

New Marston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123048
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327838
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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)	230
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	Mr N Paplomatas
Headteacher	Ms Z d'Archambaud
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Copse Lane Headington Oxford OX3 0AY
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made through the school's Nursery and Reception classes. Almost 60 per cent of the pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds and over half speak English as an additional language. More pupils than usually found are eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties is just above average; most commonly these pupils are identified as having moderate learning, and speech and language difficulties. There is a hearing impaired unit and pupils from the unit are integrated into mainstream classes. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is very high. The school has gained the silver Eco Award and Healthy School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own self-evaluation and most of the parents that it provides a satisfactory, but improving standard of education for its pupils. Although children start with a marked underdevelopment in their mathematical and literacy skills they make good progress and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, the pupils make satisfactory progress despite the very high numbers of them who join or leave at other than the usual times. The headteacher and her team are now beginning to successfully address previous underachievement evident in Key Stage 2, although they recognise there is still work to be done in promptly assessing the needs of new pupils who join after the beginning of the school year. Systems and structures are now in place that have brought about improved standards in Year 2 this year. However, the journey towards raising standards by the end of Year 6 still has some way to go. Standards in Year 6 are below average, but new systems for keeping track of pupils' progress are beginning to show some impact. The picture of current achievement in both Years 4 and 5 shows that standards are set to rise. This is also because teaching has improved, in particular as the headteacher has made a number of successful key appointments. The currently good teaching in the school is having a real impact on achievement. In addition, new topic-based approaches to delivering a more creative curriculum add to the pupils' enjoyment. For example, in Year 5, the 'design your own country' topic has involved pupils in building cultural profiles, designing flags and composing national anthems.

The school works hard to provide for pupils' safety and emotional well-being. In a very effective assembly led by the headteacher, they were encouraged to discuss in groups how they could best cope with a number of common worries that they might have. Then, using a radio microphone, pupils were able to tell the whole school how they could allay fears and calm anxiety. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well, are kind and considerate and very much enjoy being at school. They are given ample opportunity to develop skills that contribute to the community and they are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils are very well cared for and the school works efficiently with other agencies to promote the well-being of vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and her team are clearly aware of what needs to be done in the school and how they are going to do it. There have been some significant new additions to senior and middle management and work is being done to bring about effective teamworking. Governors provide satisfactory support for the school but currently they do not hold the school to account as well as they should. This is because their training needs have not been adequately addressed. The school continues to find ways to involve parents more effectively in reviewing their child's progress, including establishing a class for adults learning English and a workshop for parents which helps them support their children's learning. However, parental involvement in their child's education is not as good as it could be. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and key issues are in the process of being tackled effectively. For example, lower down the school, effective teaching of letters and sounds is having a positive impact on pupils' reading and writing. In light of this, improvements in results in Year 2 and good teaching, there is satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with generally low levels of skills, especially in communication, language and literacy, calculating and personal development. However, they get off to a cracking start in the Nursery, and good teaching contributes well to children making good progress. Many reach standards that are in line with those attained nationally by the end of the Reception Year. The atmosphere in lessons is very calm, but purposeful and busy. Children enjoy a stimulating range of well-organised learning activities, which help them to develop independence. Recent improvements provide an excellent learning environment and accommodation in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The free flow of movement between the Nursery and Reception areas ensures continuity and helps new children to settle quickly. They work and play extremely well together, are well behaved, and follow instructions well. All staff show high levels of care for the children who feel very safe and secure. Assessment procedures are good, and staff use their observation records to identify the next steps children need to make in their learning. The determined leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures that priorities are clearly identified.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science, in particular by identifying the needs of new pupils quickly and accurately.
- Strengthen governance through the provision of more intensive training to enable governors to act as critical friends more effectively.
- Improve links with parents to engage them more effectively in their child's education.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Many pupils start from a very low baseline of knowledge and skills, and there is much ground to be made up. Provisional results for 2009, although still below average, show that achievement in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but improving. The school's own tracking data show that this trend is set to continue and indeed accelerate over the coming academic year. Currently, teacher assessments show that pupils in Year 1 are reaching standards close to those expected for their age and many have made good progress. However, despite the school's efforts, standards in Year 6 have been well below average since the time of the last inspection. This is because of previous poor performance and underachievement lower down the school, combined with a history of less effective teaching. The work and test results of pupils currently in Year 5 show that, while still below expected levels, standards are beginning to improve. The school is beginning to put more effective strategies in place to combat underachievement and to boost performance of particular groups of pupils. However, there is more work to be done to ensure that pupils joining the school at other than the usual times hit the ground running.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to relate to each other and adults. Consequently, behaviour is good because pupils value each other. They enjoy school and their attendance is satisfactory. Many pupils respond well to a range of responsibilities. Members of the school council, the school improvers, the prefects and the eco council all contribute. Pupils' views and actions make a difference. They help to support younger ones in the playground, help to decide what equipment is needed and even what topics they would like to make the centre of their learning.

