

Marus Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 106406 |
| Local Authority | Wigan |
| Inspection number | 355945 |
| Inspection dates | 21–22 September 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Lynne Read |

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 | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 297 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Anthony Gerrard |
| Headteacher | Mr Michael Gaskill |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 January 2008 |
| School address | Kelvin Grove Marus Bridge Wigan WN3 6SP |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed 13 teachers. They held meetings with governors, managers, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. In observing the school's work, they looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies and school development plans. In total, 135 questionnaires were received from parents and carers, analysed and considered, alongside 100 questionnaires completed by the pupils and 32 completed by staff.

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

- Whether self-evaluation procedures are thorough and accurate and how effectively the information gathered is used in school improvement planning.
- Whether the quality of teaching and the curriculum helps all groups of pupils to achieve their best, especially in reading and writing.
- If the Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children well enough for their National Curriculum work and makes best use of the outdoor classroom.

Information about the school

Compared to other primary schools, the school is above average in size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average and the vast majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although a higher than average number has a statement of special educational needs.

The school holds the Healthy Schools and Eco Schools awards. Recently, there have been significant changes to leadership and management at the school. At the time of inspection, a new headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and senior leadership team had all been in post for two weeks.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It has strengths in pastoral areas so that pupils' personal development and their behaviour are good. Over the last year, there has been a concerted effort to boost pupils' achievement and this has resulted in some good improvements. Effective systems are in place for keeping a close eye on pupils' achievement and for taking effective action to support those who are not meeting expectations. With an accurate view of the school's performance, the new leadership team fully acknowledges that progress, although improving, needs to accelerate further. The new headteacher is well regarded by staff, parents and carers, the governing body and pupils, and has a clear, ambitious vision for the future. Staff morale is good and they are keen to move the school forward. The capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to select their own activities in order to explore, investigate and follow their own interests. The indoor classroom is stimulating but opportunities for learning outdoors are limited. As pupils leave the Reception class, their attainment overall is just above average; their progress across Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall but varies between classes. It is often rapid in Year 2 but slower in Year 1, largely because some pupils move on to the National Curriculum programmes of study before they are ready. Progress is good overall in Key Stage 2, but progress in writing varies between classes and is slower for the younger age groups. The curriculum is satisfactory with a good programme for personal education together with some good enrichment activities, such as after-school clubs and interesting visits.

There are established systems in place for senior leaders to evaluate the school's performance and to develop improvement plans. However, the role of middle leaders, staff and the governing body in this process is underdeveloped. The key subject leaders are very knowledgeable and set good examples of classroom practice. Their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is developing, but they have too few opportunities to have influence on the practice of other colleagues, by sharing their expertise and flair, especially in developing pupils' writing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing more opportunities for children to select their own activities in order to explore and investigate

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- developing the outdoor classroom to provide the same range of learning opportunities that are available in the indoor area.
- Improve progress in Year 1 by matching learning opportunities more closely to the needs of pupils.
- In writing, ensure consistent progress across the year groups by:
 - extending the successful programme for teaching letters and sounds into Key Stage 2
 - providing opportunities for subject leaders to monitor lessons and to share expertise and flair.
- Increase the involvement of leaders, staff and the governing body in the process of evaluating the school's work and developing improvement plans.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Boys and girls make equal progress and say they thoroughly enjoy learning. In one lesson, some Year 2 pupils used imaginative language to tell and write their exciting stories and in another, Year 5 pupils developed creative ideas for their 'rotten recipes'. All age groups have positive attitudes to learning and work hard. For example, Year 6 demonstrated the fruits of their homework as they accurately recalled times-tables to music. Achievement is satisfactory for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who make satisfactory progress overall.

When they enter the Reception Year, most children's skills are within or beyond the range expected for their age. Many pupils leave the Reception class with an above-average range of skills but some have not completed all the learning goals expected and find the Year 1 work difficult. This slows their progress. Across Key Stage 2, progress accelerates and pupils increasingly meet the challenging targets that their teachers set for them. Many pupils make up for shortfalls in their previous learning, so that underachievement is systematically eradicated, especially among the more-able pupils. A good proportion of pupils are now working at the higher level, which means that attainment overall, is above average. A new 'letters and sounds' programme is helping to boost pupils' progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 1, but has not yet been extended into Key Stage 2, where some pupils are experiencing difficulties with spelling. Pupils understand grammar and punctuation and write in different styles. The school is now working on providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and use these skills in a complete piece of work.

Pupils are very polite, care for each other and clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They demonstrate a good understanding of healthy living and enjoy plenty of exercise. They assert that they feel safe and have a good awareness of potential dangers, for example, when using the internet. Pupils have good involvement with the local and wider community, enjoying sports events, music festivals and charity

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fundraising. Links with schools in different areas as well those with the local church and mosque, help to prepare them for life in the wider society. Attendance is consistently above average and pupils are punctual. Useful links with local businesses help them to develop a good awareness of the world of work. The school council ensures that pupils' views are represented in the decision making process and the Eco council is instrumental in promoting environmental awareness.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 3 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships exist in all classes and pupils say that their teachers provide lots of help. Some outstanding lessons provide exacting challenges; this is helping to boost progress for pupils at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear and provide appropriate learning targets. As a result, pupils know exactly what is expected of them, assess their own successes and develop good, independent learning skills. Teachers have developed accurate assessments of pupils' learning which they generally use to set work at different levels of difficulty. Sometimes, however, at the start of Key Stage 1, teaching does not fully meet all pupils' needs.

