

Marsh Green Primary School

Kitt Green Road, Marsh Green, Wigan, Lancashire, WN5 0EF

Inspection dates 11–12 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have overseen rapid improvements in the quality of teaching over the past 18 months. This has led to pupils, including those who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, making better than expected progress in reading and mathematics.
- Lessons are planned very well to support individual needs, with good deployment of skilled teaching assistants and use of resources.
- Leaders check the quality of lessons and pupils' achievements using clear guidelines that are fully understood by staff.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy lessons because they are nurtured and supported in school by skilled and caring staff.
- There is strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at the school, especially through links with European countries.
- There is high morale amongst all staff because leaders promote high aspirations and have clear actions for school improvement.
- Governance is a strength because governors are frequent visitors, are well informed and hold leaders to account for their work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching has not been consistently good or better over time.
- Systems for checking pupils' day-to-day reading are not yet consistently used to inform future planning for each pupil in the development of higher level reading and writing skills.
- Pupils are not always clearly informed about how to improve their reading and writing skills in different subjects.
- Leaders do not yet fully monitor how well pupils' progress in reading is used to develop higher level reading and writing skills in different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed eight teachers and four teaching assistants teach 17 lessons, parts of lessons or interventions.
- One lesson was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors met with senior staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of Governors.
- One inspector had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- One inspector had a discussion with a member of the English as a Second Language Service.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence that included: the school’s website; pupils’ assessment information; the school improvement plan and self-checking documents; and headteacher’s reports to the governing body. Inspectors also studied pupils’ workbooks and files, school policies and documents, including those relating to the curriculum, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 21 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors met with three small groups of parents. Inspectors considered 24 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents (Parent View).

Inspection team

John Ashley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Catherine Beeks

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action, school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a number of staffing changes in the past two years, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - pupils' progress in reading helps to improve their vocabulary for use in developing independent writing in all subjects so that they achieve even higher levels
 - all staff provide clear oral and written feedback to pupils who read to them so that they are clear about what they need to practise to improve
 - pupils practise their reading and writing skills in all lessons and that they fully understand the links between the two
 - subject leaders closely check that the recording of reading leads towards more precise planning and intervention in the classroom for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge below those typically expected for their age and some with skills and abilities well below. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so a small majority reach expected levels or better by the end of their time in Reception. Those who come in at lower levels also make expected or better progress but are still below national expectations by the end of Reception.
- Children learn to listen and respond well in the Nursery class, enjoying the range of activities on offer. Less-able pupils enjoy sessions where staff encourage them to develop their understanding of positional terms, for example, 'Put the teddy behind your back.'
- Children in Reception make good progress when following up discussions about pictures of animals and are then able to write simple sentences using printed, well-spaced words with capitals and full stops. Occasionally, children do not make as much progress in a lesson when they are not given the opportunity to discuss their ideas or when the pace of teaching slows down.
- Pupils exceeded the national average in the end of Year 1 national letters and sounds check both last year and this year.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils of different abilities respond equally well to lessons in counting because they have different challenges. For example, less-able pupils will partake well in counting in twos or fives songs and games, while more-able pupils will make use of work cards to encourage them to record their answers on paper. This indicates that the school provides equally well for pupils with differing needs.
- Pupils in Year 2 enjoyed going outside to record the number of minibeasts they saw using a tally-chart, leading to a discussion about habitats.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils work well together in lessons where they are grouped according to their abilities. More-able pupils will rise to the challenge of sorting complex written, mathematical information about different animals according to speed and height; these are then matched against their own predictions, while less-able pupils use calculators to change miles into kilometres.
- Older pupils respond well to opportunities provided to develop their writing because subject teachers correct spelling or grammatical errors. Less-able pupils do well in letters and sounds lessons to become more independent writers.
- Regardless of ability, pupils read with enjoyment and make progress. They make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to work out how to say new words. However, some pupils do not make the expected progress because staff do not always record what has been achieved and what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils do not always learn what new words or phrases mean such as 'moisture' or 'deduction,' even though they are accurately read. Opportunities are then lost for pupils to develop even greater independence in their reading and writing.
- The majority of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding have made good or better progress in their reading, writing and mathematics in relation to national expectations, and are closing the gap on other pupils in the school. Indeed, at the end of Year 6, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are exceeding the levels of other pupils in reading and mathematics, and are no more than a term's progress behind in other classes and in writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Based upon school information and supported by inspection evidence, very little teaching now requires improvement. Compared to eighteen months ago, most teaching is now good or better and is continuing to improve.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' folders are used to record staff observations about children's speaking, listening, reading, writing and number abilities. Activities are planned to enable children to explore their surroundings, for example, when hooking ducks with numbers on them out of a paddling pool.
- Teaching is especially strong where staff, including skilled teaching assistants, make good use of a standard planning system which ensures that staff and resources are used to meet the needs of all pupils. Planning relies strongly upon accurate checking of pupils' levels and on teachers' common agreement about the quality of pupils' written work.
- In particularly strong lessons, teachers use questioning skilfully to check on pupils' understanding of taught skills or move around the class to ensure that different groups are making progress with the support of teaching assistants. Teachers ensure that there is good pace to the lesson and that all pupils are challenged and making progress.
- In an outstanding Year 3 mathematics lesson, all pupils were asked to solve written money problems that involved finding change. More-able pupils rose to the challenge of sequencing coins in a row of five so that the three coins within the five had to equal a certain amount. Less-able pupils were guided through the mathematical process of explaining how much change they would receive from a pound when buying two items.
- Further up the school, pupils were encouraged to design a leaflet using taught writing skills. Teaching assistants worked well with middle and lower groups to write sentences such as, 'Witches have scratchy, pointed claws', while more-able pupils were able to give examples of similes, for example, 'as black as night'.
- Teachers use marking well to guide pupils. For example, 'Can you think of a better word for 'scared?'' led to a pupil choosing the word, 'terrified.' Pupils know their levels and targets and make good use of a 'My Writing Assessment' checklist to keep track of their progress. One pupil had written, 'The taste of fear makes me feel sick, as if I was going to fall.' This was recognised by the teacher as progress in descriptive writing from previous work and prompted positive feedback against the pupil's writing target.
- While the teaching of reading has led to greater confidence, especially for less-able pupils learning their letters and sounds, inconsistent recording in pupils' reading records means that not all pupils make the progress they might. Opportunities are missed to give direct feedback and guidance to pupils so that they might increase their vocabulary to then use for wider reading or in their independent writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils say that they like and enjoy their school and that the staff keep them safe and secure. They feel that the recent 'swipe-card' system to get to and from different parts of the school has led to a safer school.
- While pupils say that there is some rough play from older pupils, this does not constitute bullying and that any problems or concerns are sorted out swiftly by staff.
- Parents overwhelmingly support the school and the vast majority would recommend it to other parents. They feel able to talk to the headteacher and class teachers about any concerns they might have and are confident that they will be listened to.
- Behaviour in lessons is invariably good or better because pupils enjoy learning together.
- Pupils help each other in class and they feel that 'booster' classes after school for mathematics and English help them make progress towards their targets. One pupil stated that, at the end of the day, she is, 'so into my work that I don't want to stop!'
- Pupils say that the nurture room staff help them through difficult times. They will work with pupils alongside their families to develop their confidence and learning abilities, and then support them back full time into class.
- Attendance is better than average and has improved over the past two years. While there have been some fixed-term exclusions in the past, these are now decreasing because the school keeps track of pupils' behaviour and takes steps to support them and their families. There are