Pupils know the importance of healthy living and can say what foods are good for them. They even take a role in encouraging others to have healthy packed lunches. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if there is ever a problem. They say that adults are always approachable and help them deal promptly with any concerns. 'The teachers are outstanding', said one boy, 'they are friendly and all of us are made to feel welcome'. Although pupils' basic skills are below average, their good social skills ensure that they are prepared satisfactorily for future learning and success. Pupils are often encouraged in lessons to work collaboratively in groups or pairs. As a result, they are good at cooperating and getting on with each other.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was never less than good and some was outstanding. This is the result of a significant number of highly successful appointments to the teaching team. The good quality teaching has not yet had sufficient time to make an impact on the standards achieved by pupils in national tests. However, in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils were observed working securely at levels above those expected for their age. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly to ensure that pupils are given work to develop their skills. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to enhance lessons and they are confident in their use of the electronic whiteboards, which enlivens learning. They manage their classes well and excellent relationships mean that pupils can learn in a relaxed, but purposeful atmosphere. For example, in a good literacy lesson, the teacher used humour to good effect when role playing an incompetent travel agent. This added to the pupils' enjoyment of writing. Sometimes, the focus is on what the teacher will do rather than what the children should be learning and leaders are working to improve this. Good support is given by teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and designed to meet the needs of most pupils. The use of ICT is improving and becoming better integrated into other areas of study. Good use was seen in literacy lessons where very young learners were writing a report on the computer of a tag rugby match they had enjoyed earlier. Three pupils at the early stage of learning English were putting together sentences on a screen and hearing the result read back to them by the computer. French is taught to pupils from Year 3 onward. Those pupils who have special gifts or talents are given extra work in lessons but they are not given individual challenges in class or through

homework. The school is developing its curriculum to improve pupils' learning by adding extra relevance and enjoyment. For example, the school is trialling topic work and this is proving very popular with pupils, indeed they have played their part in this development. As a result, they are enthusiastic learners. For example, the Year 4 class chose, and are currently working on, the topic of 'oceans'. There are plans for this style of learning to be further rolled out next year. There is more work to be done to ensure that the impact of the curriculum results in raising standards for all learners. The wide range of clubs and activities, such as gardening and games, is enjoyed and adds significantly to pupils' development and appreciation of school. Sports, artistic events, trips out and the clubs are all well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. There is good attention to health and safety, and risk assessments are in place. Effective links with outside agencies are firmly established. These ensure that the school is able to call readily on specialist help for vulnerable pupils when needed. Support for pupils for whom English is a new language and for those who have emotional or learning difficulties is improving and these learners now make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 6 say that they have been given every help and support for their move to secondary schools. The school is working hard to encourage better attendance, which is improving because the school works closely with outside agencies to monitor attendance and follow up concerns. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development is good. Pupils know what is expected of them. There are individual targets, which are regularly reviewed, and some useful marking to help pupils understand how they may make progress. The school recognises the need for more consistency between subjects and year groups in relation to marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Through self-evaluation, a comprehensive school development plan for raising standards has emerged to which all staff are committed. The school has an accurate understanding of what it does well and what it needs to improve. The governing body supports the school satisfactorily. However, governors' lack of knowledge about how well the school performs hampers their ability to challenge and be effective critical friends. They are willing and enthusiastic but their training needs have not been identified adequately. At senior level, the monitoring of teaching focuses well on what is happening in classrooms and on what pupils are learning. This is why the quality of teaching has improved in recent times. Subject leaders also play a part in monitoring their areas and they ensure that planning is of good quality and that marking improves. The school's strategies for promoting local community cohesion are satisfactory and improving. There is less impact at national and international levels. The headteacher and her team have worked hard to improve links between themselves and parents. However, this has not been as successful as hoped. Learners' parents and carers are informed regularly of their progress and any problems but they do not all play as full a part in their children's school life as they might.

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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?	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?	3
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	3
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?	2
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?	3
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**

20 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Marston Primary School, Oxford, OX3 0AY

Thank you for welcoming me and my colleague into your school recently. You were well behaved, polite and courteous. You represented your school well. We were pleased that you know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe. You told us about the interesting clubs you can attend and the trips and visits you are able to participate in. We were pleased to hear about how the school council and the eco warriors make a difference to school life. It was also good to hear about how older pupils help younger ones in the playground. This is very commendable, well done!

Along with most of your parents, we agree that your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. Those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage are doing particularly well. You really have a lovely area to play and learn in, both inside and outside. Your teachers teach you well because they prepare interesting lessons for you. Your headteacher has brought in new teachers to help the school to improve. This is beginning to have an effect.

So that your school can improve more quickly, we have asked your headteacher to ensure that a number of things happen. First of all, we have asked her to ensure that more of you do better in national tests in English, mathematics and science in Year 6, in particular those of you who join after the beginning of the school year. You can help with this by working hard and always doing your best. Secondly, we have asked that your headteacher makes sure that the governors, a group of people who help run the school, are given help and training so that they can carry out all their duties well. Finally, we have asked that the school continues to find effective ways to involve your parents with the school. You can help here too by asking your parents/carers to come to school to talk to your teachers and take part in school events whenever they can.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your education at New Marston School.

Yours faithfully

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector