

Marnel Community Junior School

Shetland Road, Popley, Basingstoke RG24 9PT

Inspection dates 6–7 July 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher leads the school with conviction and passion. She has taken decisive action to improve the school since her appointment in 2013.
- Pupils attain well. Standards in 2016 in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now achieving well because leaders have taken effective action to ensure that these pupils catch up.
- Leaders use the new assessment system to rigorously evaluate the school's strengths and areas that require further attention.
- Governors exercise good oversight of the school. They ensure that funding is spent soundly and they are ambitious for the school to progress.
- The curriculum is lively and interesting. Pupils are excited and enthusiastic about learning because they enjoy the wide range of topics that they study.
- Pupils attend regularly and enjoy being in school. They work well with each other and with their teachers.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain because they have a good understanding of the values of the school and make a strong contribution to their community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers are not yet stretching the most able often enough, especially in mathematics and writing.
- Fewer pupils than expected achieve the required standard in spelling.
- A number of parents lack confidence in the school's leaders, despite recent improvements made.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further refine teaching in mathematics and writing so that the most able are consistently stretched and challenged.
- Improve the teaching of spelling so that more pupils achieve the standards expected of them by the end of key stage 2.
- Work more effectively in partnership with those few parents who currently are not confident about the work of leaders and struggle to communicate their concerns.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has taken effective action since her appointment to raise standards. Her vision for the school, 'success through care and opportunity', is well understood by staff and pupils because she leads by example and has high expectations for all.
- The headteacher is well supported by senior leaders. Leaders work effectively together by playing to their strengths, by taking risks and adopting good practice.
- Leaders evaluate their work accurately and they are careful in prioritising the areas that require further attention. They have a thorough grasp of the progress of groups and take effective action to address any shortfalls. As a result, the majority of pupils reach expected standards by the end of the academic year.
- The school improvement plan is a useful document that helps leaders and governors to keep a check on how much progress they are making, what is working well and whether further changes need to take place to address the school's priorities. As a result, leaders strike a good balance between acknowledging their successes so far and the further challenges that remain.
- The leadership of teaching is formidable. The systems to reward pay and performance are fair and robust. Staff feel well supported and they are ambitious to refine and improve their teaching. Teachers work well together on planning and assessment and they are supported to improve with relevant coaching and training. Consequently, much teaching in the school is very strong, with pockets of excellence.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective. They work well with senior leaders in developing the curriculum and raising standards for pupils across a range of subjects.
- Leaders are passionate about ensuring that all pupils experience the best teaching and provision. They have used additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities thoughtfully by developing specific programmes that meet the needs of these pupils. As a result, current information shows that these pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding to ensure that those who are disadvantaged reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders regularly review the impact of this funding and use it particularly well to support disadvantaged pupils who have social and emotional needs.
- The additional funding for sports provides a range of activities for pupils. Pupils enjoy the additional opportunities to participate in different sports, such as table-tennis, karate and cheer-leading. The school achieved an award for its sports provision in 2014.
- The curriculum is especially innovative and stimulating. There is a suitable programme of trips, visits and assemblies that complement the curriculum themes. Pupils work through a range of projects that captivate their interest as well as enable them to develop the appropriate skills in each subject. Every topic starts with an activity or 'hook' that catches pupils' imagination. Boys are increasingly engaged in their learning because leaders have thought especially carefully about resources and texts. There are also regular opportunities for parents to see pupils' work at the 'outcomes' events, which take place after every project.
- Leaders are especially adept at weaving in the school's key values of tolerance, respect and cooperation into the curriculum and the environment of the school. Pupils have designed symbols that they use to highlight where work in their books or displays on walls show evidence of these values. Pupils' understanding of wider British values is also reinforced with skilfully chosen resources and additional activities such as a mock referendum.
- The support for pupils to improve their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and celebrate each other's differences. For example, a group of Year 3 pupils, when questioned, were very proud that they and many of their classmates came from different countries or diverse backgrounds.
- There are good partnerships with other schools and the local authority. Leaders work well with the Infant school to support the transition of pupils from Year 2 to Year 3 and there are effective arrangements with secondary schools to help pupils move on. The English leader works closely with the local authority to lead moderation across a cluster of schools. The school works successfully in partnership with other services to support those pupils who have extensive additional needs.
- There is an active parent teacher association that organises events to raise money for school projects and involve parents in the life of the school. However, leaders acknowledge that they need to do more to improve the way they work in partnership with some parents, especially those parents who expressed a lack of confidence in aspects of the school's work on the online Parent View questionnaire.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance is good. Governors work together effectively to ensure that they discharge their duties. They exercise good oversight of the finances of the school and check that the systems to reward pay and performance are appropriate. They are knowledgeable about the performance of different groups, and as a result keep a close eye on the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have a good understanding of the curriculum and the new demands of the end of key stage 2 tests. They are ambitious for pupils to achieve well and challenge leaders effectively over pupils' performance. For example, governors raised concerns about the performance of most-able pupils in reading and writing in 2015. They visit the school regularly to observe the work of leaders and assess how well leaders are addressing the school's priorities.
- The governors have a clear and accurate sense of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have recruited additional expertise in finance and education to bolster the skills of the governing body. However, governors acknowledge that there is still a need to recruit more parent governors, especially given the concerns raised by parents about communication.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are stringent procedures in place to check the suitability of staff. The systems to ensure that pupils are safe and well looked after are comprehensive and thorough. Policies and procedures are well understood by staff who follow guidance systematically and to good effect. Governors also regularly visit the school to check whether procedures are being followed appropriately. Leaders work very effectively with other agencies and are tenacious in following up on any concerns previously reported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching is good, with the majority of pupils in every year group reaching expected standards. Teachers work well together to plan lessons that motivate and interest pupils. They use the school's systems for assessing pupils' work effectively so that pupils try their best and improve their work.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to deepen and probe pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics class, the teacher asked a pupil to explain how they had worked out the answer and pushed other pupils to explore different methods to find other answers. Consequently, pupils are confident to talk about and share their ideas with others.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well, to plan for and use resources that absorb and engage pupils. For example, in a Year 4 geography lesson, pupils enjoyed comparing the current map of their town with one from 1882, using their knowledge of map symbols to explain why the population had grown over time.
- The teaching of reading is increasingly strong. Pupils' skills of inference and comprehension are increasingly well developed. There are suitable programmes in place to ensure that those who need additional support to catch up, do so quickly. Pupils, including boys, talk excitedly about books they have read from the library, which is well stocked and managed. Leaders work well with parents to ensure that more pupils read regularly, with a suitable system to promote reading at home.
- Teachers use a very effective model to teach writing. As a result, pupils are writing with increasing skill and confidence using sophisticated vocabulary and punctuation. They have a good understanding of the features of different texts and can write from a variety of viewpoints. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote well from the perspective of a prisoner, developing their ability to write to inform and persuade. Pupils also receive good guidance and value the opportunities they have to improve their work, which is then displayed and shared with parents. The most able are effectively challenged by some written tasks but leaders recognise that further work is required to refine the teaching of this group.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Teachers use a wide range of approaches to ensure that these pupils learn key concepts. Teachers and other adults work well together so that any misconceptions are addressed quickly.
- Occasionally, the most-able pupils complete all the work planned for them. In mathematics, teachers aim to stretch these pupils but sometimes they still find the work too easy.
- The teaching of other subjects is also strong. For example, Year 5 pupils are developing their scientific skills well, Year 4 pupils are learning a good level of French and Year 3 pupils were able to play a piece on their violins following very skilful guidance from their teacher.
- Teachers make good use of the new approach to homework, introduced following consultation with parents, which supports pupils well in practising skills such as reading and spelling.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are happy and confident to discuss their thoughts with others. For example, in a Year 3 assembly, pupils shared their ideas about the meaning of 'open-mindedness'. Pupils at breaktime wanted to tell inspectors they enjoyed school and these views are well supported by the school's own analysis of the results of the most recent pupil questionnaires.
- Pupils are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle, many pupils enjoying the free fruit at breaktime and dancing at lunchtime. There is a drive to encourage pupils to walk to school and pupils enjoy the opportunity to swim regularly.
- Pupils receive good guidance about how to keep themselves safe. They are able to explain how to take appropriate precautions when using the internet and there are suitable programmes for pupils to learn to cycle proficiently and cross the road safely.
- The vast majority of pupils are confident that they can share any problems they may have with staff. They are very clear that staff will act quickly to support them and as a result they feel safe. However, a few pupils are concerned about other pupils being 'angry' and these concerns are shared by a few parents. The school has good systems in place to support those pupils who need additional space and help, but recognise that parents may not always be aware of these areas of support.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct in and between lessons is calm and orderly. Those few pupils who need extra attention are managed well. Pupils are polite and eager to make a good impression with visitors.
- Pupils listen well to each other and to their teachers, and collaborate well. They work happily in pairs to talk through their ideas and discuss their answers. As a result, pupils are increasingly confident about working on their own and taking risks in their work.
- Pupils are proud of their appearance; they wear their uniform well. They take pride in their work and the quality of handwriting and presentation in their books is high.
- The attendance of pupils is above the national average and those pupils whose attendance needs to improve are well supported with an effective range of strategies. As a result, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is also broadly in line with the national average. The vast majority of pupils are punctual and keen to come to school. However, a few pupils are regularly late despite leaders taking appropriate actions to address this.
- Pupils make a significant contribution to the school as peer mentors, young interpreters and school councillors. They talk about how 'they are here to help' and how in the first instance other pupils ask them for advice and guidance if a problem occurs.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the key values of the school, and they gain badges for demonstrating these values in their daily life as well as at school. As a result, pupils are able to express their views openly and tolerate others' differences well. Pupils also contribute to their community by raising money for charities and helping to organise events, such as the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations.
- Pupils reported that bullying is rare, and when it does occur it is dealt with well by teachers. The school keeps comprehensive records of unacceptable behaviour and bullying and how these are resolved. However, some parents reported that bullying remains a concern. Leaders acknowledge that some of the school's communication about their stance on bullying is not as clear to some parents as it could be.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- National test results for pupils in 2015 in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils improved significantly in 2014 and was broadly in line with the national average in 2015. In 2016, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2015, fewer pupils than the national average made good or better progress in reading and writing, while the proportion of pupils who made good or better progress in mathematics was broadly in line with

the national average. Current assessment information and evidence from books shows that more pupils make good progress from their starting points than previously, especially in reading and writing.

- Although the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged and others widened in 2015, the results at the end of key stage 2 tests in 2016 show that these gaps are narrowing. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standards in mathematics and reading was broadly in line with the national average and well above it in writing. Current information shows that the gap is narrowing rapidly in all years across the school because teachers adapt their teaching to help these pupils catch up quickly.
- This year, the vast majority of pupils achieved the standard expected of them in writing. Current information and evidence from books shows that more pupils in every year group are meeting age-related expectations than in the past. Pupils are writing in more depth because they receive helpful advice to improve their work and this is especially the case for boys.
- Standards in mathematics remain above the national average. Teachers are using the new curriculum and resources to support pupils gain the knowledge and understanding to attain well. Evidence from books shows that pupils have a good command of mathematical language and can explain their reasoning when prompted.
- Current information and test results show that pupils in all year groups read well. Leaders have ensured that there are useful systems in place to teach reading because in the past a few pupils have not made the progress expected of them. Pupils are now reading with accuracy and fluency as well as using their understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to make sense of words they are not sure of.
- In the past, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have not made strong progress, especially in reading. Current information shows that these pupils are making better progress.
- The progress and attainment of the most able was not as strong in 2015 in reading and writing. Current information shows that more of these pupils are now working at higher levels in reading. However, fewer numbers are developing mastery in mathematics or achieving beyond the expected standard in writing.
- Leaders acknowledge that more work is needed on improving pupils' spelling, following lower than expected results in 2015 and 2016. Leaders have recently refined their work in this area. As a result, pupils report that they are improving their spelling skills and evidence from books supports this.

School details

Unique reference number	10000849
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10000849

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	Junior/middle deemed primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Potter
Headteacher	Danielle Owens
Telephone number	01256 328 670
Website	www.marnel-jun.hants.sch.uk
Email address	adminoffice@marnel-jun.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 October 2011

Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger than average junior school where the majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after) is twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below that found nationally.
- Three pupils attend the local pupil referral unit for three afternoons a week.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school's website is compliant and meets the requirements for the publication of specific information.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed seven lessons and nine part-lessons across all year groups. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, other staff and with governors.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the confidential questionnaires received from staff. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of the local pupil referral unit.
- Inspectors evaluated key documents, including the school's strategic planning, minutes of meetings, reports of attendance and behaviour and records related to pupils' safety and academic progress.
- Inspectors scrutinised books in lessons and a sample of Years 5 and 6 pupils' project books.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break- and lunchtimes, around the school and in other activities.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils from every year group, both informally and formally, as well as taking into account the 305 responses from pupils to the school's own questionnaire.
- Inspectors took into account the 81 responses from parents on Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents).

Inspection team

Seamus Murphy, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Darren Aisthorpe	Ofsted Inspector
Rosemary Beattie	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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