

Marsh Hill Primary School

Marsh Hill, Erdington, Birmingham B23 7HY

Inspection dates

24–25 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The actions taken by school leaders have not been sufficient to fully address the weaknesses in teaching and pupil outcomes.
- Leaders and teachers do not consistently make effective use of the assessment information available to them to improve pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teaching does not consistently meet pupils' needs. Consequently, gaps between the achievement of the least able, the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs have not closed sufficiently.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is inconsistent. Mathematics teaching does not adequately meet the needs of pupils and the actions taken so far have not been successful in improving pupils' achievement.
- Some external support has been too generous in its assessment of the school's progress. The school has not taken swift action to work on the improvement areas recommended in reports.
- Development plans are not sufficiently focused on the areas which need most improvement, such as mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Although parents are generally supportive of the school, some rightly feel that communication between staff and parents could be improved.
- Governors have not sufficiently held leaders to account, in order to improve leadership, teaching and pupil outcomes.
- Performance management is not rigorous enough to improve leadership and teaching. Governors have not held the headteacher fully to account for the pay awards recommended for teachers.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent improvements to teaching and some of the latest assessment information indicate that the school has the capacity to get better.
- Leadership and teaching in the Reception year are good. Most Reception children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and learn. Behaviour has improved and pupils display good conduct around the school.
- A strong emphasis on the school's values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education supports pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring:
 - the pace of change quickens
 - improvement planning is more strategic, sharper, measurable and effective
 - assessment information is used more efficiently to analyse the gaps between the progress of groups of pupils and to inform teaching
 - additional support for pupils is carefully monitored and helps to close attainment gaps
 - the leadership of mathematics is effective in improving teaching, learning and assessment in this subject
 - professional development and performance management are used effectively to support improvements to teaching and pupil outcomes
 - governors systematically carry out their roles and effectively hold the school to account to improve leadership, teaching, pupils' progress and outcomes
 - the school's external support is more challenging and suggested improvements are followed up rapidly by leaders.

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good or better and pupil outcomes improve rapidly by ensuring that all teachers:
 - receive effective training and support to improve their practice
 - improve teaching and the use of assessment information, especially in mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - have higher expectations and consistently meet pupils' learning needs, especially the least able, the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs.

- Further improve attendance by continuing to work closely with the small number of parents whose children have low attendance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have been too slow to address all of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Consequently, not all of the improvements introduced have been embedded and both the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are inconsistent. This is particularly the case for the least able, the most able, disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs.
- School improvement plans are not sharply concentrated on the key areas which need improving, such as grammar, spelling, punctuation and mathematics. As a result of this, professional development and teaching have not been sufficiently focused on improving some of the weakest areas of pupils' skills. Therefore, pupils' progress and outcomes have not improved enough.
- The school's self-evaluation is not accurate enough and does not clearly explain the impact of the actions taken by leaders and teachers. Leaders believe the effectiveness of some areas of the school's work to be better than they are. Consequently, self-evaluation and improvement plans are not rigorous enough.
- The school uses some of the services offered by the local authority and receives support from the Birmingham Education Partnership on behalf of the local authority. Leaders also purchase additional support from a private provider. External reports of recent visits are not challenging enough. The reports do correctly identify some of the key improvement areas such as spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, the headteacher has not ensured these improvement areas have been sufficiently focused on and governors have not challenged this.
- The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school and the education their children receive. For example, parents give examples of how staff are doing their best to develop pupils' confidence and improve their skills. However, some parents also feel that communication could be improved as leaders and teachers are not always present or available at the beginning and end of the day to speak to, for example. A few parents of children with particular needs felt that important information about their child had not been passed on to the next year group.
- Leaders have ensured pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare have improved. As a result, the school is now more settled and teaching has started to improve in areas such as writing. High-quality displays of pupils' writing can be seen around the school and their workbooks show that they are given more opportunities to write at length in a wider range of subjects.
- Pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. For example, additional teaching and support helped disadvantaged pupils to improve their reading and writing skills by the end of Year 6 in 2015. The proportion of this group of pupils who made more than the progress expected of them from Year 2 to Year 6 was greater than the national average in reading and writing. However, the gains made in mathematics for this group were not as strong. The school's current assessment information shows that although the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the school are closing in some areas, they are widening in others. Consequently, there is more work for leaders to do to ensure that the impact of the considerable pupil premium funding the school receives increases and that gaps between disadvantaged and other pupils close consistently across subjects and year groups.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of learning experiences and extra-curricular opportunities. Colourful and interesting displays demonstrate examples of pupils' work across the curriculum, such as art work and history. The school uses an internationally based curriculum to carefully supplement the teaching of English, mathematics and science. Pupils enjoy learning in lessons, extra-curricular opportunities and a range of educational visits.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a strong focus on the school's monthly values which are displayed around the school. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to celebrate their personal achievements and develop their understanding of the school's values. Pupils learn about democracy and equality of opportunity through the election of the school council and anti-bullying ambassadors. The ambassadors have helped the staff pastoral team to deliver 'Prevent' sessions to classes across the school. The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has supported their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Additional government money to improve pupils' participation and skills in sport has been used effectively to enhance teaching and learning in physical education. Staff have been trained in a range of sports and have increased their confidence in teaching physical education as a result. The school employs a sports coach to support lessons, organise clubs and improve behaviour. Consequently, participation in clubs has increased and pupils have access to a wider range of sports, such as golf and netball. The proportion of

pupils who can swim 25 metres by the time they leave Year 6 has increased steadily over the past two years.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors know the general strengths and weaknesses of the school and which aspects have improved. Minutes of meetings show that governors analyse the school's work and sometimes challenge leaders to obtain further information. However, governors have not rigorously held the headteacher and senior leaders to account to ensure that weaknesses in pupils' skills are focused on and that advice is followed up. For example, an external report in early 2015 suggested that leaders should ensure pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills were improved, but there is no evidence that this became a high priority. Inspectors found clear evidence that pupils still need to develop these skills.
 - Governors understand how the performance management system is used to reward success and tackle weaker teaching. However, the headteacher has not been fully held to account for the link between the quality of teaching and gaps in pupils' progress and, therefore, this system is not as effective as it should be.
 - The safeguarding governor regularly meets with the business manager and designated child protection officer to check that training is up to date. However, leaders are not fully informed about the most vulnerable pupils.
 - Governors check that specific grants are directed to improving pupils' achievement. For example, governors are provided with detailed information about how the pupil premium and sport premium funds are being spent and their respective impact on pupils' progress and their participation in sport.
 - The latest financial information indicates that the school is currently spending more money than it is receiving. Inspectors were not provided with evidence that this has been fully considered and appropriate changes made.
- The school's records and checks meet statutory safeguarding requirements. All adults are trained regularly and receive safeguarding information as part of their induction. The school has good transition arrangements to pass on information when pupils join or leave the school, ensuring they are kept safe. Staff have been trained in how to promote pupils' welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable across the school. Teaching does not consistently meet the learning needs of all pupils or challenge them enough to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Sometimes teachers do not use assessment information to ensure tasks are set at the right level and pupils are moved on when they have achieved a skill.
- Teaching in the Reception classes and some other classes is stronger and, consequently, these pupils make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's assessments and inspection evidence suggest that the quality of teaching has started to improve relatively recently, following new appointments and better use of the school's marking and feedback policy, but this is not yet consistent across all classes.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers set well-planned activities for most groups of pupils and make good use of additional adult support. For example, in a writing lesson seen, the teacher created a purposeful learning environment and set clear tasks. Pupils were able to use the modelling and specific guidance provided by the teacher to develop their use of persuasive language and teaching assistants provided effective support to small groups. As a result, pupils were engaged in their writing and clear about their task. Pupils' workbooks typically show that teachers' marking and feedback are responded to well and lead to improvement.
- The teaching of mathematics has not been a priority for the school and pupils' progress is inconsistent. The school has introduced the new mastery curriculum, but expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. For example, some pupils say they find their tasks easy and inspection evidence shows that pupils are not typically moved on quickly in lessons when they understand a concept. Where teaching is weaker, some pupils lose interest and, at times, cause some low-level disruption. Pupils, especially the most able, are not consistently challenged to make the progress they are capable of in this subject.
- The school's latest assessment information shows there is a mixed picture for those pupils who have special educational needs. The gaps in progress between this group and other pupils with similar starting

