

Marsden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108687
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	324815
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Joe Clark

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	202
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Glynda Blackburn
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Bell
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mill Lane Whitburn Colliery South Tyneside Tyne and Wear SR6 7HJ
Telephone number	0191 5292040
Fax number	0191 529 5368

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. Pupils come, in roughly equal numbers, from affluent areas and areas of extreme socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision covers a Reception class and Nursery provision for 52 children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which looks after its pupils well, effectively promoting their personal development and providing good levels of personal support. Staff care about the development of the whole child' and 'The school has a strong sense of community and much emphasis is given to pastoral support and pupils' well-being' are typical of many parental comments. Pupils behave well, mix easily and confidently together and say they enjoy coming to school where their attendance is generally good, and in 2007 was above average. They have good attitudes to learning and participate enthusiastically in the good range of activities available at the end of the school day. Pupils say they feel safe in school where relationships between each other and with adults are excellent, being not only non-threatening, but also very supportive. They know about the importance of healthy lifestyles and adopting safe practices. Pupils love taking on responsibility and make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. Preparation for the next stage of learning is satisfactory.

Children join Year 1 with broadly average standards. They make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 are achieving standards which are average overall but are weaker in English than in mathematics or science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils. Given their starting points, pupils' achievement is satisfactory except for higher attaining pupils who are not stretched enough and could do better. This group of pupils underachieve because teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, and with some strengths, does not focus enough on their particular needs. Similarly, the curriculum whilst satisfactory does not provide higher attaining pupils with enough targeted support.

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. After some recent disruption, the school's leadership team is now settled and is beginning to establish more effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Good systems are starting to be used effectively to track pupils' progress. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough and fail to identify clearly what needs to be improved to make all teaching as good as the best. Development planning does not make clear enough the link between the underachievement of higher attaining pupils and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the approachability of staff. As one parent put it: 'The teaching staff always have time to discuss any issues you have'. The governing body, which is much smaller than is usual for this size of school, provides appropriate support and encouragement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter the EYFS with skills and knowledge that are below what is typical for their age, particularly in relation to speech and language. When they leave Reception, the great majority of children have made good progress in all areas of learning, having attained average levels of knowledge, understanding and skills. Their creative development and knowledge of their world are particularly well developed. Because of the quality of care and support, children quickly settle in and feel secure. The EYFS is organised as a single unit giving children of all ages opportunities to work and play together, contributing to their progress in personal and social development. Relationships and children's behaviour are excellent. The team of adults work together very effectively. They each have a focus group that enables them to efficiently

assess and respond to children's changing needs. The curriculum gives children real choice and opportunity to make decisions in their work and play. This helps them gain in confidence and raises their self-esteem. Children accept responsibility and willingly join in routine tasks of tidying and managing their environment. The leadership of EYFS is good, demonstrating a very good understanding of the unit's strengths and where developments are needed. Partnerships with parents are effective and valued. The day often begins with a phonics session. However, as this follows registration, children often remain seated on the carpet for too long with little or no practical activity. The outside area has yet to be fully integrated into the curriculum in order to give children increased opportunities to explore, investigate and interact throughout the day.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in English.
- Ensure higher attaining pupils achieve their full potential.
- Improve lesson planning so that it takes account of the different ability groups in the class.
- Develop more rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, especially the quality of teaching and learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Pupils join Year 1 with standards that are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 2 reach average standards. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2008, standards were significantly below average in reading and writing whilst in mathematics standards were broadly average. Given their starting points, achievement overall was satisfactory except for higher attaining pupils who failed to achieve the expected Level 3+ grades in writing and/or mathematics. Comparative data at the end of Key Stage 2 for 2008 has not yet been published but in national tests in 2007, standards at the end of Year 6 were broadly average and achievement for the majority of pupils, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, was satisfactory. In English, higher attaining pupils did not attain the higher Level 5+ grades they were capable of and underachieved. Provisional test results for 2008 were slightly lower than 2007 but remain broadly average. Pupils are currently making satisfactory progress. Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve their suitably challenging targets in national tests due to take place in summer 2009.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development including their behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Attitudes to learning are very positive. Attendance is good. Unauthorised absence is very rare. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are strong and pupils play and work together in harmony. Residential visits help develop tolerance and understanding of others. Links with a school in Poland enhance pupils' understanding of other cultures. Pupils enjoy coming to school and say they enjoy their lessons. They say there is very little bullying, if any, and they know who to turn to if they have any concerns. Initiatives such as the Bully Box, and playground buddies help provide reassurance. Pupils have good

opportunities to take on responsibility and exercise leadership skills, for example, as house captains, school councillors or monitors. Links with the local community, for example, through Harvest Festival parcels for the elderly and monthly 'Citizenship Awards' are well established. The school has a Healthy Schools Award and Activemark Award and pupils talk knowledgeably about healthy eating and taking regular exercise. They know how to keep safe, including internet safety. Average basic skills and good social skills provide a satisfactory preparation for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some good teaching in the school but not enough of it. Common strengths in the teaching include setting tasks which interest and motivate the large majority of pupils, the very positive relationships which provide support and encouragement to pupils and the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. At times, however, there is insufficient focus on the needs of higher attaining pupils some of whom said in conversations with inspectors that at times they found the work too easy. This is because some lesson planning does not do enough to fully extend higher attaining groups and teaching is aimed too much at the whole class. Teaching assistants provide encouragement, especially to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and are generally well deployed. Marking is usually, though not always regular and highly informative in showing pupils what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets the needs of the most groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It does not provide enough challenge or support for higher attaining pupils or pupils who are identified as able, gifted or talented. Good use is made of the local environment. As a 'Guardian School' for Souter lighthouse, classes make regular visits to the lighthouse as part of their science and history lessons. The curriculum supports aspects of pupils' personal development effectively. The annual 'Healthy Road Show' highlights to pupils the risks associated with smoking and substance abuse. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, not only in sport, but in music and the arts. Good curriculum planning eases children's transition from the Reception class into the main school. Particularly strong partnerships exist with the local secondary school. These enhance the curriculum whilst also preparing pupils for their move into Year 7.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for. The school knows its pupils well and the pastoral care of pupils is very strong. Relationships throughout the school are supportive and encouraging. Links with outside agencies are good and provide effective support to vulnerable pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Safeguarding procedures and conform to recent legislation. All staff have had First Aid training and risk assessments are carried out at appropriate intervals. The new tracking system is leading to the setting of more challenging and realistic targets and identifying which pupils need extra support. Guidance to pupils on how to improve their academic

performance is generally effective. Pupils usually know what level they are working at and have clear curriculum targets which help them to improve. There are times, however, when higher attainers need more challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Changes in the senior leadership team resulted in some recent short-term instability but this has now been resolved. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school have been strengthened but are not yet robust enough. The monitoring of teaching and learning, for example, does not clearly highlight what needs to be improved and within what timescale. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have been successfully developed and are being embedded across the school. Consequently, for the first time in three years, the school is on track to achieve its targets in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2009. There is some good practice in subject leadership but it is inconsistent, particularly in its role of monitoring and improving classroom practice. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. The school makes a good contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. Links with the local community, including welcoming representatives from minority ethnic communities and contact with a school in Poland help to broaden pupils' understanding of the diversity of modern society. The small governing body satisfactorily performs its duty but is very supportive of the school. The overwhelming majority of parents have great confidence in the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

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?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	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**

15 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marsden Primary School, South Tyneside, SR6 7HJ

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. It was a pleasure to talk to you both in the warmth of the classroom and whilst you were sliding in the playground!

Your views and opinions were very well expressed and were very helpful to us. This is what we thought about your school.

You receive a satisfactory education in your school. Your personal development is good. We found you to be polite, friendly and confident young people with a keenly developed sense of humour. Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. You get on well together and it is good to see older pupils looking after the younger children at breaks and lunchtime. You told us how much you enjoyed school and your attendance is certainly good. The school provides a good range of trips and after-school activities which you said you really enjoyed.

The school knows each of you very well and takes good care of you. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the majority of you make satisfactory progress. By the time you come to leave, the standards you reach in your subjects are average against pupils in other schools. However, we think those of you who have high ability could do better and reach higher standards, especially in English.

To help you do this we have asked the school to ensure that in your lessons you are stretched more and do much harder work so that the tasks you are set are never too easy. We have also asked the school to look more carefully at how well the school is doing so that it can make it even better. We know you will do your part and work as hard as you can, as indeed you already do.

Thank you once again for being so helpful and good luck for the future.

Very best wishes

Joe Clark

Lead inspector