

Marsh School

Abbey Barn Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 1RW

Inspection dates 8–9 May 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress, particularly in developing skills in reading and mathematics.
- Standards of attainment have risen and are broadly average. Pupils' achievement is good.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are catching up with other pupils in their classes.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress.
- Teaching is typically good; some is outstanding. Teachers use the information they have about the pupils to plan work which challenges most pupils well.
- Teachers choose interesting topics for pupils to study. Teachers have a good range of skills to check how well pupils have understood.
- Reading skills are given a high priority and pupils develop good levels of confidence.
- Pupils are almost always well behaved and need few reminders about what is expected of them. They enjoy learning and like working together when they get the chance.
- At school, pupils feel they are well cared for and are helped to overcome any difficulties they may face. They develop good understanding of how they can help to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher and governors have worked hard to make sure that particular issues raised at the last inspection, or since then, have been sorted out.
- The members of the governing body know a lot about the school because they regularly visit lessons and talk to teachers, parents and pupils. They check the school's information and ask challenging questions. They help the school to make sure all statutory requirements are met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always make as much progress in their writing as they do in their reading and mathematics. This is because targets are not used effectively enough, the more-able pupils are not always given hard enough work, and pupils do not always respond to marking.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding, because teachers are not always given specific advice on what they need to improve to accelerate pupil progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 16 lessons delivered by eight teachers. Several of these observations were undertaken together with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed small groups of pupils being taught by teaching assistants.
- During these observations, inspectors evaluated the work pupils were doing, spoke to them about their learning, and looked at teachers' planning and their records about the progress pupils have made. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and spoke to them about their experience of school.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior leaders and teachers who lead particular subjects, the special educational needs coordinator and met with members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority with responsibility for the school.
- School documents and records were reviewed by inspectors, including the school's view about how well it is doing, and the plans to bring about further improvements. Records tracking the progress pupils make were considered, as well as procedures and policies to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed the 37 responses to Parent View, the on-line survey for Ofsted, as well as the school's own survey completed recently. Staff completed a questionnaire about their views of the work of the school.
- At the time of the inspection, there was building work happening, providing an additional two classrooms, to fulfil plans to expand to two-form entry from September 2013.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lucy Maughan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized infant school, including a Nursery class and one class in each year group. There is an additional, mixed-age class of Years 1 and 2 pupils.
- About half of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups, with a larger group of pupils of Pakistani heritage. Some of these pupils speak English as an additional language, a few of whom are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is double the average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average, although it is much higher in some year groups.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This additional funding is allocated to schools by the government to support pupils who have been eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority, or for children of parents serving in the armed forces.
- The school includes a nurture group, helping pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties. There is also a breakfast club run by the school. The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, by:
 - developing the procedures to check on the quality of teaching and giving teachers feedback that helps them know precisely what they need to do to develop the very best practice and accelerate pupils' progress.
- Raise attainment, particularly in writing, and further accelerate the progress pupils make, by:
 - more frequently reviewing the targets that pupils have, and involving pupils more actively in deciding when they have reached these targets and what their next targets should be
 - giving more-able pupils even more challenging opportunities to write, and expecting them to get on with this more quickly
 - making sure that pupils in Key Stage 1 develop the habit of responding to the comments teachers make in their books.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When they join the school in Nursery, or in the Reception class, children's skills and knowledge vary widely, but overall are below those typical for pupils their age. Often their speaking and listening skills and their physical development are low. The activities provided and support from the adults around them mean they make a good start to their learning.
- Across the school, pupils typically make good progress, so that they make up ground. By the end of Year 2, standards in English and mathematics are closer to the national average, and more pupils than expected reach the higher levels. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs means that the overall figures have been slightly below average.
- The pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to reach standards of attainment which are slightly above average, demonstrating the effectiveness of the strategies introduced to improve learning. In particular, standards have risen in reading and in mathematics, standards in writing have risen more slowly.
- Work in books, the school's records about the progress pupils make, and the views of pupils, parents and teachers show that good progress is typical. However, more-able pupils are not always challenged as much as they could cope with and occasionally they have to sit through explanations they do not need, before getting on with their work.
- There is a strong emphasis on helping pupils to learn how to link letters and the sounds they make (phonics) and this means pupils develop good skills in reading and spelling. Pupils enjoy reading, and parents are given training to understand how they can help at home.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are skilfully supported by well-trained teaching assistants. These pupils make rapid progress, particularly when they are new to speaking English, because they get lots of opportunities to learn new vocabulary, other pupils help them, and the school has good resources to support their learning. As they become confident in speaking and listening, their progress in all areas of learning accelerates rapidly.
- Any pupils with disabilities or those with special educational needs are identified quickly and appropriate support is put in place. They are given work which is closely matched to their needs and also make good progress. Some, with particularly severe needs, are helped to make excellent progress.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium benefit from additional support from teaching assistants, and one-to-one time with specially trained staff, to help them make the best progress they can. While their standards have been below those of similar pupils elsewhere, this is improving and they are catching up. These pupils are now on track to reach standards which are closer to the average point scores in reading, writing and mathematics compared to other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Almost all the teaching is good, and some is outstanding. Work in pupils' books shows that the pupils are given interesting things to do that help them develop their skills across the different topics they study. There is a good emphasis on speaking and listening, so pupils enjoy discussing their work and sharing ideas.
- Teachers are keen to improve what they do to help pupils learn, but the feedback teachers are given is not always as specific or challenging as it needs to be. At the moment, improvements in teaching rely too much on the headteacher's views and do not link clearly enough to the progress pupils make. Whilst other leaders across the school are beginning to be involved in this, they do not always have enough time, or the expertise, to play enough of a role in identifying and sharing the strategies that work the best in the classroom.
- Pupils are given targets to help them know what particular skills they need to be working on. They refer to these, for example, when they are doing writing in another subject. However,

these targets remain the same for too long and teachers do not always involve the pupils enough in deciding if they have reached their targets, or what they should be working on next. This means that their progress is not always as rapid as it could be.

- In the best lessons teachers work together with the pupils to develop statements which will help them decide if they have succeeded. However, this is not always the case.
- There is a good sense of teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants, and they work together to give pupils interesting learning opportunities. They ask good questions to probe how well pupils have understood what they are learning, and adapt what they are doing in the light of this.
- Teaching assistants are well informed and provide good support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They encourage and help pupils while making sure they remain as independent as possible.
- A common approach to the marking of pupils' work has been developed with the teachers and is being used more consistently. In the best examples, pupils are also given the time to respond to the comments teachers have made, but this does not always happen. As a result, some pupils have missed opportunities to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- During free time, pupils are very cooperative and play together happily. Very occasional disagreements are quickly sorted out. Pupils like developing role-play scenarios and often sustain these for a considerable length of time. The resources available give them good opportunities to do so.
- In lessons, pupils listen carefully and do what is asked of them. Very occasionally, pupils rely too much on the adults around them to maintain their focus on their learning. Their attitudes to learning are not yet exemplary.
- Parents agree that behaviour is well managed. Pupils said that there can sometimes be silliness, but that this is not allowed to disrupt their learning. They said that any form of bullying is very rare, and that any incidents where pupils say unkind things would be dealt with quickly.
- The focus of the school on the rights and responsibilities that pupils have means that pupils are aware of how they can help others to succeed or improve.
- Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, and they understand why this is important. For example, children in the Nursery particularly enjoyed role playing in a situation about road safety, taking on different roles and explaining what they had to do.
- While pupils enjoy being at school, their attendance is below average. This is often because of family circumstances and the school works very hard to support parents in getting their children to school regularly and on time.
- Pupils who have behavioural or emotional difficulties are particularly well supported through the nurture group. They are helped to learn how to make better choices, by thinking carefully about what they are doing and the possible consequences. This helps them to play a more positive role in the classroom and to make good progress.
- The breakfast club has had a positive impact on improving attendance and provides those pupils who attend with a calm, orderly start to their day; they enjoy the many activities available.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, the school has continued to tackle the difficult issues facing some of the pupils. The quality of teaching has been maintained and pupils continue to make good progress. The school has also developed plans to cope with the expanding numbers of pupils.
- The school has introduced new systems to keep track of how well pupils are doing and teachers are becoming more adept at using these systems to help them plan their lessons carefully.
- However, systems to keep track of the quality of teaching are not well organised and this means

that improvements are not always as effective as they could be. While teachers do share good ideas about how to improve, this is not used as strategically as it could be to develop the very best practice across all areas of teaching.

- The topics around which teachers plan the work for pupils are carefully chosen to be interesting for the pupils. Trips and visitors give pupils rich opportunities to find out more about the topics and are used well to enhance their learning. Together with the emphasis on recognising each other's rights and responsibilities, this strongly supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- Pupils like the clubs that are available, and singing, in particular, is a strength of the school; pupils still talk about their wonderful trip to sing with thousands of other pupils in London.
- The headteacher, together with governors, shows great determination to overcome any barriers to learning pupils may face, and they are determined to make sure every pupil achieves as well as they can. The emphasis on balancing rights and responsibilities demonstrates their commitment to equal opportunities.
- The local authority provides the school with a light touch of support, helping to keep a check on what the data show about the performance of the school in comparison with others. The advisers also help the school to make sure that teachers evaluate the standards of pupils' work accurately.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The members of the governing body make sure they have accurate views about the work of the school, by getting the views of external advisers as well as gathering some information for themselves. They regularly undertake training to keep up to date with developments, and to compare the school with others. Governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher, although they have not always been robust enough in checking how well organised the school's systems are. Together with the headteacher, they make sure that teachers' pay reflects the quality of their teaching. Governors also check what the pupil premium funding is spent on and look at the impact this has on helping the pupils who are eligible to catch up with others and reach appropriate standards. Governors ensure that statutory duties such as safeguarding are met and that financial resources are managed well.

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	110234
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	413428

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Knight
Headteacher	Rebecca Morrisson
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 January 2010
Telephone number	01494 522756
Fax number	01494 522756
Email address	office@marsh.bucks.sch.uk

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