

Much Marcle CofE Primary School

Much Marcle, Ledbury, Hertfordshire, HR8 2LY

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The exceptional vision, enthusiasm and drive of the headteacher, well supported by staff and an outstanding governing body inspire pupils to thrive in all aspects of their personal and academic development.
- Leaders ensure that teaching and learning are outstanding across the school. The headteacher's direction enables staff to develop their skills and expertise continuously.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above those usually found in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are treated as individuals and, as a result, all pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those with special educational needs, achieve well and are extremely well-prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Teachers develop pupils' personal qualities and teamwork skills to the full. This enables them to work very successfully in partnership with each other and with teachers to extend their learning.
- High-quality and consistent marking celebrates pupils' achievements and ensures that all pupils know what they need to do next in order to improve.
- Support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is excellent.
- Pupils' exemplary behaviour contributes strongly to the outstanding quality of learning in lessons. They repay staff's trust in them through their outstanding behaviour and by always trying their best. They say they feel safe in the school.
- From an early age, pupils enjoy coming to school and this shows in their eagerness to learn and their high levels of attendance.
- Exceptionally rigorous assessment and tracking systems ensure the progress of individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is very well monitored. However, with the exception of RE, the school does not currently analyse pupils' progress in other subjects.
- Staff are caring and supportive, and, with governing body members, volunteers, and visitors to the school, they create an exceptional place for learning.
- The headteacher is passionate about ensuring that all pupils do as well as they possibly can and sets very high expectations for all staff.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop into confident, articulate and reflective individuals who are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- Meetings and discussions were held with governors, members of staff, representatives of the local authority and groups of pupils. The inspector also heard a number of pupils read.
- The inspection took into account the 18 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, and the outcomes from the school's recent consultations with parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupil mobility, pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and only a very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- With the exception of the Nursery and Reception classes, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and other specific groups) is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work to develop a more formal system of assessing and tracking pupils' progress in other subjects to match the rigorous systems already in place for reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the Nursery and the Reception class with skills and aptitudes that are broadly typical for their age group. They achieve well because of the high quality of teaching and support, effective links between the school and home and the range of activities provided within the classrooms and secure outdoor areas. They make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their attainment when they start Year 1 is a little above average.
- Pupils across the range of year groups and abilities make outstanding progress. This exceptional progress was reflected in the high quality of learning observed in lessons during the inspection, and confirmed by work in pupils' books. Standards have been maintained at well-above average levels for several years. Year 6 pupils in 2013 attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Over half the Year 6 pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in reading and the proportion achieving the highest Level 6 in mathematics was well above the national average.
- Pupils use their skills in English, communication and mathematics to enhance their learning across the curriculum, so they also enjoy and achieve very well in other subjects. Teaching assistants play an invaluable role in supporting individuals and small groups, both within the classroom and on a one-to-one basis.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2013 known to be eligible for the pupil premium for their performance to be compared without potentially identifying them. Their progress is similar to that of their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because they receive skilled support that is precisely matched to their needs. Their individual work programmes ensure that they succeed in line with their abilities and enjoy their education to the full.
- The imaginative, carefully planned, 'creative' curriculum provides pupils with a rich array of exciting and memorable experiences. It fosters their personal and social development exceptionally well and ensures their whole-hearted participation in their learning.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in developing their reading skills. This starts by teaching younger pupils to read by linking letters to the sounds they represent (phonics). Key Stage 1 pupils who read to the inspector were able to confidently use their reading skills to break down and sound out difficult or unfamiliar words. The teaching of reading through daily phonics lessons and guided reading activities continues through all age groups. As a result, pupils throughout the school read exceptionally well and older pupils read fluently, with expression and with a good understanding of their texts.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because teachers have strong expectations of pupils' progress and organise lessons very carefully to ensure that pupils acquire knowledge and reinforce new skills rapidly. Lesson planning demonstrates staff's secure subject knowledge and builds carefully on pupils' prior learning.
- Teachers are adept at enlisting pupils as full partners in their learning. They constantly re-shape

tasks and questions in the light of pupils' responses, in order to develop their understanding. Teachers are skilled at intervening at well-chosen moments to summarise pupils' learning and to ensure that lessons move at a brisk pace.

- Teachers and teaching assistants develop pupils' teamwork skills exceptionally well. Teachers in Key Stage 2 provide ample opportunities for pupils to examine critically and to comment constructively on their own work and that of their peers. Excellent relationships and astute questioning ensure that pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well.
- Strategies for managing the behaviour of pupils are very effective, with the result that lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils work hard and sustain their concentration without the need for constant adult intervention.
- All these strengths in teaching were demonstrated in an outstanding Y5/6 mathematics lesson where the teacher made excellent use of assessment and questioning to introduce and reinforce the concept of the use of brackets in mathematical equations.
- Teachers provide pupils with detailed, informative marking clearly linked to the lesson objectives. Pupils know their targets and use key subject terminology confidently during responses and commentaries to explain what they have learnt.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, in class, around the school, in assemblies and in the playground areas. Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and strive to do well. This is a major factor in the excellent progress they make in most lessons. They respond very positively to challenges and persevere with sustained concentration. They understand the importance of being a part of a team and that everyone contributes to its success and encourage each other well as they work in small groups.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous. This was evident in the warm welcome given to visitors and the mature way in which they discuss their work. They are developing inquisitive minds and appreciate what the school is doing to 'make learning fun'. Pupils' love of school explains why their attendance is above average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including any that might be encountered through internet sites. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They say that they feel 'very safe' in school and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the school's excellent promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have a very clear sense of right and wrong.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders and managers at all levels work exceptionally well as a team in the continuous drive to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. Underpinned by the meticulous tracking of pupils'

progress and detailed review of all aspects of provision, the self-evaluation process is sharp, focussed and accurate. This leads to the setting of appropriate priorities in the school development plans.

- The successful outcomes of leaders' actions demonstrate that they have the capacity to maintain the improvements and their success at promoting equality of opportunities and eliminating any discrimination.
- The skilled, insightful and determined leadership of the headteacher has helped teaching become outstanding since the previous inspection. Senior leaders train and support school staff to become outstanding practitioners and arrangements to support colleagues new to the profession are exemplary.
- Each pupil's progress in reading, writing and mathematics is rigorously tracked and checked as they move through the school. Regular meetings are held to discuss the information gained. These meetings ensure that teachers have an excellent understanding of how well the pupils in their charge are doing and the action they should take to support and help them to reach their challenging targets. The success of current initiatives is assessed and, where necessary, additional support is allocated to ensure all pupils continue to make good progress. The assessment of other subject areas is currently more informal, however, and does not have such a strong impact on achievement.
- The small size of the school ensures that all pupils and families are known very well by staff. The school's very positive relationships with parents and carers and its good links with a wide range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. Strong links with local schools help to overcome the potential isolation of such a small school.
- The school is deeply committed to all pupils achieving well, developing their talents and discovering new interests. The extra funding provided for pupils supported through the pupil premium is spent wisely and imaginatively, and its impact is carefully and regularly checked.
- The school uses its primary sport funding well to provide additional weekly physical education lessons and after-school activities led by skilled sports coaches. This motivates pupils very well and is leading in turn to improved physical skills, health and well-being. Systems are fully in place for the evaluation of the provision at a future date.
- A comprehensive process of setting targets for teachers to improve their work is firmly established and teachers are held to account for achievement in each class.
- English and mathematics are given a high priority but time is also given to develop pupils' interests across a range of subjects. The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of visits and visitors, and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Much attention is given to creative arts where pupils gain insights into how art, music and drama can enhance their lives.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective and members are passionate about ensuring that pupils' achievement is outstanding. Governors are very well informed and bring a wide range of experience to their work. They have a very good understanding of the quality of teaching and an extremely good grasp of how to interpret assessment data in order to keep a sharp

eye on the school's performance. Governors strike an effective balance of support and challenge for all staff. They are fully involved in the decision making about how pupil premium funds are used and are developing systems to monitor its impact. Governors ensure safeguarding requirements are met fully and that pupils are kept safe.

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	116904
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	431499

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Wood
Headteacher	Lorna Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
Telephone number	01531 660607
Fax number	N/A
Email address	admin@muchmarcle.hereford.sch.uk

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