

# Marsh Lane Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	112544
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325628
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Woodruff
Headteacher	Mr William J Smith
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 June 2006
School address	School Lane Marsh Lane Sheffield South Yorkshire S21 5RS
Telephone number	01246 432701
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Email address	headteacher@marshlane.derbyshire.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons, held meetings with governors, staff and pupils, and talked to several parents. He observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, key policies, arrangements for safeguarding pupils and 52 parental questionnaires.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- what the school is doing to raise standards by improving provision in science, for the boys in Key Stage 1 and for the most able,
- the effectiveness of intervention groups in raising standards and how the school tracks these pupils' progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and how good the provision is
- the impact of changes to leadership, including the new headteacher, and how well the school promotes community cohesion.

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. It serves the village of Marsh Lane and the surrounding rural communities. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall but high in some year groups. The main identified needs are moderate, severe and specific learning difficulties. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided for in a Reception class. The school has the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards and a local authority award for anti-bullying work. The headteacher took up the post last September.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

### Main findings

This good school has improved since the last inspection. Most aspects of its work are now good with some that are outstanding. The appointment of a new headteacher has not had a slowing effect on the progress being made and has resulted in further good work being undertaken to recognise and address priorities for improvement. Because of this the school's self-evaluation is accurate and honest, and actions taken to address previous weaknesses in writing and in the Early Years Foundation Stage show that there is a good capacity to improve still further.

Children's progress in the Reception class is satisfactory. The provision is improving and new strategies for planning and tracking children's progress are beginning to have a positive impact. However, there is no suitable outdoor provision for children's learning and the Reception staff have recognised that not enough is done to gather parents' views on how well their children are doing. The progress made by pupils throughout the rest of the school is good and they consistently reach standards that are above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. In science, standards are closer to average and the school has recognised the need to improve the proportion of pupils who reach the higher than expected Level 5 in National Curriculum tests. The differences in the attainment of boys, summer born pupils and the more able, evident in 2008, were issues specific to that year group. The school's tracking of pupils' achievement and the evidence of the inspection show that there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups. Part of the reason for the good achievement is the improved and good teaching and pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes towards learning.

Pupils with learning difficulties are well provided for and they make equally good progress as their peers. This is because the school is quick to identify underachievement and to provide support where it is needed. For example, following the assessments made at the end of Year 2 in 2008, the school recognised the need to provide extra support for some of those pupils who are now in Year 3. A variety of well-planned and targeted group work is helping them make good progress and to begin to catch up with their peers.

The headteacher is providing clear and effective leadership that is focused on raising standards as well as ensuring pupils' well-being. Subject leadership and the monitoring of the school's work by the governing body have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Governors have a good understanding of the school's

areas for improvement. Safeguarding requirements are met well. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they clearly enjoy being there. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The school has not carried out a full evaluation of its work to promote community cohesion but is aware that more needs to be done to teach pupils about how others live nationally and globally.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in science throughout the school and ensure that at least 50% of the pupils achieve Level 5 by the end of Year 6 in 2010.
- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by developing the outdoor learning provision and improve the communication with parents to support the assessment of what the children can do.
- Develop the school's contribution to community cohesion by extending pupils' understanding and establishing links with other schools nationally and globally by July 2010.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Progress is good in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils make good progress from a range of different starting points. For example, although standards at the end of the current Year 6 are likely to be slightly lower than last year, the progress they have made has been equally as good as in other years and above that expected. In most of the lessons observed, and from the scrutiny of their work, it is clear that pupils are currently making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress in science is more inconsistent because of the differing knowledge and skills of teachers. The school is working to address this, so that more pupils are able to reach higher standards and have more opportunities to carry out investigative and problem solving activities. There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups.

Reading standards are consistently high and writing has improved due to the work the school has done to provide more opportunities, especially for boys, to write for different purposes and in a variety of styles. Pupils have good opportunities to use computers in different subjects and this is enhancing their information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Pupils often make good progress because of their excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning. They enjoy doing well. They work together exceptionally well and this is helping prepare them effectively for their future learning and life after school. Their enthusiasm is also shown in the above average attendance and in the number who take part in after-school and other activities, especially in a range of sports and gardening. Their knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy is excellent and they make a good contribution to the school and local community through a range of responsibilities and fund-raising activities. They have a basic knowledge of some other faiths and cultures but this is an area the school recognises it needs to develop further.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Although some changes to staffing have slowed progress in places, the overall picture is of good teaching resulting in pupils' good progress. Lessons are well planned and resources carefully chosen to support pupils' learning. Teachers are making effective use of interactive whiteboards to illustrate and explain ideas. For example, in a good Year 1 and 2 lesson, the teacher used the board to illustrate the parts of a flower. Assessment of pupils' learning is good and is especially well used to provide intervention groups for those at risk of slipping behind. Good work by teaching assistants both in classes and with small groups is helping them learn and catch up with their peers. Teachers often make good use of teaching assistants' expertise in areas such as ICT.

The curriculum is enhanced especially well where appropriate links are made between subjects, although this work is at an early stage of development. In one good example, Year 5 and 6 pupils used their work on a poem about a highwayman to inspire their research on the internet into how real highwaymen lived. In Years 3 and 4 pupils wrote a super class poem in a religious education lesson, demonstrating good literacy skills. The school has developed strong partnerships with a range of external organisations and other schools to enhance pupils' learning, especially those with learning difficulties or those who have particular gifts or talents. The use of expert teachers from other schools has helped spread good practice and broadened the horizons of all staff, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in science.

The staff promote pupils' safety and excellent behaviour very effectively. There is very effective support, especially for pupils with learning or physical difficulties.

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Pupils report little or no bullying or poor behaviour and they feel safe and have adults they can trust to talk to if they are worried about something.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

## How effective are leadership and management?

Although there has been a new headteacher since the last inspection, improvements continue to ensure good provision for pupils' learning. The small number of staff means that they have a heavy load of responsibilities for different subjects and other aspects of the school's work. However, the inspection highlighted a strong dedication of leaders to improvement, a lack of complacency, good communication and a willingness to look beyond the school for advice and support when appropriate. These strong partnerships with others have ensured teachers' skills have improved, as has the curriculum, especially in writing. The subject leaders monitor the work in other classes through observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. This is also helped by the governors, some of whom join subject leaders in their monitoring work and thus gain a good understanding of how well the school is performing. Safeguarding procedures are good.

Since taking up the post the headteacher has formed an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. His assessment of these is driving the school improvements. He has shared his vision with staff and governors and all are working together to raise standards further. Careful planning and accurate tracking ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils, and particularly good inclusion for those with learning or physical difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has not audited its work on promoting community cohesion in detail and more remains to be done to give the pupils experience of how others live, nationally and globally.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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## Early Years Foundation Stage

The small size of the different year groups means attainment on entry to Reception varies from year to year. Some groups have attainment below that expected, but most groups have a broadly typical range of abilities. They make satisfactory progress in their learning during the year, due to the suitable development of basic skills. Most reach the expected standards in all areas of learning. Reception staff are aware what needs to improve to match the good progress found elsewhere. Through strong leadership, weaknesses have been identified accurately and a number of measures have been put in place to address them, although it is too soon to judge their full impact. The planning of activities and the tracking of children's progress has improved. Activities are often linked appropriately to make learning more meaningful to the children. For example, children were learning to recognise and name coins, and they were able to use this knowledge when they played at purchasing seeds and pots from the garden centre. Children are excellently behaved and develop good attitudes towards school and learning, which help them make good progress as they get older. The learning environment is satisfactory but there is no access to a suitable outdoor area and the school is investigating ways to improve this. In addition, the staff want to involve parents more closely in helping recognise and assess how their children progress so that more information about the children is shared between home and school.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

A large majority of the parents are fully satisfied with the way the school teaches and looks after their children. They say the school keeps their children safe and helps them learn to stay healthy, as well as making good academic progress. One parent who is moving house summed up their views by saying, 'We will be very sorry saying goodbye to Marsh Lane and all the staff....We will miss everyone greatly.' The inspection findings support these positive views. A small number of parents feel that homework arrangements could be improved but the pupils are happy with the amount they get and this appears appropriate given their ages.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marsh Lane Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.



The inspector received 52 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 88 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	12	1	0

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marsh Lane Primary School, Marsh Lane, S21 5RS

I am writing to thank you for your help when I visited your school recently. I also want to tell you about what I found out. Thank you especially to those of you who met with me at lunchtime and who told me a lot about the school.

I agree with you and your parents. Marsh Lane is a good and improving school. One of the reasons it is good is because you behave so well and you have excellent attitudes towards learning. The teachers work hard to help you learn and I like the fact that they are always looking to do even better and to try new ideas. You reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Well done for working hard to improve your writing so much recently. I especially liked Class 3's poem 'I've got a secret to share'. The school is well led by Mr Smith and he and the other adults look after you well. You are safe in school and learn how to look after yourselves, and especially about how to keep yourselves healthy.

To help the school get even better in the future I have suggested three things that will help.

- You need more opportunities to investigate and solve problems in science.
- The Reception class needs a good outdoor area for learning and play, and needs to listen to your parents' views about what you are able to do.
- The school needs to do more to help you learn about how others live in this country and across the world.

Well done again for your outstandingly good behaviour. Enjoy your time at Marsh Lane and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms  
Lead inspector

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