

Marshland Primary School

Marshland Road, Moorends, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN8 4SB

Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Significant change to the leadership and teaching staff has hindered improvement.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent in its impact on learning and pupils' outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- Teaching does not always meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able. As a result, few learn to a greater depth.
- Teachers' expectations are not always as high as they should be. Consequently, handwriting and presentation are very variable.
- In the early years and key stage 1, boys make insufficient progress in reading and writing. Disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress and their attainment lags behind that of their peers.
- Leaders have not checked on the impact of teaching and planned improvements on different groups of pupils. The skills of middle leaders are underdeveloped.
- Governors know the school well but have an overgenerous view of the effectiveness of the school. They have not robustly challenged leaders about the use and impact of the pupil premium funding on teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- Persistent absence of some boys and some disadvantaged pupils adversely affects their learning and progress.
- Although there are strengths in the leadership of the early years, inconsistencies mean that not all pupils benefit from the often well-thought-out provision, particularly boys.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and head of school have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and what needs to be improved.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning have improved following a period of decline connected to staff change. Pupils behave well.
- Pupils receive good care and safeguarding arrangements are effective. Pupils' personal development is good.
- There are very warm relationships between pupils and adults and this contributes to pupils' improved attitudes to school.
- Teachers are proud of the school and are committed to driving improvement. Leaders have begun to provide teachers with guidance that is helping to improve teaching.
- There is some effective teaching, particularly in phonics and in Year 5 and Year 6.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors have a clear understanding of their role in holding leaders to account for the impact of their actions, particularly for the use and impact of the pupil premium funding
 - middle leaders' skills are developed to enable them to effectively evaluate and influence their colleagues' work and impact on all groups of pupils
 - the plans for improvement are refined to reflect more precisely the areas identified for improvement at this school rather than across both schools in the federation
 - the monitoring of the impact of teachers' work is fine-tuned to identify the impact on different groups, particularly boys and the disadvantaged
 - leaders refine the pupil premium strategy to better use funds to address any identified barriers to learning, particularly absenteeism
 - all required information is published on the school website.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently match tasks to the needs of all pupils, particularly the higher-ability pupils
 - all teachers have the highest expectations for all pupils and make these explicit within lessons
 - presentation of work in books is improved so that it is as good as the best at the school
 - handwriting and letter formation are taught more consistently across the school
 - teachers provide activities that effectively develop pupils' spelling, punctuation, comprehension and vocabulary more consistently
 - the skills and expertise of the most effective teachers are shared with other staff.
- Improve boys' progress and attainment in reading and writing in the early years by:
 - capitalising on children's interest in practical activities and outdoor play to develop their language skills and vocabulary
 - sustaining boys' interest in and concentration on activities indoors and outdoors
 - ensuring that both boys and girls benefit from activities designed to develop early writing and reading skills.

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 pupil premium funding 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

- Although senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's overall effectiveness, and have had some successes in improving behaviour, their work to improve teaching and outcomes have not securely led to improvement in all aspects of the school's work.
- The use of the pupil premium has not secured good progress for disadvantaged pupils. Although leaders identify that persistent absenteeism adversely affects the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils this has not been addressed in the pupil premium strategy.
- Leaders use a wide range of strategies to check on the work and impact of teachers, such as lesson observations and scrutinising pupils' work. However, these strategies do not focus sharply on the impact on specific groups, such as the disadvantaged and boys, even where leaders have identified that the progress and attainment of these groups are areas for improvement.
- The school improvement plan is common to both Marshland and the other school in the federation. While this has served the purpose of improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the most important areas that relate only to this school are not always precise in the actions designed to impact at Marshland.
- Middle leaders are keen to support their colleagues and get the best out of all pupils. However, some are new to their whole-school roles and not all have the skills and knowledge they need to be able to effectively evaluate and influence the work of other teachers.
- Teachers value the guidance and support provided by senior leaders, along with training opportunities. Although this is beginning to improve teaching, opportunities for less experienced teachers to observe and learn from the most effective teachers are limited.
- Following a period of great change in the staffing, there was a deterioration in pupils' behaviour and attitudes which adversely affected learning. The executive headteacher and staff have effectively tackled this deterioration in behaviour and pupils confirm that behaviour is much improved. As a consequence, the school is calm and orderly and pupils say they feel safe.
- In the best interests of pupils and the local community, the leaders and governors took the decision to extend the provision in the early years to admit three-year-olds and very recently this has been extended further to allow a small number of two-year-olds to access the provision. Children are beginning to benefit from this but inconsistencies in approach mean that not all children benefit fully from the opportunities provided, particularly the boys.
- Improvements to the curriculum are helping to engage pupils. The curriculum focuses squarely on the development of reading, writing and mathematics and uses topics to interest pupils, such as 'Invasion', where pupils learned about the Vikings. Recent changes to include more visits are helping to add interest and purpose to learning. British values are promoted effectively through assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons as well as religious education (RE) lessons. Pupils' spiritual,

moral, social and cultural development is strong.