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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Marking is generally good but there is no consistent policy across classes.

Links between subjects are developing effectively and a local network provides pupils with additional experiences in sport. Action plans are in place to further develop opportunities for writing and applying pupils' information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. Some small group sessions out of class provide extra, targeted tuition, for example, in writing or reading. However, these are not evaluated in terms of gains in learning or the effect of withdrawing pupils from lessons. Their overall impact is, therefore, unclear. Some interesting after-school clubs, such as those for cheerleading or gardening are well attended and extend pupils' experiences further.

Pupils' welfare is paramount and the school provides a safe, nurturing environment. Good systems to deal with any incident of bullying are established and pupils assert that adults act swiftly to address any concerns or worries they express. Effective induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly in the Reception class and older pupils are well prepared for their move to their secondary schools. Some pupils, however, are not supported well enough in the transition between their Early Years Foundation Stage work and that in Year 1.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The established systems for evaluating performance at the school and planning improvements are satisfactory and have led to better progress and attainment over the last year. However, there is limited involvement of middle managers and the governing body in the process. The role of the subject managers in checking and supporting teaching and learning is not fully developed. This means that leadership responsibilities are not evenly distributed and the range of skills and experience across the staff is not utilised to the full. Nevertheless, managers ensure that the school runs smoothly and that administrative systems are highly effective.

Community cohesion is promoted well, for example, through good links with businesses, charities, other schools and places of worship. The equalities policy ensures that groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have full and equal access to all activities. Some younger pupils, however, do not have equal access to learning because support is not tailored well enough to their needs. Safeguarding measures are good across all areas of the school's work, including good systems for child protection and supporting vulnerable pupils. The governing body brings a good

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level of expertise to support managers and offers active support in classes by, for example, developing resources or on school visits. They fully acknowledge that their role in challenging school leaders and evaluating performance is not sufficiently developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 3 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 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 | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they enter the Reception classes, children's skills are broadly in line with those expected for their age, with a minority demonstrating skills beyond their years. Their progress is satisfactory overall. By the end of the year, attainment is just above average and children are well on the way towards achieving the goals expected of the age group. However, fewer children than expected have completed all the early work and are not ready to move on to the National Curriculum.

The indoor classroom is stimulating and inviting. Children's progress is assessed frequently and indoor tasks are planned effectively to build on their developing knowledge and skills. Throughout the day, children have short and focused group sessions with an adult and are free, at other times, to choose from a range of activities where they practise their developing skills. However, independent learning is not promoted to the full because there are few opportunities for children to instigate their own lines of enquiry, investigate or explore their world. This is especially so in the outdoor area, where resources and opportunities are very limited. Leaders have identified the need to develop outdoor learning but this has not been translated into precise action plans. Welfare arrangements are good and the accommodation is secure. Good links with pre-school providers and effective induction procedures help children to settle quickly and parents and carers are successfully encouraged to be partners in the

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learning process.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of responses to the questionnaire was higher than average. Parents and carers commend the provision and feel well informed. The overwhelming majority of those who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children's experience of school is a happy one and all agree that their children are safe. They feel that the headteacher and staff are very approachable and helpful. Comments include 'my child is extremely happy and well cared for at this school' and 'the school has a warm, friendly atmosphere'. Parents and carers feel that teaching is good, pupils are helped to live a healthy lifestyle and that the school is well managed and led. The inspection endorses most of their views. However, there are a few occasions, as several responses suggested, when teaching does not meet pupils' needs fully. While agreeing that the school is efficiently run and staff are helpful, inspectors find that the current distribution of leadership roles does not utilise staff or governors' expertise to the full.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marus Bridge 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 135 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 297 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 96 | 71 | 37 | 27 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 107 | 79 | 27 | 20 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 72 | 53 | 55 | 41 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 78 | 58 | 48 | 36 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 81 | 60 | 51 | 38 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 69 | 51 | 58 | 43 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 85 | 63 | 49 | 36 | 1 | 1 | 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) | 69 | 51 | 58 | 43 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 74 | 55 | 54 | 40 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 63 | 47 | 64 | 47 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 55 | 41 | 67 | 50 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 75 | 56 | 56 | 41 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 98 | 73 | 36 | 27 | 1 | 1 | 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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



23 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marus Bridge Primary School, Wigan, WN3 6SP

Thank you for the very warm welcome and lovely smiles you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. In return, I would like to tell you what we found out.

Marus Bridge Primary is a happy and safe school. It provides you with a satisfactory standard of education and promotes your personal development well. You get on very well together and take good care of each other. You are a credit to the school and your families. Well done! Thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with us. You are very pleased with your school and feel that your teachers and headteacher do a good job.

You are keen to learn and work hard. You are learning at a faster rate now but we think that there are some areas for further improvement. We have asked your teachers to:

- increase opportunities for the reception children to investigate and explore and to develop the outdoor classroom so it includes a wide range of activities, just like the indoor one
- provide more help for children on their learning journey between the reception and Year 1 classes
- make sure that you make good progress in writing in all classes
- work more closely together to identify areas that need improvement and when they plan how to make things better.

You can help by continuing to attend regularly, being keen to learn and working hard. Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector

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