still occasions when pupils can be a little boisterous, taking time to settle when coming in from playtime.

- Pupils say that the behaviour system encourages pupils to 'stay on green' so that they can qualify for trips out or other rewards. The weekly celebration assembly promotes good attendance, behaviour and learning and is representative of strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their fundraising efforts on behalf of the school and local charities as well as their close links, with European schools to whom they write letters.

The leadership and management is good

- With the support of the local authority and the partnership with local schools, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have addressed the issues from the last report. They have revitalised the school so that the quality of teaching is mostly good or better and achievement is rapidly improving to be closer to national averages, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The staffing structure has been revised to a simpler and more efficient format so that two new middle leaders are in post to oversee each Key Stage. There is good capacity for the school to improve even further.
- The headteacher has worked with staff to focus on the key priorities for improvement. This has led to a concerted drive towards agreeing clear policies for lesson planning, checking pupils' work through assessment and marking, recording and reporting on pupils' achievements and progress.
- Systems to check the performance of teachers are now agreed and staff, including teaching assistants, have had opportunities to attend training to help them improve even more. For example, they regularly observe each other teaching and have learned to provide constructive feedback leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and support.
- While improvements have undoubtedly been made in the checking, marking and feedback procedures relating to pupils' work, the monitoring of pupils' reading is inconsistent. Not enough information is yet provided in reading records to inform how pupils could improve in areas such as increasing vocabulary in order to improve their independent writing.
- The curriculum provides equal opportunities for pupils to experience different learning opportunities, for example, through a range of educational visits, song-writing or a gardening project to enable pupils to sell home-grown produce. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about the special sounds and pictures room which provides an audio-visual experience to reinforce their learning from recent visits such as Blackpool. Occasionally, opportunities for pupils to practise their reading and writing skills in subjects other than English are missed.
- The nurture room is a strong aspect of what the school provides for groups of pupils who need extra help and support because it has created strong partnership working with parents. Parents have attended courses to improve their literacy, numeracy and behaviour management skills.
- Other partnership working with European schools has led to pupils enthusiastically writing letters to their pen-pals and is a strong aspect of the schools work in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school meets requirements for safeguarding and follows safe recruitment procedures, with staff checks routinely made.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has four new members and is providing strong support and challenge to the school.
 - Governors are well informed about the school's business, are regular visitors and hold the school to account through close monitoring of teaching.
 - Governors have received training in safeguarding, safe recruitment and how to manage the performance of teachers, including the headteacher, with reference to the agreed pay structure.
 - Governors oversee the management of the school's finances, including the money set aside

for improving the school's accommodation, including IT, with efficiency.

- The pupil premium funding has been used to provide staff and resources to support vulnerable groups and governors check, through headteacher reports, that these groups make expected progress.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106403
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	411804

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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vicki Rigby
Headteacher	Gill Leigh
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2009
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