

# The Mareham-le-Fen Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120576
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313680
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	97
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>	Rev Alec Boyd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Avril Moore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2005
<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>	School Lane Mareham-le-Fen Lincolnshire PE22 7QB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01507 568304

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**Fax number**

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving the village of Mareham-le-Fen and surrounding area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority groups or have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average and very high in some year groups. The main needs recognised are moderate, severe or specific learning difficulties. An above average number of pupils leave or join the school at times other than normal. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are provided for in a Reception class. Although it varies from year-to-year because of the small numbers, many pupils have skills and knowledge that are below that expected when they start school. The headteacher was part of a job share headship until this term when she became sole headteacher.

## 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 and it has improved significantly since the last inspection. Alongside a number of other recent initiatives, this shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Over time, good leadership and management have brought about a trend of rising standards and good overall achievement. A very large majority of the parents are correctly very happy with the school. As one said, this is a 'very good and well respected school.'

Pupils reach broadly average standards by the time they leave the school. This represents good progress from their starting points. In reading pupils make outstanding progress to achieve exceptionally high standards. The pupils with learning difficulties often make excellent progress due to the effective support they receive. Standards in mathematics are more variable. Pupils make good progress so that the most recent national test results at the end of Year 6 show pupils achieve broadly average standards in mathematics. In writing, standards are below average. However, the school is making good progress to improve this subject and the school has already begun to introduce some new initiatives to raise standards. Although the overall progress made is good, that made by the most able pupils could sometimes be better, thus ensuring they always reach the highest levels

The good achievement is the result of good teaching and learning. Staff have very good relationships with pupils. Lessons are mostly well planned although the provision for the most able pupils is not always challenging enough. The teachers are well supported by good teaching assistants who provide very effective support especially for those with learning difficulties. Teachers assess pupils' progress in some detail. They have planned a good curriculum, developing useful links between subjects so pupils can use the skills learned in one subject to support another. For example, teachers are now finding more opportunities to write at some length in history or in religious education. Good opportunities are found to enrich the curriculum through visits and visitors and through good sporting and other extra-curricular activities.

The school ensures pupils are well cared for and looked after. One parent pointed out the 'lovely, caring atmosphere' and the children say how safe they feel. The caring nature of the school is evident in pupils' good personal development. Their behaviour is excellent and they talk very enthusiastically about how much they enjoy being at school. Attendance is above average. Although the school has many links to the local village and with the church, it works hard to develop pupils' understanding of the wider world through, for example, the ownership of a plot of land in Nigeria for local people to grow food. Pupils develop good learning habits and learn to cooperate and collaborate well. This is preparing them effectively for the next stage in their education.

The school is well led and managed at all levels. The headteacher has quickly developed her appreciation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has created a positive staff ethos where teachers are willing to accept advice and look for continuous improvement in their work. Targets set to raise standards are challenging but appropriate. The new tracking system is very detailed and useful in identifying the progress made by all pupils although it is not yet fully used by staff when planning pupils' next steps. Governors offer the school a good level of support and challenge as well as having a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The provision in the EYFS has improved significantly since the last inspection. The teaching is good and this is helping the children make good progress in all areas of learning. However, many of the recent changes and initiatives have yet to have a full impact on children's progress and the levels they reach at the end of the Reception year. The accommodation inside and outside is of good quality and is used effectively and imaginatively. The staff pay particular attention to the outdoor classroom and to creating good opportunities for outdoor learning. This is also developed well through the good range of visits children make, such as those when they were learning about 'people who help us.' These are very well supported by parents. The effective planning ensures that children have a good range of adult-led and pupil-initiated activities that are well resourced and which the children clearly enjoy. Teachers have excellent relationships with the children and this helps them settle very quickly when they start school.

The two staff responsible for the EYFS have demonstrated outstanding leadership in the way they have planned and introduced the new curriculum and expectations since this year. In addition, they have kept governors fully informed about the changes through an excellent case study document. They have also developed very high quality assessment systems. These are particularly strong in tracking children's learning and in capturing new learning through notes and digital photographs.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend and improve pupils' vocabulary and provide sufficient opportunities for them to write for a range of purposes.
- Improve the progress made by the most able pupils and ensure they are always given tasks that are sufficiently challenging.
- Securely establish the recently introduced tracking system and ensure all staff use it when planning lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Most pupils achieve well and make good progress. This is especially true in reading, where the standards are exceptionally high and progress is outstanding. In mathematics, pupils' achievement is more inconsistent between cohorts with broadly average standards at the end of Key Stage 2. In writing, pupils' progress is satisfactory but improving, although standards remain below average. The school has recognised the need to raise standards in writing and has begun to introduce a range of initiatives to improve skills, especially for the boys. It is too early yet to see much impact of this and more remains to be done to help pupils develop a broader vocabulary and to use their writing skills in a variety of ways.

Pupils with a range of different learning difficulties are very well supported. The school's tracking, alongside the national test results, shows that these pupils often make outstanding progress from their starting levels. Parents are aware of this with one saying she is '100% happy with the provision.' Progress for the most able pupils is not always as consistently high and some could achieve even more.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

The school's successes in the way it develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is evident in their excellent behaviour and considerable enjoyment of school. Pupils talk willingly of how much they enjoy school life. They have good opportunities to take responsibility and to have their voice heard through the school council and the play leader scheme. Pupils get on well together and they say there is no bullying in school. They make healthy choices regarding food and know about other ways to keep their bodies fit. A good number take part in a range of sporting and other activities. Pupils are also aware of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

One parent wrote 'The school is a huge part of village life with strong connections to the Church and the community.' The staff are aware of how easy it would be for the school to be content with this level of community cohesion but are working hard and successfully to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of how others live in other parts of the country and abroad. There are effective opportunities for pupils to develop good learning skills that are helping prepare them well for their future education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good because teachers work very hard to plan interesting and lively lessons that keep pupils attentive and on-task. Although lessons are not always sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils, the majority are helped to make good progress. Staff have very strong relationships with the pupils and they know them and their families well. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to support their teaching and to record examples of pupils' activities. Teaching assistants provide very good support and the teachers plan their work well so the best use is made of their time. Their individual knowledge and skills, such as with computer technology, are well used to support learning. Marking is often good and helps pupils understand how they can improve their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good; supporting pupils' good achievement. It does this by being broad, balanced and appropriate for the ages of the pupils. In addition the school is beginning to make good links between subjects so that pupils are able to use the skills they learn in one area to support their learning in another. One good example seen during the inspection was in a history lesson. Here pupils' knowledge about the Second World War was used effectively to develop their factual and imaginative writing skills. Good use of the introduction of a modern foreign language has been made in widening pupils' understanding of another European country. The school plans many enrichment activities, using visitors and visits to places of interest to extend pupils' learning and support their personal and social development. While there are planned activities to support the most able pupils the school does not do enough in its day-to-day work to consistently challenge and enrich their learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for and parents are very happy with this aspect of the school's work. One said 'I am very impressed with the way the school deals with any concerns that I may have about my child, either through her work or about her peers.' Effective arrangements for ensuring pupils safety and protection meet requirements and they are well looked after. Pupils are happy there is an adult they could turn to if worried or concerned about something. In addition, the school has a sound understanding of how well they are making progress in their learning. A recently introduced system for tracking pupils' progress has been adapted and it now provides a good tool for assessing how well individual and groups of pupils are doing. This has not yet become embedded in the school's everyday practice, either at a managerial or at a classroom level. As a result, there is scope for some lessons to be planned even more closely, to cater for all pupils' needs.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has had sole charge of the school for only a few weeks. Overall leadership has clearly been effective since the last inspection resulting in the good improvements, which have been made to various aspects of the provision. The staff are a small but efficient team and have an impressive willingness to look beyond the school for ideas, support and ways they can continually improve the provision. The importance of analysing available data as a tool for assessing how well individual pupils are making progress in the basic skills has been recognised, although it is yet to be fully utilised throughout the school. The governors have recently had a number of changes to membership. They have retained the good level of knowledge about the work of the school found at the last inspection. However, this is not yet always done through their own first hand evaluation.



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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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	1

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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>	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<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	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**

26 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Mareham-le-Fen CE VC Primary School, Boston, PE22 7QB

Thank you for the way you made me welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and talking to some of you, especially the school council and those children with whom I had lunch. You helped me find out about your school and I agree with you that it is a good one.

You help your teachers by behaving extremely well in lessons. This means they can provide you with more interesting things to do to help you learn. Well done and keep it up! You are very good at reading but I have asked the teachers to help you get better at writing.

Your school is especially good at helping those of you who find learning more difficult. You get lots of good help from teachers and especially from the teaching assistants. Because of this, you often make outstanding progress in your learning. I have asked the school to do the same for those of you who find learning easier so that you are provided with work that really challenges you and helps you make very good progress.

The school has recently created a good system for tracking how well you are all doing. This means everyone will be able to see who is learning well and who has slowed down and needs extra help. This system is very new and I have asked the school to make sure it makes full use of all the information it has on how well you are doing.

Thank you for your help again. Enjoy your time at Mareham-le-Fen and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector