

# Marsh Baldon Church of England Primary School

The Green, Marsh Baldon, Oxfordshire OX44 9LJ

## Inspection dates

23–24 February 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Requires improvement**

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils across the school are not working at the expected level in reading, writing or mathematics. Although pupils are catching up to where they should be, there is still some way to go. This is particularly the case for pupils in Key Stage 2 who have not made sufficient progress for some years.
- Teaching requires improvement because not all teachers have sufficient expertise in all subjects. Some teachers do not check how well pupils are progressing in lessons and do not adapt activities to meet pupils' learning needs as fully as possible.
- The most-able pupils are not challenged to achieve as much as they should because activities are not sufficiently open-ended and demanding.
- Teaching assistants do not have the skills and expertise to support pupils' learning well enough.
- The early years provision requires improvement because activities are not always structured well enough to interest children and help them learn. Adults do not always ask questions which help to deepen children's thinking.
- Behaviour is not yet good because expectations are not consistently high and staff do not manage behaviour effectively enough.
- Attendance figures are below the national average. Leaders have taken action to tackle this with parents but further improvement is required.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has tackled ineffective teaching and low expectations with urgency. The quality of teaching and learning is now improving rapidly and pupils are making up lost ground.
- The interim executive board has accurately identified the priorities for improvement and is holding the headteacher effectively to account.
- Leaders have taken swift action to improve safeguarding arrangements. The school is now safe and secure for pupils. Parents recognise this and pupils say they feel safe.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They recognise that they are working harder than they were and describe the school as 'much better than it was'.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure all pupils catch up to at least the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - checking learning in lessons and adapting activities to pupils' needs
  - planning activities which are appropriately challenging and open-ended, especially for the most-able pupils
  - providing opportunities for pupils to practise their reading skills
  - making sure grammar and punctuation skills are taught explicitly and used by pupils in their work
  - developing teachers' expertise and confidence in teaching mathematics
  - developing teaching assistants' skills to support pupils' learning effectively.
  
- Ensure children in the early years provision are ready for Year 1 by:
  - making sure activities interest children and help them learn
  - developing the skills of all adults so that they can ask questions which deepen children's thinking and understanding consistently.
  
- Raise expectations of pupils' behaviour and ensure that all staff consistently follow the school's behaviour management policy.
  
- Increase attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, who joined the school in September, has tackled the many challenges with alacrity, resilience and fortitude. Her ambition for pupils to achieve as well as they can, combined with her determination that 'every lesson and learning experience counts' has reversed the decline in standards identified since the previous inspection. Through her positive attitude, honesty and openness, she has won over the majority of staff and parents.
- Leaders have taken rapid action to improve pupils' progress. They rightly identified that pupils across the school are working at levels which are significantly below what is expected for their age. The headteacher has tackled ineffective teaching head on and as a result, teaching is much better than it was. Teachers are clear about what they need to do to become consistently good, because the feedback from lesson observations is specific and clear. As a result, teaching is much better than it was and is set to improve further.
- Performance management procedures are now rigorous. Targets, which are ambitious and measurable, link well to pupils' achievement.
- Leaders check progress carefully to ensure that pupils are catching up to where they should be. Working closely with teachers, leaders identify pupils who need more support and manage the limited resources available very well to ensure that support is provided promptly. This is recognised by parents as being a new and positive approach to improving their children's progress.
- All middle leaders are new to their roles but are rapidly becoming familiar with their areas of responsibility and beginning to make a difference to standards of teaching and learning. They have identified the right priorities for development and are rapidly developing their skills to become even more effective.
- A recent review of the curriculum has ensured that all subjects are given equal standing. Cross-curricular opportunities are often used well to develop learning across a range of subjects. This was evident in Years 4, 5 and 6, where pupils have learned skills and knowledge which are common to geography, science and art, as well as reading for information, and writing. However, in some classes, cross-curricular links are not made quite as well as in others.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development is supported well through collective worship and class lessons. Whole-school worship is led by the headteacher or the vicar and focuses on a different school value each half term. Discussions and assemblies about each value help pupils to develop a deeper understanding of how they demonstrate respect and tolerance. In the Years 2 and 3 class, a pupil described respect as looking at someone and paying attention when they are talking. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their actions and how they impact on others.
- Leaders check the progress of disadvantaged pupils carefully and use funding well to support their learning, social and pastoral needs. Examples of this are the support provided for individuals at playtime so that pupils can develop social relationships, and the personalised phonics sessions for individuals. As a result of this effective support, these pupils are catching up well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Leaders check their progress carefully to make sure they are catching up to where they should be. Where this is not the case, they ensure that additional support is provided for small groups or individuals.
- Sports funding is used well to enhance sports across the school. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs has ensured that more pupils participate in physical activities, such as archery and hockey.
- The local authority and diocese have supported the school very well by holding leaders to account for pupils' outcomes and taking effective action. Advisers from both have worked cooperatively to ensure the best possible support for the school during the recent challenging period. They have played a key role in the rapid improvements at the school through their brokering of the new interim executive board (IEB) members, relevant and useful training, and ongoing monitoring of progress.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The IEB uses its good range of skills effectively to evaluate how well the school is doing. It strategically plans the priorities and how necessary improvements will be made. IEB members rightly identify the need for a sustainable and effective governing body and their actions to make this happen are useful.

- Evidence from school visits ensures that IEB members are clear about improvements and hold the headteacher rigorously to account. They also provide the necessary support to enable her to manage challenging historical issues. They sensibly identify the need to ensure that she is not doing too much herself.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Following recent training, staff have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe. Recent changes to site safety mean that the school is much more secure for pupils. The risks posed by low fences alongside public areas are managed very well by the school. It is positive that leaders are negotiating with the parish council to agree a more robust boundary.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, whilst improving, remains inconsistent. Some teachers do not check learning in lessons enough and adapt activities to help pupils learn as much as they should. Teachers plan relevant lessons, with appropriate tasks for pupils with different abilities. However, pupils who can get on more quickly or those who need more support or time to complete tasks are not sufficiently challenged or supported at times. This means that, although all pupils are now making better progress than they were, some could make even more. This is particularly the case for pupils working at the lower levels and those who are the most able.
- Teaching of reading and phonics (linking sounds to letters) is variable but improving. Teachers now plan lessons carefully to meet pupils' needs but do not always ensure that there are enough opportunities for pupils to practise their skills.
- Teaching of writing is also improving but is not yet good in all areas. Teachers do not focus enough on developing pupils' grammatical and punctuation skills. This means that some older pupils are still not using full stops and capital letters correctly. However, teachers develop pupils' writing of particular genres well. This is evident by comparing pupils' writing at the beginning and end of a sequence of lessons, where the improvements are invariably significant.
- Mathematical skills are developed usefully over a sequence of lessons. Increasingly, teachers use equipment and mathematical strategies to help pupils understand better. However, some teachers lack the subject expertise to fully meet the needs of pupils working at the lower and higher ability levels.
- Some teaching assistants do not yet support pupils' learning well enough because the questions they ask do not help pupils to think harder and explain their reasoning.
- Teachers plan activities at different levels well. However, they do not provide sufficiently challenging tasks to help the most-able pupils achieve as much as they can.
- Effective teaching and carefully planned support for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs are helping these pupils to make more rapid progress. As a result, they are catching up with others nationally.
- Teaching of other subjects, such as science and music, is variable but improving. Pupils have useful opportunities to do practical activities, such as experiments in science, but their skills are currently a long way behind where they should be.
- Work is checked and assessed after each lesson so teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn next. Some teachers make useful comments to help pupils to know the next steps in their learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** requires improvement

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils show adults respect by being polite and courteous. However, some pupils do not yet show similar respect to their peers.

- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They learn about being safe when using the internet. They also learn how to keep safe when crossing the road and when near to water in a pond. These skills, sensibly, take account of the school's rural locality. During the inspection, children in the early years provision were learning about fire safety; it was delightful to see them rehearsing through role play what to do in the event of a fire.
- Some pupils work well independently, getting on with activities without needing support from an adult. However, this is not yet the case for many pupils who, when stuck, sit and wait for adult assistance, so their learning slows.
- Attendance figures are below the national average. The headteacher has taken useful action to encourage increased attendance, meeting with parents of pupils whose attendance is low and not authorising holiday. However, attendance continues to be below the national average.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The new behaviour management policy identifies clearly what is and is not acceptable and as a result, pupils and staff describe behaviour as being much better. However, although all staff follow the steps identified in the policy, some do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This means that there is some rough play at breaktimes and lunchtimes and occasional low-level disruption in class.
- Bullying is rare and pupils say it is managed well by teachers and by the headteacher. They share concerns that some other staff take it less seriously.

### Outcomes for pupils

#### require improvement

- In 2015, pupils' attainment was below national averages in almost all areas. None of the Year 6 pupils achieved the expected level in all three subjects of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since September, the majority of pupils are making more rapid progress. They are beginning to catch up to the expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. This is happening more quickly in the early years provision and Key Stage 1 because the gaps are not as wide as in Key Stage 2.
- The most-able pupils are making faster progress but it is not yet as fast as it could be. This is because they sometimes they have to work at the same pace as other pupils, rather than starting work as soon as they understand what to do.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are making accelerated progress. Their achievement is in line with other pupils at the school but well below that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs are catching up to where they need to be. There is some way to go, but their faster progress reflects the much-improved provision and support.
- In other subjects, such as science and history, pupils do not achieve as much as they should. This is because their skills of research and investigation have not been developed over time. Pupils have recently begun to develop these skills. An example of this is in science, where Year 1 pupils are carrying out similar activities as pupils in Years 2 and 3. However, there is still more to do in this area.

### Early years provision

#### requires improvement

- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching over the week and too often children are not supported to learn as well as they should.
- The early years leader, who joined the school in November, has made sensible changes to improve provision for children in early years. Topics are now chosen and planned according to children's likes and hobbies and as a result, are more interesting and fun. However, some activities are not planned well enough to sustain children's interests and there are too few activities which challenge children to think harder and learn more.
- Adults in the early years provision look after children well; they keep children safe and make sure they are happy. Children's personal, medical and social needs are met well.
- Last year, the percentage of children who made a good level of development was below the national average. This year, children are making good progress and many are working at the expected level for their age.

- Previously, children in early years provision struggled with the move to Year 1, even though they remain in the same classroom. This is because, in addition to not reaching the expected levels, many children were not used to concentrating for longer periods of time. Teachers now sensibly develop children's concentration by teaching early years children and Year 1 pupils for short sessions together; these are planned to increase during the year.
- Children's behaviour is variable. When interested in activities or sitting on the carpet for very short periods, many children concentrate and listen well. However, frequently they lose interest and, when not challenged, become boisterous. At times they play well and take turns.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123131
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001360

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Moyes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Herring
<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 343249
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.marshbaldonschool.co.uk">www.marshbaldonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Office.3188@marsh-baldon.oxon.sch.uk">Office.3188@marsh-baldon.oxon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8–9 February 2011

## Information about this school

- Marsh Baldon is a small, village primary school which admits pupils from the local villages and Oxford suburbs.
- The school organises pupils into three mixed-age classes, with two consecutive year groups in the younger classes and Years 4, 5 and 6 in the oldest class.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average.
- The headteacher joined the school in September, following a term of interim headteacher arrangements.
- The local authority and diocese organised the current IEB to replace the previous governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- Her Majesty's Inspector observed seven lessons across a range of subjects, as well as part of an assembly. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at playtime. She and the headteacher scrutinised pupils' work. The inspector talked with pupils and listened to a selection of pupils read.
- The inspector met with teachers, many of whom had leadership roles. She also met with the IEB and representatives from the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector looked closely at school documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school improvement plan and information about pupils' progress. The school's behaviour logs were also reviewed.
- The inspectors took account of 27 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and informal discussions with parents before the start of the school day. Inspectors analysed four responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.

## Inspection team

Louise Adams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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