

Marlborough School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111978
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357018
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Turner
Headteacher	Richard Gambier
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons and observed seven teachers. They also attended two assemblies, observed break and lunchtime activities, and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The provision and planning for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities were evaluated. In addition, questionnaires completed by 92 parents and carers, 107 pupils and 12 staff were analysed.

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

- Given some instability in staffing in recent years, the effectiveness of teaching and learning in enabling all groups to make good progress.
- Pupils' achievements in writing and mathematics, especially by higher attainers and in Key Stage 2, and the degree to which the curriculum provides sufficient opportunity for pupils to develop and use their literacy, numeracy and personal skills to enrich their learning across the range of subjects.
- The degree to which leaders and managers, at all levels, evaluate the impact of their work to bring about and sustain continuous improvements in pupils' achievements.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized, single-form entry primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, but varies across the year groups. The main groups of needs are related to speech and language, and behavioural and emotional difficulties. There has been significant instability in staffing in recent years.

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

- Marlborough is a good and improving school with several excellent features. Despite a significant degree of staffing instability in recent years, the school has made good improvement since the previous inspection, most notably securing good teaching and learning, which is now promoting the pupils' good achievement.
- Other improvements include the elimination of the gap between boys' and girls' attainment, more effective monitoring of provision and the pupils' very well developed speaking, listening and independent learning skills.
- Much of this improvement has stemmed from the headteacher's determination to establish a good curriculum, enriched by enjoyable practical learning experiences for the pupils, and the governing body's steadfast support and wise counsel. Together, they have promoted excellent links and relationships among the staff and with parents, carers and the community and have embedded a shared commitment to improvement. As a result, the school clearly demonstrates a good capacity to sustain further improvement into the future.
- The headteacher has also shown much resilience in dealing with continuing concerns about the maintenance of the accommodation and delays in its improvement. Nevertheless, given his commitment and the diligence of the governing body and staff, pupils' welfare is safeguarded well.
- Children make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most pupils make good progress during their time in this school. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average overall, but in response to more consistent teaching, more pupils are now reaching higher National Curriculum levels, especially in reading. The school, with some success, continues to target pupils' writing and numeracy skills. However, the development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills through Key Stage 2 varies. This is because handwriting, presentation skills, time for writing and ways of improving in mathematics are not always emphasised well enough.
- Pupils behave well and attendance is above average. They enjoy school a great deal because of their many happy relationships and friendships and throw themselves wholeheartedly into the full range of often practical learning activities. Their excellent contributions to school and the community and adoption of healthy living bear testament to the welcoming ethos of the school.
- Senior managers and the governing body work well as a team and use self-evaluation well to identify areas in need of improvement. Given changes in

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staff, some subject leadership roles are not fully developed. In addition, inconsistencies in the way assessments of pupils' progress are tracked do not help subject leaders to set targets for improvement. Nevertheless, improvements in the quality of pupils' learning augur well for the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

By the end of the current school year:

- Develop the pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills more consistently through Years 3 to 6 by:
 - systematically developing pupils' handwriting skills and raising expectations of the quality of pupils' recorded work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write extensively about their own ideas
 - improving teachers' marking in mathematics by giving pupils more written guidance on how to improve.
- Strengthen the way that pupils' progress is assessed and tracked as they move through the school so that leaders and managers, at all levels, have a clear view of achievement and are better placed to use targets to raise standards.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Observations of lessons showed that pupils across the range of ability, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, work hard and really enjoyed their time at school. From broadly average starting points pupils achieve well and levels of attainment are above average by the end of Year 6. Discussions with pupils and evaluations of work in books and of a variety of assessments also show pupils' good progress through the school. In particular, in response to consistently good oral guidance, an increasing number of pupils are attaining above national averages across the range of subjects. This was seen, for example, during a Year 6 lesson in the information and communication technology (ICT) suite when pupils, in response to the teacher's sharp questioning, collaborated well in pairs and eagerly researched the internet for information about tourism in the mountain ranges they had chosen to study.

Pupils make consistently good progress through Years 1 and 2, as teachers, focusing on basic literacy and numeracy skills, build well on pupils' impressive start in Reception. Although variable, progress in English and mathematics, especially by those with more ability, has improved through Years 3 to 6 and is now good overall. Pupils benefit from frequent practical learning activities and develop good levels of understanding and investigative skills, for example in science.

Pupils say that they feel very safe and love coming to school and this is seen in their

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above average attendance and good behaviour. Pupils share warm friendships, for example in the weekly celebration assembly as they applaud each other's achievements. The pupils' adoption of healthy living and their contributions to their own and each other's work and to a range of school and community events are exemplary features. For example, their eagerness when participating with their parents and carers in the popular after-school 'apple day' event was a joy to witness. The pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development underpins their very friendly relationships and the consideration shown to others. Topic work promotes the pupils' good understanding of cultures across the world, but their awareness of multicultural Britain is less strong. By the time pupils leave the school, their ability to relate well to other people alongside their good achievement prepare them well for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

Teachers use open-ended questioning to get pupils, of all abilities, to develop ideas, build new learning and extend vocabulary and speaking skills. Their consistent approach to daily guided reading successfully promotes pupils' above average reading skills. Teachers are also skilful in using interactive whiteboards and in capitalising on pupils' enthusiasm and skills in using laptop and other computers to work independently. Teachers and their assistants also encourage pupils to work collaboratively to good effect. This was seen, for example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson when pupils took turns enjoying role play as Hogwarts' wizard apprentices calculating the ingredients for their 'brew'. Teachers make supportive links across

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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subjects to develop the pupils' understanding: for example, in an English lesson in Year 4, the teacher tapped fruitfully into the pupils' interest in dissecting owl pellets, first seen in their science studies, and used this successfully to develop pupils' information writing. However, pupils are not always given sufficient time to complete extended writing, particularly about their own ideas, and this represents a lost opportunity to further enhance writing skills. Topic work is used effectively to generate positive attitudes to learning and self-enquiry skills. Some teachers make good use of writing ladders to develop pupils' self-evaluation skills and also give detailed guidance on how to improve when marking pupils' work. However, teachers' marking and expectations of the quality of pupils' recorded work vary through Years 3 to 6. As a result, pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not always good enough and, at times, their insecure numeracy skills still inhibit their ability to solve problems.

The curriculum is well matched to individual needs. There is a good range of outdoor facilities, but except for the excellent area for the youngest children, currently there are limitations on their use because of constraints necessitating adult supervision. The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of clubs, events such as 'Fab Friday' topics, and visits, which promote the pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles and independent learning skills extremely well. Good partner-working between teachers and teaching assistants gives good support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Excellent links with parents, carers and outside agencies also contribute to the high level of pastoral care, much appreciated by parents and carers, provided by all the adults who work in the school.

Information from day-to-day assessment is used effectively to identify relevant learning objectives. In most classes, especially in English and topic work, this also helps pupils to know where they have made mistakes and, more positively, what they have to do next to improve. At times, through Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics, teachers' marking does not draw pupils sufficiently into self-evaluation or give enough written information on how to improve, constraining the development of pupils' basic numeracy skills.

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	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

Enjoyment and independent learning for all are concepts that are central to the ethos of the school. These are successfully promoted by the headteacher and fully endorsed by the whole school community. The governing body is highly supportive, but also well organised, lively and challenging. It greatly values the leadership of the headteacher, especially in dealing with continuing uncertainty about the long awaited improvements to the school's accommodation. Senior managers and subject leaders work well together to sustain effective self-evaluation, which ensures that the right areas for development are targeted. Established strengths in promoting pupils' reading and speaking and listening skills are now being used to improving effect, through role play, to lift pupils' writing skills. However, given some continuing instability in staffing and a lack of clarity in assessing pupils' progress through the school, not all leaders have had sufficient time to develop their roles to the full. Even so, there is high staff morale, which, despite the challenge of staff changes in recent years, has brought improved teaching, lifted boys' achievements and shows a good capacity for further improvement.

The pupils' welfare, underpinned by carefully documented and implemented procedures and risk assessments, is safeguarded well. Excellent partnerships with other schools, the local community and with parents and carers also support the high quality of care and extend the practical learning opportunities provided for the pupils. All pupils are treated equally and staff are diligent in eliminating discrimination, for example by encouraging collaborative learning and equal access to computers and the well-equipped outdoor facilities. The school promotes community cohesion well and is itself a highly cohesive community. Very good local and global experiences and satisfactory references to the national community are seen in the range of activities provided in the topic-based curriculum, which, for example, also include Spanish sessions during 'Fab Friday' activities. The school is currently seeking to re-connect with a school in a more culturally mixed area of the United Kingdom to widen pupils' first-hand experiences.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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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

Continued development of the accommodation and facilities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has enabled the school to enrich its already outstanding provision and new learning continues with equally beneficial effect, both in the classroom and outdoors. An outstanding range of learning opportunities is supported by exemplary care, guidance and support from all staff and often from several voluntary, parent and carer helpers. Together, they keep children safe and promote the children's great enjoyment. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are of the highest quality and include an excellent balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. Teachers' planning is informed by exemplary assessment of the children's progress and ensures that their individual needs are fully met. Learning activities are rooted in practical enquiry with adult questioning drawing new ideas from the children's excited responses. For example, they squealed with delight when examining a range of frozen fish. The provision is extremely well led and planned and ensures that children make excellent progress across all areas of learning, most notably in speaking and listening and in their social development. Very warm and supportive relationships with parents and carers also contribute significantly to the children's outstanding achievements. For example, at the beginning of each day, children rush eagerly into their classroom and outdoor area and excitedly show their parents and carers the wealth of interesting activities available. For their part, parents and carers are particularly helpful in encouraging positive attitudes to school by willingly joining in, for example as their children build brick walls or make wooden block roadways for floor robots.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of the parents and carers who returned their questionnaires responded very positively to most statements and are very happy and have full confidence in the work of the school. A typically supportive comment, also reflected in most of the written comments received and in the remarks of those interviewed, was, 'Marlborough School has been a very positive experience for all my children.' A

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few parents and carers expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, takes account of their suggestions and prepares pupils for their future schooling. Inspection evidence shows that pupils behave well, that the school manages behaviour very effectively and takes due account of parents' and carers' views. Inspection evidence, and information on the progress of pupils from Marlborough School provided by the two local secondary schools, shows that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning by the time they leave this school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marlborough 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	79	20	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	66	72	25	27	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	68	28	30	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	62	32	35	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	67	30	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	65	33	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	57	41	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	51	39	42	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	66	27	29	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	52	33	36	3	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	51	39	42	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	64	31	34	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	76	18	20	2	2	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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 pupils' 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.

22 October 2010

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Marlborough School, Falmouth, TR11 4HU

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school. Special thanks go to the two groups of pupils, including members of the School Parliament, who so kindly took time to talk with my colleague. We have no hesitation in finding that your school is a good school that continues to improve.

These are the features that pleased us the most.

- You have an excellent understanding of healthy living and make very willing contributions to work, to school life and to community events.
- The staff of the school provide you with an excellent standard of care.
- The quality of education that is provided in the Reception class is excellent.
- The work of the governing body is exemplary, and with the support of your headteacher, ensures that the school is a safe and well-equipped place where you can enjoy your learning.
- The school has excellent links with your parents, carers and with other groups. This helps to ensure that you are happy at school and experience an interesting and stimulating range of activities.

These are some of the other good things we found.

- You make good progress in response to good teaching and learning.
- You attend school regularly and behave well.
- Leaders and managers work well together. They have a good understanding of the school and know what to do next to continue to improve it further.

To help the school to improve, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- improve your writing and number skills, by improving your handwriting, providing more time for you to write long stories and giving you more written guidance on how to improve your work in mathematics
- track the development of your skills more clearly as you move through the school so that targets can be used more effectively to help you to make progress.

You can help the school to improve by taking more care with your handwriting and when recording your work in books.

Yours sincerely
Alex Baxter
Lead Inspector

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