

# Marsh School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110234
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	337455
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nina Bee

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Knight
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rebecca Morrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Abbey Barn Road High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP11 1RW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Just under five hours were spent looking at learning; ten lessons were observed and seven teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, governors, groups of children, the inclusion manager and the coordinator for special educational needs. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, evidence from internal and external monitoring, academic performance data, teachers' planning and safeguarding documentation. Forty-two parental questionnaires were analysed along with six from staff.

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

- whether children in Years 1 and 2 make better progress in mathematics and science than they do in reading and writing and if progress is good overall
- how effectively children are supported and guided to enable them to move on to the next steps of learning
- whether the Early Years Foundation Stage has developed effective strategies for improving children's speaking and listening skills.

## Information about the school

Marsh is an Infant and Nursery school. Just under half of the children come from White British families, with approximately one fifth of children coming from Pakistani backgrounds. The rest of the children come from a wide range of backgrounds. An above average number of children are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties, social and emotional difficulties and physical difficulties is above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Nursery and two Reception classes.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

### Main findings

This school provides a good education for its children. It is particularly good at caring for them. Children thrive and do well, especially in their personal development. Those with specific needs are extremely well catered for. For example, the nurture group provides excellent support for those children who need extra help to build their confidence and self-esteem. Children get on very well with each other and their behaviour is outstanding. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although cultural development is not as strong as the other areas. This is because children's awareness of the many different cultures and beliefs represented in today's society is not well developed. They show a good awareness of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Most children bring healthy lunchboxes to school each day and know that too much sugar and too many fizzy drinks are not as good for you as a nice juicy apple and a drink of milk. They appreciate the wide range of sporting activities that are offered during the year. Children's contribution to the community is satisfactory. From an early age, they are given responsibilities and begin to learn that they too can have their say through the voice of the school council. For example, members of the school council have been actively involved in the appointment of new staff. Funds are raised for local and world charities, but many children are unsure about why they collect funds or what they are used for.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a rapid start to their education. By the end of Year 2, attainment is average. In relation to their starting points this represents good achievement. This is largely because of good teaching. Teachers develop very good relationships with the children and consequently, children become keen and eager learners. Activities that are planned are usually interesting and capture the children's interests. On occasions, planning does not accurately match the needs and abilities in their classes and learning is not so fast. Teaching is good overall. By the time children leave at the end of Year 2, they develop good personal skills and most children reach academic levels that are average. A few do not do as well as they should because they do not attend often enough. Attendance is satisfactory. The school works hard at improving attendance. The school has successfully increased the number of children who are now attending regularly having been poor attenders in the past.

The school's success is due to the very good leadership of the headteacher. Since the previous inspection, she has very effectively managed a number of complex staffing issues, making sure there was minimal impact on children's learning. She, along with her senior staff and governors, has developed a shared vision where everyone plays an important part in a happy team that is committed to moving this school forward. Staff

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morale, as a result, is high. Accurate self-evaluation has led to good improvement since the previous inspection. There have been improvements in the quality of learning, progress and behaviour. These successes indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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

- Ensure that children always receive good quality teaching by checking that higher-attaining children are always sufficiently challenged and lower-attaining children are given activities that are not too difficult for them.
- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural and religious diversity in the United Kingdom.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Children's enjoyment of school is evident in their positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, children were seen to have very good relationships with their teachers and the other adults who help them. As a result, all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. Children in Year 2 were seen confidently writing the end of a fairy story. Learning was good because the lesson was imaginatively resourced and children of all abilities were given excellent guidance to spell words correctly and use interesting vocabulary. In Year 1, good learning was seen in a literacy lesson where questioning expertly engaged all children and worksheets were accurately matched to children's different abilities. When learning is not so rapid, assessment information is not used sufficiently well to match accurately the activities to the needs of all children. By the end of Year 2, children's attainment is broadly average.

Children say they feel safe in school. They have great confidence in their teachers and the 'big gates' that keep them safe. Children show a good awareness of the need to keep themselves safe. For example, they know about road safety, how to use scissors safely and understand why it is important to walk and not run while in school. Children also say that the playground is a safe and happy place to play.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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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.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Lessons are well organised and resourced and generally engage children well because teachers provide clear explanations of what children are going to learn. In the very best lessons, all abilities are challenged, questioning is good and pupils' thinking is consolidated and extended. Consequently, lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Occasionally, some children find activities too easy and others too difficult. This happens because the activities that teachers plan are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of different abilities within their classes. Where children are given the best academic guidance, marking is both supportive and informative and they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. In addition, literacy targets are used well to develop learning further. However, the school acknowledges this is not consistent across all classes. At times, pupils are given too little guidance on how to improve their work, particularly letter and number formation and basic sentence construction.

Curriculum provision has improved since the previous inspection. In particular, a wide range of out-of-school activities and clubs has been organised to support, reinforce and develop children's learning. For example, the gardening club is encouraging children to eat healthy as they grow their own vegetables. The knitting club is run by enthusiastic volunteers. Not only are children taught to knit squares to make blankets for people who are not as fortunate as they are, but it also promotes their awareness of the wider world. Provision for information and communication technology has improved and a scheme of work has been implemented. As a result, children use computers confidently but, at times, higher-attaining children are not sufficiently challenged.

The level of care, guidance and support provided for children is exemplary. Good

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partnerships with external agencies enable children with specific difficulties to be very effectively supported. Personal and social skills are very well focused on. As a result, the school turns out confident and polite individuals. Vulnerable children are given excellent support to enable them to overcome barriers which affect their learning. For example, expertly organised sessions for those pupils who find it difficult to attend school enable them to develop their confidence and enjoyment of learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher knows the school very well. She has high aspirations and provides clear direction for development, particularly in relation to embedding ambition and driving improvement. In addition, she has a good understanding of the quality of teaching throughout the school and has worked hard to improve it. Recent assessment information is now more reliable and gives an accurate picture of the progress children make. The two senior leaders support the headteacher well and are driving improvements in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. However, they are in the early stages of using data to see how well children are performing in relation to the national picture and in each subject. Nevertheless, although children have, in the past, done better in mathematics and science, recent tracking information shows that targets for reading and writing are higher and achievement is good.

The school makes an effective contribution to community cohesion. Recent links with another local school have enabled children to work and play with children who come from backgrounds different to their own. Links on a national and international level are not as strong. Effective links with the feeder junior school make sure that children transfer with ease at the end of Year 2. Many visitors are invited into school through the good partnerships that have been established with people in the local community. These greatly enhance many curriculum areas and make learning fun. Governors ensure that the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures meet requirements and that all children are treated equally and any discrimination is quickly tackled. They take their roles and responsibilities seriously and are well informed about the work of the school. As a result, they effectively support and challenge when necessary. The school has developed good relationships with parents. Almost all are overwhelmingly supportive of all that the school does. A few took the time to write positive and appreciative

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comments about how happy their children are in school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and achieve well. This good achievement is built on in Reception. The current Reception children started with levels well below those expected for their ages. Although most children are working towards the expected levels by the time they move into Year 1, this represents good progress and achievement in relation to their starting points. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make and how quickly they settle into school life. Teaching is good. Children are supported sensitively and so all of them, including those who have learning difficulties or other specific problems learn well. Bilingual teaching assistants enable those children who speak English as an additional language to have full access to the activities and learn well. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted in all that the children do. Children were seen to have good opportunities to speak out during interventions with adults and during plenary sessions at the end of lessons. They listen well in class groups, smaller groups and in one-to-one situations. There is a good mix of adult-focused activities and those that children are allowed to choose themselves. Learning in Nursery was good as children confidently printed with sponges as they learnt the colour red and that the shapes they were making were circles. Others were happy to speak about what they were doing. One child said, 'I am making sugar biscuits' while another said, 'I'm putting water on the plant, growing it.' In Reception, children excitedly dig for 'dinosaur bones' and then examine what they find. They put on rubber gloves and carefully brush the earth off the bones they have found. In all classes, the



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development of personal and social skills is well promoted in all activities. As a result, all children get along very well with each other and develop very good relationships with the adults who help them learn. Behaviour is always good and often outstanding. Adults know each child very well and have good procedures to assess and record the progress the children are making. Individual needs and interests are well catered for. The way the children are looked after is excellent. Leadership and management are good. Sessions run smoothly because they are well resourced and organised both inside and in the secure outside area. All adults have a good understanding of how these young children learn.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. All of them who returned questionnaires or spoke to an inspector felt confident in saying that the school kept their children safe and helps them to develop a healthy lifestyle. In addition, all agreed with the statement that their children enjoy school.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marsh School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 158 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	79	9	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	76	10	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	64	13	31	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	64	12	29	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	67	11	26	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	60	15	36	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	62	15	36	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	57	15	36	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	55	18	43	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	55	15	36	1	2	0	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	52	17	40	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	59	15	35	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	71	11	26	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



26 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Marsh School, High Wycombe HP11 1RW

Thank you for making our recent visit so enjoyable. We had an interesting time talking to your teachers and the other people who come and help you learn. We especially enjoyed talking to you and think you are polite to adults and kind towards each other. Yours is a good school, where staff and governors are working hard to make it even better. This means that there are lots of things that it does really well, but also that there are some things that could be even better.

These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You are polite and behave exceptionally well.
- You are taught well and make good progress.
- Teachers and other adults organise a very good range of activities and out-of-school clubs to make learning interesting and fun. We were impressed by the lovely warm blankets you are making for those who are less fortunate than us.
- You are looked after and cared for extremely well and your parents and carers agree.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. It was good to see so many healthy lunchboxes.
- Your school is well led and managed.

We have asked the school to do two things to improve the education you receive.

- Ensure that the activities that are planned for you are not too easy or hard so that you all enjoy learning and make rapid progress.
- Provide more opportunities for you to develop a better understanding of the different backgrounds and beliefs of people who live in our country.

You too can help by always working hard.

Keep smiling as you learn and play in your lovely school.

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee

Lead inspector

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