

# Marlfields Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111040
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	337614
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Padgett HMI

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Margaret Gartside
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sandra Isherwood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	Waggs Road Congleton Cheshire CW12 4BT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors, one of whom was solely deployed to inspect the school's safeguarding arrangements. In all, inspectors spent a third of their time observing pupils learning. They observed nine teachers during ten lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents, and representatives of the local authority and external services. Inspectors examined school policies and performance data, and analysed 87 returns from the Ofsted parental questionnaire circulated prior to the inspection.

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

- how well the school meets the needs of the pupils with special educational needs, particularly those allocated to the Resource Base
- how well the school has developed its partnerships with parents and others to improve outcomes for pupils.

## Information about the school

Marfields Primary School is an average-size primary school with a nursery situated within the town of Congleton. It serves a community from a broad social and economic spectrum, mainly from the centre and north of the town. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is above average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has a Resource Base to provide for pupils in the wider area with complex learning difficulties. Each of these pupils has a statement of special educational need or its equivalent. Currently, there are 17 such pupils attending the school. Pupils in the Resource Base generally join and may leave the school during Key Stage 2.

The school has been presented with many awards and accreditations for pupils' achievements, including national awards for art, sport, environmental work and enterprise education.

A private provider of before- and after-school childcare, 'Cherubs and Imps', operates from the school site. This provision was inspected at the same time as the school. It has a separate report that can be viewed on the Ofsted website.

**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

This is a good school. It does some things outstandingly well. The care for pupils is of the highest quality and the work provided for them is often imaginative and exciting. As a result, pupils enjoy school, feel safe and are well motivated to learn. Several parents explained that they chose the school for how welcoming and inclusive it feels and for the harmonious relations that exist between pupils and with staff. They are right in their perceptions, as these are strengths of the school.

Pupils make good progress and achieve good outcomes, including those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Overall, many pupils start school with below average levels of knowledge and understanding and in most years they leave school with levels of attainment that meet national expectations. Their personal development is very good. They leave as mature, well informed young citizens with a strong sense of responsibility and care for others. Their behaviour is good.

Pupils with complex learning difficulties are well provided for in the Resource Base. They make good progress in very small steps and a proportion join mainstream pupils of their own age during afternoon sessions. They enjoy school and make many friends.

Teaching is largely of good quality. However, the school's evaluations and tracking of pupils' progress suggest that some pupils are not yet reaching their potential. As a consequence, improving the quality of teaching and learning further to ensure that they do is one of the school's key priorities. Unfortunately, recent disruption to staffing has delayed progress somewhat. Teaching has considerable strengths, but the use of assessment by teachers to help pupils learn even more effectively is an area for further development.

The school benefits from good leadership and management. This is a positive and forward-looking school that is fully involved in modern educational initiatives aimed at helping pupils prepare for life in the twenty-first century. It is committed to working in partnership with parents, the community and with external agencies. It does all these things well. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have an accurate view of the school, its strengths and where it needs to improve. They have the necessary vision and the management skills to enable them to build on past success and achieve all they plan, including making good progress in meeting the issues from the last inspection. The capacity of the school to sustain improvement is therefore good.

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

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning by improving the assessment of

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pupils' work in order to help them understand their next steps in learning.

- Raise pupils' attainment by improving the proportion of teaching that is good or better, so that pupils' learning builds consistently through the year and from year-to-year.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

One of the key points for improvement in the last inspection, in 2007, was to raise standards by the end of Key Stage 1, which were well below average at that time. Over the three years, the school has achieved this and pupils' attainment is now at expected levels. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve above average standards.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been at average levels for several years. Raising attainment remains a key priority for the school. However, an average performance represents good progress for the pupils, as the overall average is required to include all pupils, even those who, because of their complex learning difficulties, do not sit the national tests. This makes simple comparisons with other primary schools inappropriate. For example, in 2009, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 appeared to fall significantly. However, this was an exceptional year, with a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need than is usual, even for a school of this designation. In practice, the great majority of those pupils, including those with statements and other children with identified special needs, made good progress in relation to their starting points. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the current Years 5 and 6 classes are also very high. Those pupils, whether taught in the mainstream classes or in the Resource Base, are also making good progress.

Outcomes for pupils' personal development and well-being are very good. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In respect of their contribution to the school and wider community, and in their preparation for future citizenship, outcomes are exceptional. For example, pupils' understanding of business and enterprise learned through the ventures they undertake, coupled with their growing sense of care and responsibility for others less fortunate than themselves, promote good citizenship very strongly. Other outcomes are also very positive. The vast majority of pupils feel safe within school. They behave well and have a keen understanding of how to live a healthy life. Only in respect of their attendance at school are outcomes less positive: attendance is average and a very small number of pupils have high levels of absence.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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>2</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</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?**

Teaching overall is of good quality. Teachers match work well to the widely different ability levels of pupils and employ a variety of teaching strategies to suit the varied learning styles of different pupils. Teaching assistants and learning support assistants working with individual pupils make a very substantial positive impact on teaching and learning. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with pupils, which makes a strong contribution to the positive ethos of the school that is appreciated so much by parents. Pupils' work is carefully monitored by teachers and all pupils have written targets to meet. However, the use of routine assessments of pupils' work is not, as yet, sufficiently helping pupils to understand their next steps in learning.

