

Marton Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111577
Local Authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	337699
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Joy Frost HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Sue Richardson
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Coleman
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, two assemblies and held meetings with governors, staff and two groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's safeguarding documents and policies, the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body and documents relating to monitoring and evaluation. They scrutinised pupils' work in books; assessments; the school's records for tracking pupils; and the 52 questionnaires returned from parents and carers, 121 questionnaires from pupils and 27 questionnaires from staff.

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

the progress and attainment pupils are currently making in lessons with a specific emphasis on:

- boys' achievement
- higher-attaining pupils

how effectively teachers use assessment information to plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils in the class

how well the curriculum organisation enables pupils to:

- write at length in other subjects
 - develop an understanding of other faiths and cultures beyond the local area
- the extent to which leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, embed ambition and drive improvement leading to sustained and improved outcomes for all pupils.

Information about the school

Marton Grove is an average-sized primary school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen significantly since the last inspection. Over half of the pupils, 55.6%, are entitled to free school meals, a percentage well above the national average. The school has a resource base for pupils on the autistic spectrum who are referred from other schools in the town. Two other resource bases closed in July 2009; an assessment class for Key Stage 1 pupils and a 10-place unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. No new admissions will be made to these bases although current pupils will remain in the bases until their natural transition points in Year 2 or Year 6. The local authority continues to fund these pupils. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average at 24.9%. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British heritage but an increasing number have recently joined the school from Eastern European backgrounds and are at the very early stages of learning spoken English. The school's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and Reception class. The school has achieved the Activemark, Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Award and Eco-Schools Award.

The school is housed in a very old, large and rambling building. The local authority is currently exploring proposals to close this school building and to extend the school on another primary school site. As a result, governors are currently considering federating

with this primary school. No decision has been taken yet as to which school will ultimately close.

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 rapidly improving school. Senior leaders set a very clear direction for the staff and pupils which has the welfare and safeguarding of all pupils at the heart of its work. Children, particularly boys, enter the school with very low levels of basic skills, especially in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and social and emotional development. When pupils leave the school they are mature and confident individuals who are keen and enthusiastic learners. This is because of good teaching and the good care, guidance and support they receive. Every pupil in this school is treated as an individual and staff work well together to meet all of their needs. During the inspection, pupils behaved well and formed excellent relationships with their teachers and each other. The school has excellent strategies for behaviour management and this ensures that pupils who have more complex social and behavioural needs are well supported to behave well.

Most pupils made good progress in the majority of lessons observed because they were helped and supported in their learning by good teaching and experienced and knowledgeable teaching assistants. Consequently, pupils' achievement is good from very low starting points. The school is closing the gap between pupils' attainment and national age-related expectations, particularly in mathematics and science. English attainment, however, remains slightly below the national average, especially for boys. This is owing to some relative shortcomings in teaching and assessment in the subject. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently make good progress because of the many personalised learning programmes they have access to, but more-able pupils, although very few in number, make only satisfactory progress in English.

Leaders and managers are rigorous in their monitoring of the school's work through observing teaching, scrutinising books and lesson planning, and interviewing pupils. Leaders always act on their findings and involve the whole school community in their self-evaluation. However, currently opportunities for subject leaders to monitor and observe teaching in the classroom are underdeveloped.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in improving teaching and learning, the curriculum, provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, behaviour and pupils' personal development. This progress, together with rigorous self-evaluation, indicates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. Therefore, the school's capacity to sustain improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in English for all pupils, but particularly for boys, so that by Year 6 standards are at least at the national expectation by:
 - ensuring that the activities set for more-able pupils give more opportunities for challenge and extension in their writing
 - embedding the good systems of marking and target setting seen in some books across all classes
 - decreasing the use of published worksheets in lessons so that pupils have more opportunities to write at length and become independent writers more quickly.
- Strengthen the school's monitoring procedures by:
 - developing the skills of the subject leaders in monitoring teaching and learning through more regular classroom observations.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' overall attainment accelerates as they progress through the school and acquire the necessary basic skills. In the most recent national tests at end of Year 6 attainment was average in mathematics, above average in science, but lagged slightly behind national expectations in English. Pupils made good or better progress in the majority of lessons observed. On the playground and around school pupils are courteous and kind to each other; they have a good moral code and cooperate well. Older pupils help younger pupils at lunchtimes and they have many opportunities to take active exercise in the very large playground area. Extra-curricular clubs are well attended. Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school and that there were clear rewards and sanctions for those pupils who do not comply with the school rules. They said they knew someone would help them if they had a problem and that any bullying was dealt with promptly. Pupils were also knowledgeable about keeping themselves safe in a range of situations, for example when cycling. They had a good understanding and awareness of fire and the dangers of drugs, alcohol abuse and smoking. They make informed choices in the dining hall and the breakfast club about choosing healthy options.

Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is also good. Through assemblies, the good curriculum, links with local churches and other local schools they are able to reflect and discuss what life is like for other children in the local area and around the world.

Despite the school's best efforts, attendance remains only barely average. However, there is a range of strategies in place to engage with parents and carers to help pupils to be punctual and to attend regularly. The parental support worker knows families well and has been instrumental in improving attendance to satisfactory levels.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In observed lessons during the inspection, pupils in all classes and the support bases were keen and eager to learn. They are able to access their learning because in the majority of lessons it is well structured for different ability groups and based on pupils' prior learning. A well-organised and improved curriculum plan makes very good links between all subjects under a 'topic theme'. These are well thought out and enriched with many visits and visitors to extend pupils' knowledge of the local and wider area. The school seizes opportunities for local groups and organisations to work with the pupils in a range of areas, both during and beyond the school day. The school's engaging curriculum has been influenced by pupils' interests and views and to appeal to boys so that they are fully engaged in learning. The curriculum uses local attractions very well to stimulate learning in the classroom. For example, Albert Park and the Dorman Museum are visited regularly to enrich pupils' knowledge and understanding in geography and history. Pupils' questionnaires were very positive about the school and the opportunities they receive to visit local places.

Teaching in mathematics and science is stronger than in English. Pupils' literacy skills are much lower and the school rightly concentrates on developing pupils' phonic and reading skills through a rigorous daily programme across the school. Older pupils were very enthusiastically writing poetry in an English lesson using powerful verbs and adverbs. They had good knowledge of parts of speech and were working together very cooperatively to produce group poems. The lesson was lively with many opportunities for pupils to talk and discuss their learning with each other, swap ideas, and to reflect on and improve their work. Pupils made good progress throughout the lesson. In a few

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English lessons observed for younger pupils, work sheets restricted pupils' ability to write independently or at length and sometimes there was a lack of challenge for higher-ability pupils. In the mathematics lessons observed pupils were given a range of methods and 'tool boxes' to help them use their prior knowledge to work out unknown facts. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) very effectively to engage all pupils in learning. As a result, pupils quickly become proficient in using ICT to develop their learning and to improve their work. Teachers' use of assessments of pupils' progress and attainment enables them to group older pupils appropriately into small, similar ability groups for mathematics and English lessons. This provides pupils with good support and increases their confidence in their learning.

The support mechanisms in the school for pupils who are vulnerable or who have complex learning needs are very good. Teaching in the support bases is very good as are the one-to-one tuition programmes that run throughout the day to support and accelerate pupils' learning in mathematics, reading and writing. Pupils are encouraged to make decisions for themselves about their behaviour and discuss their feelings. The parental support worker has developed very good relationships with the parents and carers of pupils who are vulnerable, in the support bases or who do not attend school regularly enough. Extra support for more-able pupils is less well developed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her deputy headteacher have established a very strong leadership team. Their vision for the school can be clearly seen in the work that they do. The school improvement plan is well focused on developing pupils' basic skills through carefully tracking their progress and accurately assessing what they have achieved. Subject leaders are knowledgeable, up to date with current thinking and have clear action plans for improving pupils' attainment. The school uses a range of strategies to monitor subject leaders' work which are carried out regularly and involve all leaders. The impact of this work is that they have a clear idea of what is working well and what needs improving. However, the time for subject leaders to monitor learning in the classroom is currently underdeveloped. The school's work is carefully monitored by the governing body who are fully involved in setting school priorities. Governors are very committed and carry out their statutory duties well, attending many training courses, visiting the school, working alongside the staff and mentoring new colleagues. The

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governing body's audit for community cohesion is comprehensive as is their understanding of safeguarding, and these aspects are given a high priority in the school. This has led to a good action plan to develop pupils' awareness of the local area, diversity and equality and to ensure pupils' safety while in school.

