

Marston Green Infant School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	104073
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	323953
Inspection date	25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	342
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	14
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucile Green
Headteacher	Mary Parfitt
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Elm Farm Avenue Marston Green Birmingham B37 7AA
Telephone number	01217 795667
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Age group	3-7
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how changes in the school community are likely to impact on current standards and levels of achievement
- how the school's strengths in teaching, care and the curriculum are enabling all pupils to achieve well
- the extent to which the school promotes all elements of community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from the school's assessments of pupils' standards and progress and an analysis of the results of the 2008 tests. There were observations of teaching, and discussions took place with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. Parents' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire were also analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Marston Green Infant School is large school. Within the school provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is an attached funded early years day care unit for children aged 0-3 years called the Marston Green Leapfrogs, and a maintained nursery and three Reception classes in the main school. Children attend the school Nursery either in the morning or afternoon sessions and have the option of then attending the separate early years day care during the rest of the day. The vast majority of pupils in the school are from families of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The numbers of these pupils are rising, however, as pupils who live out of the school's catchment area are admitted into the school because of changes being made in other areas as part of the local authority regeneration programme. The school also provides out-of-school care for its pupils in the mornings and after school. In 2007, the school was successful in achieving the Artsmark Bronze Award and Activemark, and in 2008, the Eco Schools Silver and Bronze Awards and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Marston Green Infants is a truly outstanding school. It provides an excellent education that meets pupils' learning and individual needs extremely well. All staff are committed to the task of giving the pupils the best possible start to their education and work together as a successful team under the strong leadership of the headteacher and senior staff. High aspirations are a tangible element within the school. It comes from the staff and pupils alike. Pupils who talked to inspectors about their school showed immense pride in their work and were adamant that 'We are an outstanding school because we do things really well.' This view is clearly reflected in the large number of positive comments made by parents: 'Both my children have received an excellent start to their education' and 'My child really enjoys going to school as she learns something new everyday and is taught by excellent staff in a safe and fun environment' are typical of these comments.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and go on to achieve extremely well to reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has an above average proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected standards of Level 3 in all three subjects, which is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards in mathematics were not as high. An effective range of strategies have been employed to support pupils in mathematics, including a new intervention programme for pupils who found difficulties in the subject, and this has worked extremely well. Similarly, the school has focused on how to engage boys more positively in reading and writing which has also had a good impact on raising their standards. Teaching is excellent and activities are well structured so that pupils' learning progresses extremely well. Teaching assistants work alongside teachers, providing a highly effective partnership that promotes pupils' excellent progress. There are many very positive strategies which are used consistently across the school to promote good learning. Due to the very good assessment systems set up across the school that identify pupils' next steps in learning, pupils are fully and effectively involved in evaluating how well they are doing. When asked, they clearly explain what they need to do next to improve. Academic support is very effective for all pupils, including those who are new to the school and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who also make outstanding progress. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their next stage of education.

The curriculum is very well focused on engaging the interest of all pupils and they say they find their activities fun. Topics such as those on 'Heroes' and 'Space' motivate boys in particular so that they are well motivated to write about what they know. There is also a dedication to providing children with a rich curriculum that strongly promotes their personal development. Programmes designed to develop pupils' social and emotional development and to help them be effective learners are working well and, in consequence, pupils' personal development and sense of well-being are excellent. Pupils have a strong awareness of the needs of their peers and show real care and consideration of others' feelings. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and are quick to help one another. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and understand the importance of developing healthy lifestyles. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, which they do with a sense of pride. The school council and the eco groups, for example, make many suggestions on how to make the school a better place. Pupils are developing an awareness of different places around the world and are keen to raise money for worldwide charities, wanting to help those less well off than themselves. Pupils are gaining a good understanding of various religions around the

world, but they have fewer opportunities to work and play with people of other cultures and to learn about the diversity of cultures in places much nearer to home in the United Kingdom. They show interest and respect for those who seem different from themselves but this is an aspect of their development that is not quite as strong as the rest.

The personal and pastoral care provided for all pupils is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident of the good levels of care and support they receive. All safeguarding requirements are met in all areas of the school, be it in the pre-school nursery, in the main school or in the wrap-around care. The provision made through the breakfast session for children's early morning start to school is exceptional. It is very well organised and provides a sensitive early morning 'club' for several children. Children and parents are welcomed in a very friendly manner and soon children are settled with a drink, toast and other breakfast foods. Many activities are available, but each child is able to gradually wake up in a quiet atmosphere in preparation for the day ahead. The after-school club is a relaxed and cheerful affair, with many children following their own interests under the very good supervision of the adults. The space centre, the exploration of artists of the world, the cookery and the keep fit sessions are all supported extremely positively. The level of care in both of these out-of-school clubs is excellent. Similarly, the babies in the pre-school group are cared for extremely well. With carefully considered routines, they settle contentedly each day.

The reason for the school's excellent provision and standards is the outstanding levels of leadership and very effective management. The strong sense of partnership within the staff and the sharing of responsibilities mean that there is a united drive towards further improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and has led to many initiatives which have enriched the school's provision further. The governors provide effective levels of support and challenge based on a good understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. The very good partnership with parents, the close links with the local community and links with communities around the world are examples of the school's good efforts to promote community cohesion. There are now plans to build links with a school in a more diverse community in England. Marston Green Infants is a school that is keen to keep improving, and its capacity for further improvement is extremely good, as evidenced in the raising of standards in mathematics and the positive strategies for supporting the increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision made by the school for the care of children of 0 to 3 years in the Marston Green Leapfrogs unit is outstanding because of its excellent leadership and management and exceptional care and support. The adults are very knowledgeable and dedicated, forming a united and happy team having developed many skills in conjunction with school staff. The older children, for example those who also attend the school Nursery and the other pre-school children, have very positive attitudes and enjoy the wide range of tasks planned each day. As in the school Nursery, there is a good balance of activities both indoor and outside throughout the day and these cover the areas of learning exceptionally well. Children were observed planting polyanthus around the outside of the Marston Green Leapfrog building, for example, and developing an awareness of the delicate nature of plants and the need to be gentle. Comprehensive records showing each child's development are maintained in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage and these form the basis of the next steps in learning. A strong

partnership with parents is forged at all stages of the Early Years Foundation Stage and they are very positive about the care and progress children make.

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage within the school is good. Children start in the Nursery with a range of knowledge and skills expected for their age, although there is an increasing proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They settle very well into school routines under the sensitive care of all the adults and all start to make steady progress across all areas of learning because they are developing good levels of confidence, enjoy the activities available and build secure relationships with all the staff. Good teaching in the Reception classes supports this steady progress so that by the time children enter Year 1, they have made good achievement in most areas of the curriculum and attain above average standards. Progress in reading and writing is particularly strong, partly because of the effective focus on learning about sounds and letters and also because of the many activities that stimulate children's enjoyment of books and the desire to write. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to learn through self-chosen activities, including use of the outside areas that provide lots of opportunities for children to investigate and explore new ideas. Children's personal development is well promoted, but engaging their good interest and desire to learn is not as effective as developing their social and emotional skills. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. Significant improvements have been made to the provision in the Nursery, and the Foundation Stage leader accurately identified the need to develop a more accurate system of monitoring children's progress, and this is now in place. She also recognised that in some classes, children do not appear to be making as effective progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world and she has accurately identified the cause and this is being remedied. Close links are made with the Marston Green Leapfrogs pre-school group to ensure a seamless transition from one aspect of the Early Years Foundation Stage to the next.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable pupils to meet, work and play with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds so their awareness of other cultures is further developed.

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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?	1
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	1

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

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	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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marston Green Infant School, Solihull B37 7AA

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a really excellent school. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make a good start to your schooling in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You make excellent progress and by Year 2, you reach standards that are much higher than those of most children of the same age.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You have an exceptional understanding of how to keep yourselves safe. You show care for each other and respect for each other's feelings. You want to do well in your work and you are prepared very well for your future education.
- You are taught extremely well and all your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are fun and you have a good understanding of how you can get better in your work.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide strong leadership for the school and the staff all want you to do very well.
- Everyone in the school works together as a strong team and there is a good partnership with your parents and others who can help you to learn.
- The staff look after you extremely well so you feel safe and happy.
- The breakfast club and after-school club are excellent and provide you with a very safe environment in which to relax and have fun.
- The day care for the babies and Nursery children in the Marston Green Leapfrogs building is really excellent.

Even though Marston Green Infants is an outstanding school, there is something it can do to make it even better.

- We have asked the headteacher and governors to enable you to work and play with people of many different cultural backgrounds so you have a better understanding of the different people in United Kingdom.

Thank you again for helping us and remember you can help to ensure your school continues to be really special by continuing to work hard and helping one another.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector