

New Marston Primary School

Copse Lane, Headington, Oxford OX3 0AY

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have not addressed the areas requiring improvement set at the last inspection with sufficient purpose. As a result, standards have fallen. Systems for safeguarding pupils and for managing the recruitment and performance of staff are not effective.
- The teaching of writing has not improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make slower progress in writing than in reading or mathematics. Standards, particularly for the most able pupils, remain low.
- The new curriculum is not planned well. Teachers are unclear in their expectations of pupils and some subjects are not taught regularly.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and subject leaders do not receive clear guidance to improve their skills. Teaching is inadequate.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils are not catered for well enough in lessons.
- The information that leaders gather about how well pupils are learning is unreliable.
- Children in the early years do not make the progress they are capable of. Teachers do not assess children's skills accurately.
- Some parents are dissatisfied with the level of communication between home and school. The school's website does not provide enough up-to-date information for parents. Many published school policies are not reviewed within agreed timescales.
- Some pupils do not attend regularly enough.
- Local authority support has not led to swift enough improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very new to post. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are keen to see it improve.
- Governors work closely with the wider community and are highly committed to improving the school.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is improving in key stage 1. Pupils enjoy listening to stories.
- Pupils get along with each other well. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour in key stage 1 or key stage 2.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management to ensure that:
 - information gathered about pupils' performance is accurate and analysed in sufficient depth and informs school improvement planning
 - recruitment processes follow statutory procedures
 - teachers receive high-quality feedback on how to improve their skills and are held more strongly to account for the standards pupils achieve
 - additional funding intended to support disadvantaged pupils is used well and gaps between these pupils' attainment and others nationally begin to close
 - the school's website meets statutory requirements, including publishing the impact of additional funding on improving participation in physical education (PE)
 - the roles of subject and phase leaders develop, including in the early years, so that leaders have greater influence on improving outcomes for pupils
 - the curriculum is covered in full in all age groups and includes opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding
 - equality of opportunity exists throughout the school and all pupils have an equal chance of success
 - local authority advisers follow up on the school's progress more robustly
 - all pupils attend regularly
 - governors meet their statutory duties in a timely manner.
- Improve the quality of teaching, including in the early years, in order to improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - making sure that teachers use assessment information to plan tasks that build on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding
 - ensuring that teachers plan tasks that meet the needs of the differing abilities within their classes well
 - ensuring teaching assistants and teachers are trained well and offer skilled support so pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability, the lower-ability pupils and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress
 - challenging the most able pupils so they achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

An external review of governance and the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, chair of the governing body and other leaders with significant responsibility are all very new to post. The headteacher has a mostly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses but faced with instability in staffing has yet to make real inroads into improving the school. Although leaders have wisely sought external advice, they have responded too slowly to guidance. Standards have dropped considerably since the previous inspection and leaders have failed to arrest the decline. Leaders are determined to improve the school but acknowledge much is required in order to achieve their objectives.
- Leaders are not setting a clear, upward trajectory for improvement. Staff told inspectors that they are unsure what leaders expect and do not have a clear understanding of the goals the school is aiming to achieve. This is because the leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning lack precision and are not reviewed with staff regularly enough. Consequently, it is very difficult for leaders, governors and staff to evaluate the difference they are making.
- New systems to assess how well pupils are learning are unreliable and not used well enough. Leaders do not analyse the performance of different groups of pupils in sufficient depth. The school's self-evaluation does not pay heed to pupils' performance strongly enough. For example, although leaders acknowledge the underachievement of the most able pupils, there is no clear strategy to accelerate the progress of this group.
- The literacy, mathematics, pupil premium and phase leaders are all very new to post. They are enthusiastic and keen to ensure that standards rise. However, work has not extended beyond reinterpreting action plans that they have inherited. Furthermore, without clear direction, including up-to-date job descriptions, they are woolly about what is expected. Consequently, there is no coherent overview to their work. Subject and phase leaders are not yet making a difference to raising standards.
- Staff with responsibilities for leading subjects do not monitor or check the standards in those subjects. As a result, where standards are low, too little is being done to address the issues.
- Leaders monitor teachers' performance. However, teachers' targets are not specific enough or aligned to school improvement priorities. Governors lack confidence in the process and have requested an external review of the appraisal system. They want to feel assured that pay awards are linked to performance appropriately.
- Staff training for the first part of the year has focused on aspects of the curriculum such as improving the teaching of phonics. Too little is focused on what is most needed: improving teaching skills and meeting the published teachers' standards more fully. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is particularly weak. Leaders do not focus on how well the teachers' standards are being met or how well pupils are progressing. As a result, staff do not know how to improve their skills or expertise. Leaders know where teaching is at its worst. However, actions to support the teachers involved, such as planning lessons jointly with a senior member of staff, are not making any difference.
- Pupil premium funding is not used well enough to help disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers. The school's own evaluation shows interventions such as booster groups do not accelerate pupils' progress sufficiently well. Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough and, in some year groups where teaching is weakest, gaps are widening.
- Leaders do not monitor curriculum coverage and are uncertain if pupils are taught all the subjects. Pupils' books show limited coverage of some subjects like science, history and geography. Standards in many subjects are low and pupils are not accessing a broad and balanced curriculum. Plans to revitalise the curriculum from September are in place but procedures to improve the quality of teaching and monitor the standards pupils are achieving are underdeveloped.
- There are other weaknesses in the curriculum including the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Although the school's 'Tiger' values of teamwork, initiative, growth, enthusiasm and responsibility are readily recalled by pupils, their deeper understanding of modern British values and how they relate to their everyday lives is limited. Pupils' knowledge of different faiths varies from class to class. It is weakest where teachers do not plan activities in line with the school's expectations. For example, pupils do not cover a range of different faiths over the course of the year as leaders expect.
- Leaders have not revised the school's equalities policy in recent times. Consequently, plans to help all pupils achieve equally well are insufficient. Disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils are underachieving.
- Leaders use sports funding to employ additional coaches to deliver PE lessons. However, leaders have not

monitored the impact of this initiative. It is unclear what difference this is making to raising rates of pupils' participation, raising attainment or developing teachers' skills and expertise. The school's website does not meet statutory requirements because it does not evaluate the impact of this spending.

- The local authority has recently conducted a review of school performance. Officers identified correctly the areas needing significant improvement. The review was particularly helpful as it reassured new leaders that their own judgements were mostly accurate. However, leaders have responded too slowly to the issues raised, many of which remain unaddressed.
- Many parents say their children are happy in school. However, levels of satisfaction about other aspects vary considerably. Some are pleased with how well staff support their children to settle in when they transfer from a different school. Others express dissatisfaction with the school's levels of communication.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors' impact on challenging leaders about school performance is hindered by inaccuracies in the school's information. Information is not challenged in sufficient depth. This limits governors' effectiveness. Some helpful questioning has ensured that certain aspects of the school are improving, such as the monitoring of pupils' attendance.
- School policies are not reviewed in a timely manner. Governors acknowledge that some statutory policies do not reflect the school's practices. Several required policies, such as that relating to equality, are significantly outdated. Equally, differences prevail between the school's safeguarding policy and what happens in practice.
- Governors understand the link between teachers' pay and performance. They have commissioned a review of the teachers' appraisal system in order to allay or confirm their misgivings about the rigour of school arrangements. They are determined that pay rewards are earned when staff have contributed to raising standards.
- Governors are committed to improving the school and engaging with the wider community. Their determined campaigning to establish a zebra crossing for pupils is testament to this.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. Leaders do not follow carefully enough the government's guidance on how to appoint staff safely. For example, leaders do not gather references promptly for newly appointed staff. Many school policies relating to safety, such as the management of asbestos, first aid and anti-bullying are out of date. Staff new to the school do not receive clear and timely guidance on how to keep pupils safe. During the inspection, some staff received their first safeguarding briefing. This was several weeks after they commenced their employment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- The quality of teaching varies greatly across the school and not enough is good over time. Temporary staff, teaching students or teaching assistants teach many classes. Staff are not held to account strongly enough for the standards that their pupils achieve. Lesson observations by senior leaders do not provide useful feedback to enable teachers to improve their skills.
- Teachers do not make checks on pupils' understanding in lessons. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, many pupils did not understand how to find a square number. Miscalculations prevailed and went unnoticed by adults. Consequently, too few pupils moved on in their learning and mistakes were not dealt with.
- The teaching of writing is ineffective. Pupils often complete the same work, regardless of their ability. Tasks do not challenge the most able pupils or support the lower-attaining pupils effectively. Although leaders have emphasised writing across the curriculum, expectations are still too low and pupils' work is often unfinished. This means that very few make progress, as tasks are either repetitive, too easy or too hard.
- A lack of skilled questioning by staff means that pupils do not have opportunities to explain their reasoning. Teachers readily accept pupils' first responses. There is very little exploration of pupils' thought processes or well-structured conversation to deepen understanding.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan tasks to move pupils' learning forward when they are ready. Sometimes, pupils practise skills they have already mastered. For example, during the inspection, Year 2 pupils were disgruntled at repeating work on telling the time that they had already understood when in Year 1.
- Teachers' expectations are too low, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils say that work is too easy

