what constitutes a healthy life-style and know what they need to do to remain safe in a variety of circumstances. One pupil explained 'You should hold scissors like this and never run with them!'

Teaching is consistently good throughout Years 1 and 2. Assessment procedures are beginning to provide both teachers and the senior leadership team with even more detailed information about the progress of individual pupils and groups. This is because the recent introduction of relevant computer systems is helping to evaluate data more effectively. Consequently, the good monitoring procedures already established are becoming even more rigorous. Learning objectives are explained carefully at the start of lessons and learning is evaluated at their conclusion.

Teaching assistants know the pupils well and offer good support and guidance. Outstanding relationships with outside agencies ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are well understood and that they receive the support and guidance that they need. The outstanding curriculum provides a wide variety of exciting learning opportunities for all the pupils. It is well organised and supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visitors, specialist coaches, visits, events and 'special days.' Provision for care, support and guidance is good overall. Systems and procedures to protect pupils are secure and well understood by all adults. Teachers evaluate the impact of lessons on learning. However, there are currently too few opportunities for individuals and groups to regularly evaluate their own work, both independently and with the support of teachers and learning support assistants. Consequently, pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve and thereby set themselves clear goals for future learning.

Leadership and management are good. The leadership team, strongly led by the headteacher, has recognised the need to involve middle managers more in strategic planning. The deputy head, appointed in 2007, has quickly gained an overview of school priorities and especially the need to use tracking and assessment data more effectively to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. She supports the headteacher very well. The governing body, again strongly led, is developing its 'strategic role and is making the need to hold the school more rigorously to account for the standards attained and progress made, a priority. As the chair of governors said, 'We are always focussing on on-going improvement,' confirming that the governors and leadership of the school are far from complacent but have set challenging targets to accelerate progress and maintain and further improve the standards attained.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get an excellent start to their education in Reception classes. Outstanding leadership and excellent teamwork provide a vibrant and interesting learning environment in which children are taught very well. Even at this early stage in the school year, children are happy and settled and are excited to explore the world around them. This is because the systems and procedures in place are securely based on the knowledge of how young children learn and develop. The partnership with parents, pre-school providers and other agencies is a real strength. This makes transition easy and ensures continuity and progression in children's learning and development. Evidence from the Foundation stage profiles and observation of children in the current reception classes indicate that attainment on entry is broadly in line with those expected of their age in most areas of learning. However, in certain aspects of communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world attainment on entry is below those expected. Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning irrespective of their different starting points. As a result, nearly all children leave reception classes with knowledge and skills that are in line with expectations and with a significant number attaining beyond this. The introduction of the Letters and Sounds programme and the group targets set last year have had a positive impact on children's progress. One of the strengths in teaching is the way staff organise activities to make learning fun and relevant for all children. Observations and assessment are used effectively to support and extend children's learning and identify areas for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate progress, especially in writing and mathematics, by giving pupils regular opportunities to evaluate and further improve their work and ensure that they know what they need to do in order to improve it over the longer term.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

06 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marchwood Church of England Infant School, Southampton, SO40 4ZE

Thank you for the warm welcome I received when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting and talking with you and finding out about all the exciting things that you do.

You go to a good school. This is a list of the things I liked best.

- You all make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because you are given so many exciting and interesting things to do.
- You work hard and do well in your work.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you really care for each other.
- All adults in the school make sure you are very well looked after.
- Your teachers listen carefully to what you have to say, prepare interesting lessons and support you well with your work.
- The curriculum, that's all the things that your teachers plan for you to do, including lessons, after school clubs, visitors, visits and special events is outstanding and encourages you to learn many interesting things.
- Your headteacher and other people who help run your school do a really good job.

Every school, even one as good as yours, have things that could be better. We want your teachers to help you learn to regularly check your own work and agree with them about what you need to do to make it even better.

With very best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector