

Marlborough Junior School

Green Lane, Small Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B10 9NY

Inspection dates

18–19 October 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent and the progress that different groups of pupils make is too variable. Boys are making slower progress in their learning than girls, particularly in reading. The progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils is slower in reading than the progress made by other pupils.
- Books that the school provides for pupils to read are not always matched well enough to their ability levels or interests.
- Assessment is not used well enough by all teachers to plan learning activities that challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Too few teachers are consistently applying the school's marking policy. This hinders learning because pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve.
- In a few lessons, a minority of pupils behave poorly. This slows pupils' learning.
- Since the previous inspection the governing body have failed to support school improvement well enough.
- Weaknesses in governance resulted in the headteacher having to take on additional roles and responsibilities, thus diverting his focus from improving teaching and learning. This has slowed the school's improvement since the previous inspection.
- Oversight of financial management, previously carried out by members of the governing body, failed to support school improvement well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Actions to keep pupils safe in school are rigorous and robust.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in mathematics and writing improved well from 2015 to 2016.
- In school corridors and at breaktimes, pupils are polite, well-mannered and respectful of each other and of adults.
- The promotion of British values within school and the community is exceptionally strong.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have brought about improvements in many aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection.
- The new chair of the governing body is rapidly bringing about many improvements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching so all groups of pupils make strong progress in their learning, particularly boys and the most able disadvantaged pupils in reading, by:
 - making sure that rates of progress are equally good across the classes in each year group
 - ensuring that all teachers use the latest school performance information more precisely to plan for pupils' individual learning needs
 - making sure that all teachers consistently apply the school marking policy so that pupils understand what they have to do in order to improve
 - more carefully matching books to the ability levels of pupils
 - providing a wide range of books which motivate, enthuse and engage all pupils, including boys, so that they want to read
 - fostering a love of reading throughout school
 - ensuring that only the highest levels of presentation in pupils' work are acceptable.
- Ensuring that governors discharge their statutory duties more effectively in order to strategically drive school improvement by:
 - checking more thoroughly on how well pupils are learning
 - holding school leaders fully to account for pupils' underachievement
 - making sure that they have a clear oversight of the spending of the school budget
 - taking on a more rigorous role in school self-evaluation so that they understand how well the school is performing compared to other schools nationally.
- Improve pupils' behaviour in the minority of lessons where low-level disruption slows learning by:
 - making sure that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of behaviour in lessons
 - strengthening staff's behaviour management techniques.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- Significant weaknesses in governance have slowed the rate of improvement since the previous inspection. These weaknesses have taken the headteacher's focus away from improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain.
- Support for learning provided through the pupil premium is inconsistent. This is reflected in the variable progress made by disadvantaged pupils in the latest school performance information. Pupil premium funding is used more effectively to support disadvantaged pupils' learning in some subjects than others. For example, in 2016, all of the most able disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made the progress expected by the school in writing and mathematics, but only just over two thirds made a similar amount of progress in reading.
- Senior leaders' monitoring and subsequent actions lack a precise enough focus on the impact teaching has on learning, especially for specific groups of pupils such as the most able disadvantaged.
- At the beginning of the inspection, key documents were missing from the school website. Many policy documents, including one on safeguarding, were uploaded to the school website on the afternoon prior to the inspection. The processes for regularly updating the website with key information for parents are not working well enough.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team have, nevertheless, driven many improvements since the previous inspection, leading, for example, to higher standards in writing and mathematics. Significant inconsistencies in the quality of teaching still remain, but the weakest teaching has been tackled.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of what needs to be improved next. They have well-focused plans to rapidly tackle the shortcomings.
- Since the previous inspection, senior and middle leaders have greatly increased the amount and quality of their monitoring activities. They now regularly undertake visits to classrooms to check on pupils' learning. Their understanding of what the latest school performance information tells them about how well pupils are learning has also improved. Support provided by the school improvement partner and Birmingham Education Partnership has helped to promote these improvements effectively.
- The school effectively develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through the wide range of activities within a rich and diverse curriculum. The curriculum is further enriched through many visits providing opportunities for learning about the outside world. For example, RAF Cosford was recently visited by pupils to learn about the work of the Royal Air Force.
- Reading is, however, a key aspect of the curriculum which is underdeveloped. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading is less strong.
- Sport is given a very high priority within the curriculum. In lessons, learning is well promoted by the specialist physical education (PE) teacher employed through the sports premium funding provided for primary schools.

- The promotion of British values and preparation for pupils' living in modern Britain is a clear strength in this school. It is given very high priority and led effectively. For example, the local member of parliament visited the school last school year to address pupils about democracy in the United Kingdom. Older pupils will also be visiting the Houses of Parliament later this year. A visit is planned to the school by a rabbi from the Central Synagogue, to strengthen pupils' understanding of the principles which underpin the Jewish faith. Such activities successfully reinforce pupils' understanding of British values. Pupils feel proud to be British and Muslim.

Governance of the school

- Governors have failed to discharge their statutory duties well enough since the previous inspection. In the past, the headteacher has had to focus on financial oversight of the school budget because of the failings of the governing body. This diverted him from focusing fully on improving the quality of teaching.
- Governors have not previously held school leaders fully to account for pupils' underachievement. They have been insufficiently involved in checking on how well pupils were learning or how well the school was performing. This aspect of governors' work has recently improved.
- Things are changing rapidly under the highly focused leadership of the new chair of governors, who joined the school at the start of June. He is experienced in improving failing organisations and is currently undertaking meetings with other governors to ensure that they are up to the job which lies ahead in order to make the school a good one.
- The chair of governors is planning a suitable structure for more appropriate financial oversight of spending to enable the headteacher to focus fully on eliminating the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A strong culture of safeguarding pervades school life. Strong recruitment processes are underpinned by rigorous checks carried out by the school before a member of staff is employed at any level. All adults working in school are thoroughly vetted before they are permitted to work with the pupils.
- All staff, including newly qualified teachers, are kept fully updated about the latest statutory requirements for safeguarding. Robust checks are made on their understanding of what is expected of them. Staff have their knowledge checked through a rigorous test and their answers are marked by a senior leader to identify any additional training which may be required. Adults in school are well aware of who they should contact about any safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders are now very aware of the desirability to ensure that the latest safeguarding and child protection documentation is readily available on the school website for parents to access.
- Pupils are well protected from radicalisation because of the importance placed on ensuring that they are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The inconsistencies that remain in the quality of teaching are preventing all groups of pupils from making strong progress in their learning.
- The latest school performance information shows variations in rates of progress for groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics across year groups. This is also apparent between groups of pupils across the three classes in each year group.
- Too many teachers fail to apply the school marking policy consistently. This means that pupils are not helped enough to understand what they need to do to improve and how to become more successful. This slows down their learning and progress.
- Only a minority of teachers fully use their knowledge of the latest performance information about pupils to plan learning tasks to meet pupils' needs. Occasionally learning tasks are too easy for pupils so they are not challenged enough in lessons.
- Reading is not taught as well as writing or mathematics. Books given to pupils to read are not well enough matched to their ability levels. Boys are not inspired by the range of books available to them. The books fail to engender a love of reading among the boys because they see them as dull and uninteresting.
- The school has focused strongly on improving the teaching of writing. Pupils now have far more opportunities to write than they did in the past, and this is having a positive impact on outcomes. Likewise, in mathematics a greater focus on using and applying mathematics across the curriculum is starting to improve pupils' skills.
- There are some strengths to the teaching in the school. For example, in a computing lesson, pupils were observed learning effectively. Pupils were successfully undertaking a challenging activity using a spreadsheet which was well matched to their learning needs. Learning in PE is well organised and pupils progress well in PE lessons.
- Many teaching assistants were observed asking probing and challenging questions of pupils which extended their learning effectively.

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' books show they do not always take as much pride in how they present their work as they could.
- When moving around the classroom in tight spaces pupils do not always demonstrate the levels of self-control that might be reasonably expected for their age and level of maturity.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They know how to keep themselves safe in the wider community and when using the internet because of how well these subjects are taught in school. Pupils report they feel safe in school.
- Pupils are well turned out in their smart school uniforms. They wear their uniforms with pride. They are proud to be members of the Marlborough Junior School community.
- Breakfast club is well run and has a calm and peaceful atmosphere. This sets pupils up

well for the school day ahead. Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is effectively promoted by the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In a minority of lessons, low-level disruption slows learning. In a small number of classes teachers are too accepting of this low-level disruption. It is mainly, but not always, boys who initiate this low-level disruption.
- Pupils report bullying incidents are dealt with swiftly by adults in school. Incidents are resolved to pupils' satisfaction when they occur.
- Attendance is broadly average. The number of pupils who are regularly absent from school has been reduced dramatically in the past year. Regular attendance is effectively promoted by the school.
- In school corridors, in the dining hall and on the playground, pupils are polite and courteous towards other pupils and adults. They regularly hold doors open for each other and greet adults with a cheery 'Hello Miss' or 'Hello Sir'.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Many groups of pupils, such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the most able and disadvantaged pupils, are making rates of progress in their learning that are too variable. This is because the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean their individual learning needs are not met well enough.
- The impact of pupil premium is also too variable. In 2015, differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in school and other pupils nationally reduced in mathematics and reading. However, that gap failed to diminish in writing, and in pupils' use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. At the end of Year 6, the most able disadvantaged pupils were making stronger progress in reading and writing than in mathematics. In 2016, this reversed, and they made less progress in reading than in the other two subjects.
- Pupils' achievement is stronger in writing and mathematics than in reading. Boys' progress in reading lags behind that of girls because they are not taught the skills of reading well enough.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress in their learning dipped to significantly below the national average in 2015. Pupils' progress is now above average in writing and mathematics, but remains below average in reading.
- Standards are rising at the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2016 was close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics combined. These pupils were better prepared for the next stage of their education than those who have previously left the school.

School details

Unique reference number	103312
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10019998

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Hedley
Headteacher	Mohammed Sarwar
Telephone number	01214647933
Website	www.mjs.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@mjs.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 December 2014

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage. The remainder are from other minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about governors on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and part lessons. Four part-lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, school staff and the new chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a school improvement partner bought in by the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons and during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors scrutinised the pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a wide range of their books. They also listened to a small number of pupils from Year 3 and Year 6 reading.
- Inspectors closely observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the progress pupils currently in school are making.
- Other documentation scrutinised included: plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors considered six free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Nash	Ofsted Inspector
Collette Higgins	Ofsted Inspector

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