

Marsworth Church of England Infant School

Vicarage Road, Marsworth, Tring, HP23 4LT

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils thrive in this happy school, which one parent or carer described as a 'gem'. They make good progress in all years and reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They enjoy learning, feel safe and are respectful and courteous towards each other and to adults.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and make learning fun for pupils. They give pupils regular, helpful written feedback on their work.
- Relationships are a strength and create an atmosphere where pupils feel confident enough to answer and ask questions in lessons.
- Teachers encourage and foster pupils' curiosity and learning across a rich and relevant range of subjects, enhanced by after-school clubs, activities and trips. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Staff and governors are committed to the school and to the best interests of the children.
- Staff work effectively as a team and share responsibilities well. With local authority support, leaders have developed a good system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and believe that it makes a valuable contribution to the local community. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The outdoor area does not include a wide enough variety of activities for nursery and reception children to choose from.
- Assessment does not involve the children enough in evaluating their own or others' learning or in responding to teachers' detailed next steps comments in books.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 full or part lessons and lunchtime activities.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils during lessons, around the school and in an organised meeting. She heard pupils read and spoke with them about reading.
- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other teachers, support staff, parents and carers at the start of the school day and members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with a local authority consultant who has been working with the school.
- The inspector analysed 10 responses to the staff questionnaire, 14 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and responses to the school's own questionnaires for parents, carers and pupils. The inspector looked at a range of documents provided by the school including the minutes of governing body meetings, the school development plan, school's self-evaluation summary, data about pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and records, policies, pupils' work, and performance management information.

Inspection team

Helena McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Marsworth Church of England Infant School is a much smaller than average village school on the outskirts of Tring. The number of pupils on roll has decreased over the past five years. There are two classes: one for four- to five-year-olds and the second for pupils in Years 1 and 2, aged five to seven years. Children start school in the term after their fourth birthday.
- All of the pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language.
- A very small number of pupils receive support through school action because of their special educational needs; the proportion is much lower than average. There are no disabled pupils and none who receive extra support through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- At present, no pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and the children of service families). There was one pupil eligible for pupil premium funding last year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - engaging pupils more in assessing their own progress
 - sharing with pupils the criteria for assessment, their targets and next steps to improve in reading, writing and mathematics
 - giving pupils time to respond to teachers' good questions and comments in their exercise books.
- Increase the range of activities for nursery and reception pupils in the outside area and include written prompts that encourage pupils to engage with the activities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When pupils start at Marsworth School, their attainment is broadly in line with what is expected across the areas of learning. They make good progress in all subjects and their attainment is above average by the time they leave in Year 2.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception, where they are given individual attention and a good balance of teacher-led activities and those they choose for themselves. Pupils develop good personal and social skills. For example, four children were playing at being hairdressers and customers in the role play area. They chatted to each other and the 'customers' sat very patiently while their hair was being 'curled' or 'straightened'.
- The school identified writing as an area in need of improvement and staff had effective training on it from the local authority. Children are given good opportunities to write from the early years onwards and many make rapid progress. There is a good amount of extended writing in Years 1 and 2 and the outcomes have improved this year. All but one pupil attained the expected Level 2b or above, although few pupils reached the highest Level 3. Many children speak well, which is encouraged by staff who ask good open-ended questions.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read regularly in class as part of guided reading and at home. There is good communication with parents and carers through the reading records that children take home in their book bags. Pupils make good progress in reading and the most able read fluently and with expression and can talk about their favourite authors. Less confident readers use phonics (the sounds letters make) well to read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils are making good progress in mathematics and science due to the good quality of teaching. They enjoy art and design and technology and there are displays in classrooms of children's steam engines and artwork in the style of Kandinsky and Andy Warhol.
- The school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. Staff observe pupils carefully and identify any that are falling behind. They bring in external specialists where necessary to assess pupils' progress and to advise on teaching strategies. Pupils with special educational needs are given targeted support, which helps them to make good progress along with their peers.
- There are no pupils eligible for the pupil premium this year and only one last year who made good progress, with funds used appropriately to pay for additional one-to-one support.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good in both classes and some is outstanding in Key Stage 1. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to plan and share the teaching.
- Phonics is taught effectively and pupils are grouped according to their level of attainment, which works well. Year 1 children responded enthusiastically to a phonics session where they all said 'oo' and 'ee' and 'ow', and suggested and recorded different words with these endings.
- Adults in the Early Years class provide opportunities for children to develop skills in all the areas of learning and record children's achievements in individual portfolio records. Children choose from a range of activities in the classroom. The outside space is limited and not exclusively used by the early years children as it forms part of the playground. However, it is not used as creatively as it could be, and includes a narrow range of learning opportunities for pupils. A teacher who has attended a course on learning outside the classroom has created an attractive garden and planted seeds with the children, which they observe together. There is, though, a lack of written prompts to encourage children to read, and to explore and record on their own.
- Teachers have established excellent relationships with all pupils. They make learning fun and practical for pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic, have high expectations and good subject and understanding of how best to teach young children. They listen carefully to children and monitor their progress effectively in lessons, adjusting appropriately when they identify problems.

- Pupils are keen to answer questions and many confidently ask them, demonstrating their interest and concentration, and how happy and secure they feel in school. Pupils are given few opportunities to assess their own or others' learning, although they sometimes do this spontaneously as was seen when a reception child critiqued the artwork produced by two of her peers.
- Teachers plan well to meet pupils' different needs and starting points. This was seen to very good effect in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson where there was a fun starter activity of 'Guess the number?' which provoked some good questions such as 'Is it an even number?' Pupils then enjoyed working on different engaging problem-solving tasks to do with subtraction.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology in all year groups. Nursery and reception children use computers to create drawings and to help them with their reading and mathematics. Years 1 and 2 pupils use a mathematics program that enables them to work at their own pace and level. Year 1 pupils were seen using a fun program that helped them to write word problems on subtraction that they set for the teacher and each other.
- Teachers check pupils' work in books regularly and provide constructive feedback with ideas for improvement. Pupils are not, though, given time to respond to teachers' good written comments and questions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. They enjoy coming to school, are happy, feel safe and their attendance is above average.
- A letter was sent to the school by a member of staff at the local swimming pool where pupils go each week, commenting on their very good behaviour. Parents, carers and staff also feel that pupils' behaviour is excellent.
- In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to learn and to take part. They are lively and many are confident speakers, but respectfully listen to each other and to adults. There was a lovely example of this when a Year 2 child read from *Eat the teacher* to a group of 20 peers sitting on the carpet. The children listened attentively, joined in at the right moment with 'Crunch!' and asked to see the pictures when the pupil forgot to turn the book round to show them.
- Pupils enjoy being given responsibilities, such as buddies or joining the school council. They are aware of bullying, and have been taught about different types, but do not think that it happens in the school. They meet regularly with the headteacher who listens to their ideas about how to improve the school.
- Pupils cooperate well and are kind to each other. They like receiving the golden letters written by adults who have observed a particularly good example of behaviour and the leaves which pupils write about their peers.

The leadership and management are good

- In this very small school, the headteacher has a heavy teaching commitment. She draws effectively on support from the other teachers and they work well as a team, which is helping to bring about improvements. Monitoring and feedback to staff are mainly informal and not always well documented, but the headteacher knows the strengths of her staff and the self-evaluation is accurate in its judgements. There is an evident commitment to the school from staff and governors to improve further.
- The system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress has recently been improved, with assistance from a local authority consultant. Teachers plan and assess pupils' attainment well against distinct criteria for reading, writing, mathematics and science. They produce termly target sheets that go home to parents and carers with useful guidance notes for how they can help their children with their next steps. These criteria and targets are not shared with the pupils, who are therefore not involved enough in assessing their own work.
- Pupils experience a broad and balanced range of subjects, enhanced by a good number of extra-

curricular clubs, activities and trips. There are specialist weeks where pupils can spend more time on activities such as art or science. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It takes good advantage of the local authority multicultural resources to provide pupils with opportunities to learn about other countries and their customs and cultures, such as in Spain and India. The school also participates in the global awareness week and UNICEF World Vision activities. There is a strong connection with the local church.

- Pupils are prepared well for their next stage of learning. Arrangements for transition into Year 1 and for Year 2 children moving on to the next school are good. Year 2 pupils attended a transition day at their next school in the week of the inspection and joined pupils from that school on a day trip.
- The school leaders are outward looking and have developed good links with other schools. They take advantage of advice and training from the local authority, which has deemed the school to require only light touch support.
- Parents and carers are very supportive and positive about the school. They say that it is an important part of the local community. Parents and carers help out regularly at the school, for example, to supervise entry in the mornings and to accompany pupils on trips to the swimming pool and elsewhere. Communication with parents and carers is regular and appreciated. Their views are sought through an annual questionnaire that governors analyse and summarise.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors bring a good level of expertise and support to the school. They are actively involved in its strategic leadership through a range of committees and working groups. They visit the school regularly and know the strengths and areas for improvement, based on a good knowledge of performance data. They hold the leadership to account effectively and provide constructive challenge, as appropriate.
 - Governors are committed to the future of the school and have been active in trying to raise awareness of the school to parents and carers in the local area. They oversee finances effectively and are aware of how the limited pupil premium funds were spent last year.
 - Governors ensure that all statutory responsibilities, including safeguarding, are met. They take part in regular professional development on, for example, safer recruitment and special educational needs. They oversee the headteacher's performance management and are aware of the new arrangements linked to the Teachers' Standards. They ensure that movement up the pay scale is appropriately linked to the outcomes of performance management and the quality of teaching.

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	110454
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	424609

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Egan-Carter
Headteacher	Yvonne Goodwin
Date of previous school inspection	November 2008
Telephone number	01296 668440
Fax number	01296 668440
Email address	office@marsworth.bucks.sch.uk

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