

Market Harborough Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120144
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327210
Inspection dates	2–3 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Williams
Headteacher	Sue Bovill
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 June 2006
School address	Fairfield Road Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 9QH
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, governors' minutes, assessment information and pupils' work. In addition, 89 parent questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- how well teaching meets the needs of learners of different abilities in lessons
- the way in which the school promotes good attendance for all groups of pupils
- the extent to which pupils receive good feedback on their work so that they know how to improve
- how well all the school's leaders are checking on the school's work so that they can plan for improvement.

Information about the school

This is a large primary school with two Reception classes which form the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. Few pupils have English as an additional language and very few are at an early stage of learning English. Nearly 9% of pupils come from the Traveller community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There is a range of needs, but most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The amount of movement of pupils in and out of school other than at the usual times is greater than in most schools. The headteacher took up her post in April 2009.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Standards and provision have improved since the last inspection, but over the last year, because of changes to senior leadership, the rate of improvement has slowed. The new headteacher with governors and other senior staff is committed to move the school forward more rapidly, building on a number of strengths. The key ones are:

- the good start which children receive in the Reception class
- the positive relationships formed between staff and pupils
- the good behaviour of pupils promoted by a shared set of values based on care and consideration throughout the school
- a welcoming school where pupils are happy, confident and have positive attitudes towards their learning and each other
- a well-kept, attractive environment inside and out which stimulates curiosity
- a good enrichment and extra-curricular programme which promotes creativity and good aspects of personal development
- good partnerships with other schools and organisations which extend the quality of provision.

There is a clear recognition by the headteacher and senior leaders that there is much work to do in the school to raise standards and accelerate progress from satisfactory to good. They recognise that there has been less emphasis on implementing plans and evaluating the school's work over this academic year whilst a new headteacher was appointed. Because of satisfactory processes for self-evaluation, school leaders have a clear view of what needs to be done to bring about further improvement, and plans are now in place to achieve this. The school has improved in some areas since the last inspection, most notably in the standards in Years 1 and 2, and in writing across the school. This indicates that the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement in these areas and those identified by this inspection, which are that:

- the quality of teaching is inconsistent so pupils do not always know what they are expected to learn, and this is not always matched to the different needs of individuals or groups of pupils
- some pupils do not always receive detailed feedback on the next steps they need to take to improve their progress
- the school has not used its attendance information well enough or worked closely enough with parents to introduce strategies for improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the clarity and effectiveness of learning objectives which are shared with pupils so that they know how to be successful. Ensure that there is a sharper match between the work and the different abilities of pupils so that the quality of teaching throughout the school is good or better.
- After assessing pupils' learning, give detailed feedback to pupils on the next steps they need to take so that their rate of progress improves from satisfactory to good.
- Work in partnership with parents to improve awareness of the impact of absence, monitor attendance carefully and take action where appropriate so that the level of attendance is closer to that of similar schools.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children gain a flying start in Reception and make good progress from starting points which are generally lower than expected for children of their age. Progress slows to a satisfactory pace as pupils move through Years 1 to 6 because the quality of teaching is uneven. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards which are broadly average. All groups of pupils make the progress expected and some make good progress, particularly in writing. This is the subject where attainment has improved most across the school since the last inspection. Strategies introduced to promote writing across all subjects and to support the development of better writing skills have been effective. There has been an improvement in standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, but standards have not improved in reading, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.

The quality of learning in lessons is at least satisfactory. Pupils work steadily and when actively involved show high levels of enthusiasm for their work and make accelerated progress. This was the case in a Year 3 mathematics lesson when pupils worked collaboratively in teams, enthusiastically finding the solutions to problems. A few pupils make less progress than they might because their learning is slowed by persistent absence. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are clearly defined. Detailed plans are in place to meet an individual's needs. Progress is satisfactory because planning in lessons does not always take sufficient account of these plans.

Pupils know how to treat each other and most interact positively with children from different backgrounds. Many celebrate the cultural differences within the school. As one pupil said, 'I like learning a different language from him.' Pupils know how to keep safe. A Year 6 pupil commented on how the 'Starwalker' scheme had made school a safer place because fewer cars were coming. Most pupils are clear that issues they raise will be taken seriously by the school and appropriate action will be

taken. Pupils enjoy being active and show this through their participation in activities at break times and in clubs. Pupils understand how to eat healthily and most put it into practice at school. A number of pupils willingly contribute to decision making or show responsibility through the school council, green team or 'Fairtrade' group. Larger numbers are involved in raising money for local and national charities. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to make a contribution to their local community. Pupils develop good social and interpersonal skills and good basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT), for example, which helps to prepare them for the next stages of their lives. However, the low attendance of a small number of pupils is hampering their preparedness. This is improving and action taken by the school is having an impact on this readiness.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	3
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is uneven in Years 1 to 6. Whilst there are examples of good and better teaching, it is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, the pace of learning is vigorous, and that which is to be learnt is clearly shared with groups of pupils of different abilities. Work is well planned to meet the different needs within the class and teaching assistants are well deployed in the classroom to support this. Teachers use their good understanding of the subject to direct questions at individuals which probe and challenge their understanding. Teaching gives pupils the confidence to find out for themselves and to learn from mistakes. Where teaching is only satisfactory, the objectives of the lesson are not always shared well so pupils do not understand what they are meant to be learning. There is less planning for the different ability groups within the class and expectations for some pupils are not matched well enough to their ability level. The planning of support from teaching assistants is not always well thought out. Questioning may not be directed at individuals so teachers do not always know what pupils understand. These factors

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

slow the pace of learning in some lessons because pupils are either always working within their comfort zone or do not understand what is expected of them.

Like teaching, the quality of assessment is variable. Assessment is regular and accurate, but the quality of feedback which pupils receive on their work is inconsistent. In some classes, feedback is very clear on the next steps which a pupil needs to take to improve or meet a sharply focused literacy or numeracy target. In others, feedback is less detailed on the progress a pupil is making.

The good enrichment opportunities planned in the curriculum contribute well to the development of creativity and individuality through art, drama and music. A wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities does much to reinforce pupils' enjoyment and confidence. However, there is no strategic overview of the balance of different aspects of learning within the curriculum from year to year and within a year. As a result, some aspects, such as numeracy and physical education, receive less emphasis than others. There is little provision for the teaching of financial and enterprise skills.

Guidance is effective at different transition stages for pupils. There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which includes effective liaison with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils can play as full a part in school life as possible, including good support at break times. Until recently, the school has not used its information well enough to support effective strategies for improving the pupils' low attendance. Provision for pupils from the Traveller community has improved recently, which has had an impact on attendance and progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Changes of leadership over the last year have affected the clear communication of the school's vision to all members of the community. The school's plans are now in place and shared with all staff. The new information system has improved school leaders' use of data to summarise progress and identify underachievement at regular intervals during the school year. These developments in the use of the school's information systems mean it is now able to monitor the impact of its equal opportunities policies and raise attainment. There is recent evidence of this in the improvement in the attendance of some pupils who had been absent for some time. School governors and leaders are developing their plans for greater community cohesion. They have a sound understanding of where they are making positive links and where there is further work to do. Governors have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Statutory and financial responsibilities are well discharged. The school works hard to safeguard pupils,

including those most at risk. Safeguarding regulations and duties are met and are in line with government requirements and regularly reviewed. School leaders, including governors, are beginning to include the views of parents and pupils in their evaluation of the school's work. Governors and staff have recently sought the views of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on their experiences of assessment. Parents have been given an opportunity to comment on the induction process from Reception to Year 1. The school recognises that including the views of parents more frequently will improve the monitoring and evaluation of its work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children arrive in Reception with skill levels and abilities lower than expected when compared with those typical for children of their age. This is particularly the case in emotional and social development and in communication, language and literacy skills. Well-planned induction and good links with pre-school settings and parents help children to settle well. Good leadership and team work ensures that children's needs are identified quickly, and support is targeted so that children start to make progress straight away. Relationships between adults and children are strong, warm and productive. Teachers' planning ensures that individuals and groups receive a balanced curriculum across all areas of learning. The development of letters and sounds awareness is particularly well matched to individual need. Planning ensures a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Creativity is fostered inside and outdoors and there is a good emphasis on children initiating their own learning. Staff assess well, but currently do not use a systematic timetable for their observations. Children show a good understanding of safety in the way they use scissors and understand why they wear hats in the sun. Although they enjoy healthy snacks, they have limited understanding of the benefits of physical activity. Although children's social skills are underdeveloped on entry, behaviour is good by the summer term. Children enjoy their time in Reception. They make good progress from a variety of starting points. Children enter Year 1 with the standards expected for their age.

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents who responded to the questionnaire are very positive about the quality of the school's provision. Most feel their children are happy and making progress. They recognise that they are safe and well cared for. Parents comment on a 'friendly and happy school' which is 'caring and inclusive and encourages these attitudes in pupils'. Of the very small number of concerns raised in the inspection questionnaires, most focus on the amount of regular feedback which parents receive on their child's progress. In addition to the opportunities once a term, parents spoken to during the inspection at the beginning and the end of the day told inspectors that they felt able to discuss progress with class teachers at these times. School leaders acknowledge that not all parents are able to do this.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Market Harborough Church of England 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 inspection team received 89 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 369 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	60	26	2	1

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.



4 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Market Harborough Church of England Primary School,
Market Harborough, LE16 9QH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us on our recent visit to your school. We would like to share with you what we learned.

- You make satisfactory progress in your work and reach average standards by the time you leave.
- All staff care for you well and encourage you to do your best. As a result, you generally feel safe in school and most of you feel that there is someone to help you if you need it.
- Your behaviour is good. You learn and play together well.
- You have learnt a great deal about how to be healthy and it was good to see you putting it in to practice at break and lunchtimes.
- Your school and its grounds are lively and stimulating places which help you in your learning.
- You told us how you enjoy lessons where you are active and learning with others and we saw many of you doing this. You take full advantage of the opportunities to be creative and develop your ICT skills.

We are asking your headteacher and governors to make sure that the work you are given is matched carefully to your ability and that all your teachers are clear with you about what it is they want you to learn in a lesson. We would like them to give you more feedback on what you need to do next to make more progress in your work and reach your targets. The attendance of some of you is too low and is affecting your progress. We would like the school to work closely with your parents to help it to improve so that you can all achieve well. I hope you will do your best to help them put these plans in place.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook
Lead inspector

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