

# Marden Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116713
<b>Local Authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312378
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ted Wheatley

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.

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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 (total)	88
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Hammond
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maggi Newton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Marden Hereford HR1 3EW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01432 880208
<b>Fax number</b>	01432 880049

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well the school evaluates how good it is
- whether what it does to improve standards and achievement is good enough
- the effectiveness of assessment and how well the school uses it to set pupils' targets and give academic guidance.

Evidence was gathered from data on current standards and achievement, examination of pupils' work and school documents, observation of lessons, and discussions with the headteacher, governors, staff and pupils. 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 of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Reception class with almost all having attended the independent on-site pre-school nursery for three to four year-olds. Attainment on entry to Reception is below that expected, although children have a very wide range of skill levels. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but varies considerably between year groups in this school, which are smaller than average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. The great majority of parents are pleased with school, some of whom bring their children from out of the area because the school's reputation is so good. Parents say that the school is a happy place, that pupils love school, enjoy the activities provided and are well supported if they have any learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Standards have fluctuated in recent years mainly because the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in each year group varies considerably. In the past, a small number of pupils did not do as well with their writing and, to a lesser extent, their numeracy as they should have done. The school has resolved these problems by introducing several approaches such as extended writing tasks and writing in all subjects, and by encouraging accuracy in calculations. As a result, standards in writing and numeracy are now above average. Pupils write well, expressing themselves imaginatively with a wide range of vocabulary. Spelling is still occasionally inaccurate although improving because the school has established ways to correct and reinforce accurate spelling. In numeracy, pupils calculate carefully and explain how they work out problems well. In science, pupils achieve well and reach above average standards because they are encouraged to explain their understanding and knowledge individually. Occasionally a small number of the most able pupils do not do quite as well as they could, mainly because teachers give them work that is not sufficiently challenging. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of sensitive, patient support.

The school accurately evaluates pupils' personal development as excellent. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding and they enjoy coming to school because they think teachers make learning exciting. Their understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles is exceptional. The school has Healthy School Gold status and some pupils are involved in supporting another school in encouraging healthy diet and physical activity so that it too can achieve a Healthy School award. Pupils behave very safely, treat adults and other pupils with much respect, and have a first-class understanding of how to look after themselves. Their attendance is good. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the local community, especially with the interesting environmental work in which they are involved. For example, with the support of a parent, they are involved in an energy scheme that generates electricity and puts it into the national grid when it is not being used by the school. The school council plays an active role and its work is well supported and understood by other pupils. Pupils are well prepared for future life, through both the good academic skills and very good social skills they develop. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a very good grasp of right and wrong, and are prepared to discuss their feelings publicly. For example, in an assembly many pupils made contributions about their understanding of personal bravery. Pupils have a good understanding of the values and traditions of other cultures.

Teaching is good and teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and, for the most part, challenging. Relationships are excellent and pupils are confident to discuss their work in front of the whole class, even if they know they might be wrong. In most lessons, work is well matched to pupils' learning needs, although occasionally it is not hard enough for the most able pupils. Teachers include many opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills, to write independently and to acquire a wide vocabulary. This enhances pupils' learning. Marking is inconsistent, but the best marking gives a clear indication of how well pupils perform and detailed guidance on what they need to do to make further progress. However, some marking

does not give the same quality of information and guidance. The curriculum is good and has improved since the school was previously inspected. Links between subjects are developing well. For example, in a geography lesson on India, learning was particularly good because in other lessons pupils were studying Indian art and religions and were writing about life in India. There is a wide range of activities that enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about visits, for example, to Hampton Court, and to another school to learn about different religions. Given the small number of staff, the range of out-of-school activities is sound. The great majority of pupils take part in at least one activity, and enjoy them.

Care, guidance and support are good and the procedures to ensure pupils' safety and security are effective. The school has very good relationships with pupils and their families, and keeps parents well informed about school activities and pupils' progress. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is carefully planned and effectively provided by teaching assistants. Learning needs are identified early and the school establishes good links with specialist staff to provide support for those pupils and parents needing it. The school uses academic information well to set targets for pupils, and most pupils know their targets and how to achieve them.

Leadership and management are good and the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher is well supported by staff who work well together to plan and implement improvements. She provides clear direction for improvement, has high expectations and sets challenging targets. The leadership team has successfully improved achievement in writing and numeracy and work to improve pupils' spelling is starting to have a positive impact. Although the school knows what it needs to do to improve the EYFS outdoor area, funding is currently too limited, and as a result the provision is still inadequate. The school has made good progress since its previous inspection and the capacity for further improvement is good. Governors are supportive and provide a reasonable level of challenge for the school, although their effectiveness is held back by the vacancies. The school works hard to ensure all pupils achieve equally well. Provision for community cohesion is good, leading to pupils' good and improving appreciation and awareness of the values, beliefs and traditions of people around the world.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children settle very quickly into the Reception class. They achieve well and most are in line with or above national expectations by the end of Reception. Their personal and social skills are excellent. Children make rapid progress from the moment they start because their teacher knows them well and is already familiar to them through her frequent visits to the nearby playgroup. Effective teaching, good welfare arrangements coupled with strong assessment procedures and an interesting range of planned activities enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning. Gains in personal and social development are especially good because of the successful focus on promoting independence and choice, which enables children to think for themselves. Learning resources are well organised and enhance opportunities for pupils to learn through play. For example, the 'builders supplies' is much enjoyed and pupils take orders from each other and then give away a free hard hat as an offer. Writing skills and linking sounds and letters are relatively weak in relation to other skills but teachers are addressing these areas and as a result, both are improving. Despite the many strengths in provision, the outdoor area is inadequate and does not support learning as well as it might. However, staff work particularly effectively to compensate for the outdoor space's shortcomings. They plan activities to make

sure that pupils have opportunities to learn outside and develop their independence and physical skills.

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

- Ensure that work is always matched to pupils' needs, especially for the most able.
- Ensure that marking consistently gives pupils accurate information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to make further progress.
- Improve the quality of outdoor provision in the EYFS so that children can readily initiate their own learning outside.

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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?	2
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

15 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Marden Primary School, Marden, Hereford HR1 3EW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We spoke to many of you and you told us about how much you enjoy school and what it is like to be there. You were really helpful.

These are the main things I found out about your school.

- You are at a good school. You make good progress and reach above average standards. This is because teaching is good and teachers work hard to make sure you do well.
- The school organises a lot of trips and activities that make schoolwork interesting.
- The headteacher, governors and staff are working hard to make sure the school becomes even better.
- You enjoy school. Your behaviour is excellent and you treat everyone with respect and consideration.
- You take any responsibilities you have, such as the school council, seriously and you have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe.
- Your knowledge and understanding about the values and beliefs of other people in the world is good.
- Most of you have a good understanding of how well you are doing at school, and how to improve your work.
- The school takes good care of you and is safe and secure at all times.

To improve things we have asked the school to do the following:

- help you do even better by making sure work is always hard enough, especially for the most able of you
- make sure marking tells you how to do even better
- improve the quality of the Reception outside area so that children can more easily plan their own learning activities.

You can help by asking for help if you think work is too easy.

With best wishes,

Ted Wheatley Lead inspector