Partnerships with parents and carers, and other outside agencies, are good despite the fact that many parents and carers are reluctant to engage fully with the school. Leaders and managers regularly seek the views of parents and carers, and pupils, and act on any issues identified. One example is that in the most recent pupils' questionnaire a few said they did not feel safe in school. Leaders set up a focus group for these pupils to explore the reasons why they said this and to involve them in improving this area of the school's work. Staff work very closely with the speech and language therapist, educational psychologist, social workers and local schools to improve the life chances for all pupils.

All pupils in the school are treated as equals and the progress and attainment of many different groups in the school are tracked regularly. Because of this the school is aware that boys' attainment lags slightly behind that of girls and that pupils make less progress in English than they do in other subjects. Clear plans are in place to improve these areas. Good leadership has sown the seeds of improvements in attainment which are beginning to bear fruit across the school. Consequently, value for money is good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school immediately after their third birthday. The transition

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arrangements are very good in ensuring that by the time they come to school the staff already know them well. Parents and carers are encouraged to bring their children to school early and to stay and work with them every morning. More and more parents and carers are choosing to do this. Welfare arrangements are very secure and all staff work together as a close-knit team because the Early Years Foundation Stage manager sets a clear direction and is a good role model. In the unit there is a good balance between adult-led tasks and the many opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. During the inspection, Reception children were using their senses to explore real fish in the outdoor water tray. They were well supported by an adult who was skilfully developing their vocabulary through probing questions. The children were inquisitive, developing their concentration and thoroughly enjoying the experience. In the Nursery class, very young pupils were listening to sounds and matching them to pictures on the interactive whiteboard. They then donned huge cardboard 'ears' and enthusiastically took part in a listening walk around the school. These very young children have already settled in well and are following school procedures.

The skills and knowledge of the pupils when they enter the Nursery are at very low levels. However, the key workers attached to each child work with small groups of children for four short sessions a day to develop their social and emotional development, and language, communication and literacy skills. This system is very effective in accelerating children's ability to work cooperatively together and to develop their knowledge of, and ability to, link sounds and letters. Year-on-year attainment in these areas is improving rapidly so that by the time they enter Year 1 their skills are increasingly nearer the levels of those nationally expected. Children make good progress across all six areas of learning because of the well-planned learning environment. The space in the outdoor area is small but well used and the school has secured funding to improve this resource further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 and carers were overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. They felt that their children were kept safe and enjoyed their education. Parents and carers had particular support for the leadership of the school and some said that they were very sad the school is closing. Two parents and carers expressed minor concerns about their children's education which are being dealt with by the school. The inspection evidence

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confirms parents' and carers' positive views of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marton Grove 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 261 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	63	18	35	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	18	127	82	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	48	21	53	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	45	22	55	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	54	19	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	39	24	59	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	49	20	49	1	2	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)	16	42	22	58	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	54	18	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	48	17	43	3	8	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	38	22	59	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	55	16	40	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	56	17	44	0	0	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors who visited your school recently to see how well you were doing in your work. We were very impressed with how eager you were to talk to us and to tell us about your school and your learning. We agree with you that Marton Grove is a good school. We were particularly impressed with your behaviour and how well you all get along together. In lessons you were enthusiastic, keen to talk about your work and you all worked very hard. Those of you who find learning difficult are very well supported by the many teachers and teaching assistants in your school. You are encouraged to think about your learning and behaviour and as you progress through the school you are developing your skills and knowledge well.

We have asked the staff to make some improvements so that you all reach higher standards in your writing and reading. Lots of you get extra help and support for this but some of you who are able to do harder work are not getting enough challenge in English lessons.

Therefore, we have asked the school to help you all to improve your work in English by:

- making sure that those of you who can do harder work are given more challenging activities to extend your writing
- making sure that all of you receive the good marking and target setting that we saw in some of the classes for older children
- making sure that teachers give you fewer work sheets in English lessons and instead encourage you to write more for yourselves.

We have also asked the headteacher to let the subject leaders watch you learn in lessons so that they can help your teachers to help you improve your work. You can help your teachers by making sure that you come to school every day and on time ready to start work.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your education.

Yours faithfully

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