and they want activities that challenge and stretch their thinking. Teachers do not adapt and modify work during lessons to meet the needs of pupils effectively.

- Teaching assistants support groups or individuals in lessons. However, they are not clear about what is expected and many have not received training to support them in their roles. Teachers do not check regularly enough on groups who are working with other adults to see how the pupils are progressing.
- Teachers ensure that pupils who attend the hearing resource base feel well included in lessons.
- Leaders have reviewed the school's approach to marking. However, their expectations are implemented inconsistently and many pupils receive insufficient guidance on how to improve their skills. The feedback pupils receive is not having a marked impact on moving learning forward.
- Teachers and adults do not cater well enough for pupils who have special educational needs or disability and pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The teaching of phonics is improving and standards are rising. Pupils enjoy hearing stories at the end of the school day and have very positive attitudes to reading well. Parents too are equally positive about the teaching of reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Teachers expect too little of pupils and this dampens pupils' enthusiasm. Much teaching fails to spark pupils' interest and pupils complete tasks slowly, showing little motivation to do their very best.
- Pupils are not always clear on what they are learning. They can happily converse about what they are doing but often struggle to articulate how activities are developing their skills.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They understand about different forms of bullying and say that such incidents are rare. Pupils have confidence that staff address incidents of misbehaviour. They have a well-developed sense of cause and consequence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils know the school's Tiger values well. They generally behave well at playtimes and around the school. However, some routines, such as lining up after a playtime, are not enforced to a high standard. As a result, pushing and jostling are quite common, creating an unsettled start to the next session. Equally, teachers are too slow to praise good behaviour and reinforce what is expected.
- Lunchtime supervisors struggle to ensure that all pupils have sufficient time to eat unhurriedly. As the school has grown in size, routines have not been adapted to account for the increasing number of pupils. Pupils say they feel rushed. Consequently, lunchtime is an unsettled occasion and pupils take too little care – for instance, they too often drop food on the floor.
- Attendance is broadly average. Strategies to improve attendance for some pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are only making a positive difference to some. Information about how well pupils are attending is out of date. Rates of unauthorised absence are too high.

Outcomes for pupils are inadequate

- The proportion of pupils in key stage 1 who have met the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics has been below the national average for the last three years. This year, standards in key stage 1 are still too low. Pupils are not well prepared for the challenges of key stage 2.
- Since the previous inspection, standards in writing have not improved quickly enough. In 2015, standards in writing at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 were below those seen nationally. The school's current information shows that progress in writing is slower than in mathematics and reading. In some year groups, standards are still too low and not enough pupils are catching up.
- In 2015, too few pupils achieved the higher levels in reading, writing or mathematics at key stage 1 and in writing at key stage 2. Actions to improve the quality of teaching for the most able pupils lack clarity and the quality of teaching still does not meet these pupils' needs well enough. Older pupils say work is often too easy.
- In 2015, the proportion of children in Reception who achieved a good level of development was in line with that achieved nationally by five-year-olds. However, pupils, particularly in Year 1, are not making sufficient progress in reading, writing or mathematics and capitalising on their readiness for key stage 1.

- Leaders have identified that pupils in some year groups, particularly Year 2, Year 4 and Year 5, are underachieving. However, too little is being done to address the issues and accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in the Year 1 check on phonics (the sounds that letters make) have risen. In 2015, the proportion of pupils who met the standard was slightly above that seen nationally. Teachers have benefited from training opportunities and the school's work to develop storytelling has inspired pupils to learn to read well.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability, including those who attend the hearing resource base, are not making sufficient progress. Standards are low, as teaching does not meet their needs sufficiently well. Disadvantaged pupils are not catching up quickly enough.
- In other subjects too, standards are low. This is particularly the case in science. Pupils' misconceptions in their scientific understanding, such as how light travels or key facts about the earth, moon and space, are not addressed. Although some teachers check pupils' prior knowledge at the beginning of a unit of work, when misunderstandings arise, teachers do not tackle them sufficiently well.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- Children do not respond to adults promptly and adults struggle to enforce their expectations. As a result, routines, such as tidying away, are not understood fully. The early years zone is secure but a lack of vigilance by staff means that children roam outside unnoticed, even when they are asked to stay inside.
- The local authority has advised staff to declutter but much more is required in order to create an appealing, well-organised learning environment. Some activities do not capture children's interests sufficiently well. Many children do not retain concentration and wander from one activity to another.
- Adults are not clear on their roles and responsibilities. Uncertainty prevails and staff are poorly equipped to support children's learning well. Adults miss opportunities to intervene and develop the skills of children as they play and learn independently.
- Adults, in very recent times, have tried to provide activities and resources that hold greater appeal. In some instances, activities are now clearly labelled instructing children what to do. However, as children are only just beginning to develop their early reading skills, deciphering what is expected is too hard for them. For example, although an activity with pompoms attracted children's attention, they could not read the instruction to know to count them out. Consequently, they lost interest and quickly drifted away. Adults do too little to ensure that children understand the purpose of learning activities.
- In 2015, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development rose and was in line with national outcomes. Standards in number were lower than other aspects, especially for girls. Standards this year have slipped and the leaders acknowledge that this year's targets appear overly generous.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years is weak. Children do not settle when in small teaching groups and staff are unable to hold their attention. Staff mispronounce key sounds and this hinders children's ability to make good progress. Progress for many, including those who speak English as an additional language, is slow.
- Assessment information is not used well. Adults do not use the information they gather to track children's progress carefully and identify those who may require additional support.
- Leaders responsible for the early years are aware of the weaknesses in the department. Working with the local authority, support has increased over the year but it is not yet making a difference to improving standards.

School details

Unique reference number	123048
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10001044

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Claire Murray
Headteacher	Ms Hannah Brown
Telephone number	01865 761 560
Website	www.new-marston.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.2529@new-marston.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 June 2012

Information about this school

- New Marston Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6. The school has recently expanded.
- The early years provision comprises three classes, one Nursery and two Reception classes. Children attend the Nursery part time and Reception full time.
- The school offers a breakfast club.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language are above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children looked after and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- Within the school, but managed separately, is a local authority hearing resource base, which was not subject to this inspection. Pupils who visit this provision attend most of their lessons in school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher started in September 2015. There have been many changes to staffing over the last few months. Other leaders, including the literacy and mathematics leaders, have taken up post in recent times.
- The chair of the governing body was elected in September 2015.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, 13 of which were seen jointly with the headteacher. An inspector also visited a school assembly. Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading progress with them. A meeting was held with a group of pupils in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other staff with significant responsibilities and three representatives of the governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground and took into account 47 responses, including written comments, to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors also considered the 21 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, records showing leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, and documents about how the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection team

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Krista Dawkins	Ofsted Inspector

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