points have widened in writing this year. The gaps in reading and mathematics between such pupils and their classmates show an inconsistent pattern, with the gaps closing in some year groups but widening in others. Leaders and teachers have not yet ensured that the provision for these pupils is consistently strong or carefully checked to enable gaps to close.

- The teaching of reading is getting better and the latest assessment information indicates that most pupils' progress is improving this year. As a result of better teaching and appropriate additional support, pupils who did not pass the Year 1 phonics check now use their phonics skills well in Year 2. They read confidently and are catching up quickly.
- Writing has been a key priority for the school. As a result, pupils' skills in drafting, editing and improving their written work are improving. Teachers have provided more opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and in other subjects, such as history. There has not been enough focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar and pupils' workbooks show that these skills have not been developed enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and experiencing the broad curriculum on offer. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about what they do and how they make progress.
- Leaders promote pupils' confidence, physical and emotional well-being and ensure pupils are given time to discuss sensitive topics. Consequently, most pupils confidently try out new learning opportunities and challenges.
- Parents are generally supportive of the school's actions to support pupils' personal development and welfare. However, some parents say that communication between staff could be improved for those pupils who have particular needs.
- Leaders ensure pupils have equal access to the curriculum. For example, staff check appropriate adaptations are made and additional support is put in place for pupils with special educational needs.
- Nearly all parents say their children are happy at school and well looked after. The vast majority of parents have confidence in the school to meet their child's educational, personal and welfare needs.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they are knowledgeable about the dangers associated with the internet. Pupils say they feel safe in school because adults are there to help them if needed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff have worked hard to improve behaviour and, as a result, the school is now a calm place to learn and develop. Pupils have good attitudes around the school and during transitions between classes.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is good and they show good respect towards both adults and each other. The vast majority of pupils play actively and happily during well-organised playtimes.
- Staff promote good behaviour and manage pupils' needs well. Consequently, lessons are rarely disrupted. Staff and most parents are positive about the management of behaviour in the school.
- Pupils are well informed of different types of bullying and say that behaviour is rarely a problem here. If anything does go wrong, problems are dealt with well.
- The school analyses behaviour carefully. Checks show that previously high rates of exclusion have fallen. There have been no exclusions during the current academic year.
- Attendance rates are in line with the national average and have improved since the last inspection, especially for those pupils who were persistently absent. However, the attendance of some small groups of pupils is below that of other pupils in the school.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are inconsistent and require improvement. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 improved to be in line with the national average at the end of Year 2 in 2015. Despite some improvements in 2013 and 2014,

pupils' attainment in reading, writing, mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar at the end of Year 6 fell to below the national average in 2015.

- Pupils' progress and attainment vary across year groups and groups of pupils. For example, boys perform better than girls in some year groups. Pupils with low attainment in key stage 1 progress well in key stage 2 in some years, but do not progress well in others. There is typically no difference between the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups. The lack of patterns or trends reflects the inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment.
- The most able pupils do not reach their potential at the end of Year 2 or by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6. The attainment of this group of pupils is nearly always below that of similar pupils nationally. In 2015, the attainment of this group by the end of Year 6 fell in reading and stayed the same in mathematics. However, there was a marginal rise in the proportion of Year 6 pupils who achieved a higher standard of writing in 2015.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check is consistently above the national average. Nearly all of the Year 1 pupils who did not reach the expected phonics standard are catching up quickly in Year 2 because they have received targeted support. However, these skills are not always sustained, as the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 2 was below the national average in 2014 and 2015.
- The school's current assessment information and work in pupils' workbooks suggest that progress across the school is showing signs of improvement this year. However, the improvements are not yet consistent as some groups of pupils are progressing faster than others.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and the least able varies across the school. The needs of these pupils have not been met well in the past and, therefore, their attainment varies and gaps have not closed enough. Current assessment information indicates that progress for these groups in reading, writing and mathematics is still inconsistent and therefore requires improvement.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is better, but still erratic. The additional support given to these pupils in 2015 enabled the school to reduce the attainment gap between this group and other pupils in the school in key stage 1. Also in 2015, the proportion of this group of pupils who made more than the progress expected of them from Year 2 to Year 6 was greater than the national average in reading and writing. Progress and attainment by the end of Year 6 was not as good in mathematics. Current assessment information shows that the progress of disadvantaged pupils is still inconsistent across subjects and year groups.

Early years provision

is good

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. The Reception leader has high expectations of children's behaviour and learning. Staff are well trained and successful in providing a stimulating learning environment that captures children's imagination. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has successfully addressed previous weaknesses in the early years provision.
- Children enter the school with skills that are generally below typical for their age, especially in speech, language and communication. The proportion of children who leave Reception with a good level of development is just above the national average for boys and those who are disadvantaged, but just below for girls. Good leadership, organisation and teaching enable children to make effective progress, so that most are well prepared for Year 1.
- Reception children are confident and happy because of the well-established routines that are reinforced by the adults working in early years. Adults ensure children learn in a safe and caring environment and check the provision and equipment to make sure it is safe to use.
- Early years staff are skilled at working with young children and set clear learning expectations that the children understand. Consequently, children listen carefully, are enthusiastic to learn and behave well. They develop a good sense of how to keep themselves and others safe and are keen to join in the good range of learning activities.
- Teaching is good. A range of carefully planned and well-resourced learning activities ensure that children have daily opportunities to learn and achieve well. In one lesson seen, the whole class was involved in a speaking and listening activity where staff had given the children cameras to use at home. While children shared their photographs in school, the rest of the class listened attentively with fascination and asked relevant questions. Consequently, the children were highly engaged in the activity, which helped to improve their skills in this area of learning.

- The support for disadvantaged children is good. These children typically achieve skills which are, overall, in line with other children nationally.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were positive and appreciative of the solid start their children were making at school. They are kept informed of their children's learning and felt that the transition to Year 1 was effective.

School details

Unique reference number	103233
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10002513

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Donna Murrall
Principal	Marlene Douglas
Telephone number	0121 464 2920
Website	www.marshall.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@marshall.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2013

Information about this school

- Marsh Hill Primary School is larger than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than other schools nationally. The largest minority ethnic groups are of Pakistani or Caribbean heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly higher than other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than other schools nationally. There are currently pupils who have a disability attending the school.
- Approximately half of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is twice the national average. Pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The school does not meet all of the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 27 lessons or part-lessons, including examples of teaching in every year group. Most teaching observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors and a representative of Birmingham local authority who works with the school.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' workbooks to establish the progress and quality of their work over time.
- Informal discussions were held with parents to gauge their views of the school. The inspector took account of 63 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection and the comments made.
- The inspection team did not receive any responses to the online staff inspection questionnaire, but spoke to staff during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of pupils as well as individual pupils during their lessons and at playtimes to find out their views about the school. No pupils completed Ofsted's voluntary online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and observed their behaviour in lessons, around the school and at playtimes.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, external monitoring reports, records of checks made by leaders and information on pupils' progress and outcomes. They also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

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