The curriculum is well grounded in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In several areas of the curriculum, the school provides outstandingly well, giving pupils rich and memorable learning experiences. It has a well-established and fully deserved reputation for excellence in art and of involving artists, and it is at the leading edge of developments in promoting environmental awareness and enterprise education. It is developing music and singing strongly and involving other schools and the wider community in doing so.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are some of the most exceptional features of the school and they impact strongly on pupils' happiness and well-being, and on the high levels of satisfaction of parents with the school. The excellent care for pupils is possibly seen most clearly with the most vulnerable; for example, with the youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and with the pupils with complex learning difficulties in the Resource Base. Through its local Educational Improvement Partnership,

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the school is very effective in encouraging outside agencies to come into school to provide targeted and specialist support for pupils. Staff work closely with specialist professionals and implement suggestions made by them. As a result, the impact made by the visits is much greater than that which could otherwise be achieved by the visits alone. The range of after-school clubs is wide and participation levels are high. The school has a satisfactory relationship with the private provider of childcare but has plans to improve the quality of links now the new community building is completed.

*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	3
<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?**

Overall, the school is very well led and managed. It is developing distinctive strengths. It has maintained its strong reputation with parents and pupils as a caring, inclusive school that promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination; one in which pupils with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed and nurtured. The arrangements for safeguarding are robust and effective. The school is at the forefront of several educational initiatives, such as promoting environmental education and developing enterprise skills amongst pupils. Its success has been recognised in high level awards and at a national level. The school promotes community cohesion well. It is particularly resourceful in attracting external children's services to support pupils' progress in learning and/or in their well-being. Building work has recently been concluded in order to further the school's provision for extended services to make it easier for the school to be a focal point for children's and family services within the community. It works well with parents and very effectively with other schools in the local Education Improvement Partnership. The drive and vision for these developments has been provided by outstanding, entrepreneurial leadership from the headteacher. She has strong support from senior staff. Teachers and teaching assistants carry substantial management responsibilities and form a dedicated team.

Recent staffing difficulties have delayed the school's plans to further improve teaching and learning. The local authority is providing a programme of support for literacy and numeracy that is being received constructively and enthusiastically by subject co-ordinators. Governors are supportive of the school and are beginning to provide increasing challenge to school leaders to account for the school's performance. School self-evaluation is largely accurate, pupils' progress is tracked thoroughly and there are clear priorities for development.

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*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>3</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>1</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

The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a part-time Nursery and a Reception. A small number of children currently take up full-time nursery places. Together, Nursery and Reception offer good early education and exceptional care. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively to create a warm, special and welcoming environment where young children have good quality opportunities to learn through play, to learn social skills, and make a good start to reading, early writing and understanding numbers. There are good opportunities to learn through outdoor play in the well-developed outside areas. Staffing has been unavoidably disrupted recently but the school and the temporary teachers have managed the situation very well. Parents continue to have high regard for the quality of what is provided and their confidence is fully justified. Children are made to feel safe and secure and they become increasingly confident and independent in learning through exploration. From starting points that are sometimes below those of most children of their age, children often make good progress and reach the levels of development they need to begin more formal schoolwork in Key Stage 1. Teachers assess the children's levels of development thoroughly. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Further improvement requires staff to make even more of the children's spontaneous interests to provide opportunities for learning.

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*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

Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire, approximately 19 in every 20 were very largely happy with their child's experience of school. Nearly all parents felt pupils were safe in school. Individual concerns were discussed with the school. However, in analysing the questionnaires, no common concerns emerged.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marfields Primary 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 226 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	0	36	0	2	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	0	42	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	0	53	0	5	0	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	0	49	0	4	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	0	51	0	3	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	0	53	0	2	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	0	52	0	3	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)	30	0	44	0	2	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	0	48	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	0	49	0	6	0	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	0	51	0	6	0	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	0	48	0	6	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	0	41	0	3	0	1	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.**



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marfields Primary School, Congleton, CW12 4BT

You may remember that I visited your school recently with Mr Wainwright and Mrs Cooper to carry out an inspection, to find out how well you are getting on at school. This letter is to tell you what we found. First, I want to thank you for being very welcoming and helpful to the inspection team. The information you gave us was important in helping us come to our conclusions.

We judged your school to be a good school. You are learning well and enjoying school life. Most of you make good progress in lessons, such as in those in English and mathematics. You are making very good progress in developing the understanding and skills you will need for later life, such as knowing how to stay safe and be healthy, and how to make a positive difference to the community you live in. Quite a number of you have real difficulty learning and have come from other schools to be taught at Marfields. We were very keen to see how you were getting on. We are pleased to see you are also making good progress. The school seems to us to be a settled and happy community. You get on very well with your teachers and have a wide range of exciting opportunities for learning, inside and outside of the classroom.

We asked your parents what they felt about the school and what it does for you. Nearly all of them are very pleased they made the decision to send you to Marfields. We understand their reasons. The school is welcoming, bright and lively. The teachers' care for your well-being is of the highest quality, and Mrs Isherwood makes sure that if you need additional help for any reason, you get it.

Inspectors are asked to recommend ways in which schools can get better. Along with your headteacher, we feel that you can reach even higher standards than those you reach now, and that you should know more about what you need to learn next in each subject. You will need to play your part if the school is to reach these two challenges. I am sure you will rise to the challenge!

Yours sincerely,

Brian Padgett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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