- The funding for primary school physical education is used appropriately. A recent review of expenditure means there is a sound plan to use the funding to develop the skills of staff as well as encouraging pupils to participate in a wide range of sports. Physical education and after-school sports clubs are valued by pupils.
- Senior leaders and the inclusion manager ensure that funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is appropriately used and this is beginning to meet pupils' needs. There is evidence that some well-targeted actions, such as the pastoral support for vulnerable pupils, are leading to improved outcomes. However, although the inclusion manager knows about the range of planned interventions these are not regularly evaluated.
- The parents who spoke to inspectors were very positive about the school. Many identified the recent improvements in behaviour. They invariably said they were confident that the school is safe and staff care well for their children.
- School leaders have engaged appropriately with the local authority. The local authority officer knows the school well and has provided appropriate challenge, but support has been hampered because of the local authority's limited capacity.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. Although some governors have proven skills, others are new to their role and collectively the governing body has not effectively challenged and supported school leaders. They have not, for example, challenged the use of the pupil premium funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. They have not ensured that all of the required documents are published on the school website.
- Governors are clear about the challenges faced by pupils and their families. They know what the school does well to support pupils and their families. Although governors receive appropriate information about the outcomes for pupils, some governors have an overly generous view of the school's current performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records of recruitment and vetting checks fully meet requirements.
- The site is maintained so that it is safe. Risk assessments identify any potential hazards and these are appropriately managed. For example, within the early years classrooms, sockets have covers and children are taught not to run inside. Staff follow agreed routines which are designed to protect children. For example, at breaktimes and lunchtimes, staff supervise areas effectively inside and outside. Staff qualified in first aid are available and pupils know who to go to if there are any problems or minor injuries.
- Staff training is regular and staff are vigilant in spotting, recording and reporting any concerns. Where needed, referrals are made to the local authority and are followed-up with appropriate reports.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although there is a core of effective teaching, there is too much variability across the school. As a consequence, pupils' learning and progress are uneven and not all pupils make the progress that they could.
- The tasks set by teachers are not always pitched at just the right level to challenge pupils of all abilities, particularly the higher-attaining pupils. Consequently, pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Sometimes, teachers set tasks that do not provide enough challenge or give pupils the opportunity to apply new concepts and ideas. For example, in mathematics, pupils' books show that the higher-attaining pupils complete tasks with few mistakes and are not challenged by the work set. Some higher-ability pupils told inspectors that work was sometimes a little too easy for them.
- Not all teachers insist that written work is of a good standard. Although some teachers have high expectations and communicate these very clearly, this is not always the case. Sometimes the quality and quantity of work is wanting. Pupils sometimes make careless errors, such as incorrectly spelling common words. These errors are at times not picked up by staff, even when the school's approach is to insist that such words are always spelled correctly.
- A recent focus on improving handwriting has helped some pupils to develop a clear and legible handwriting style. However, the teaching of letter formation and handwriting remain inconsistent. As a consequence, some pupils do not form letters correctly and this contributes to some poorly presented pieces of work.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils are used well to ensure that classrooms are calm and orderly. The expectations of pupils' behaviour are clear and, as a consequence, pupils say their learning is rarely disturbed by misbehaviour.
- The teaching of early reading is largely effective. Teachers and other adults use their phonics knowledge to teach early reading skills well, but there is a little variability in the impact of this work. Nevertheless, regular daily phonic lessons are helping to develop pupils' reading skills. When reading new texts, pupils use their phonic skills well to work out unknown words.
- Leaders and teachers have correctly identified the need to develop pupils' spelling, punctuation and comprehension skills. However, inconsistencies in the translation of the school's approach into every day practice means that this is only just beginning to show impact. A particular challenge for the school relates to pupils' sometimes limited understanding of vocabulary.
- In mathematics, teachers have begun to plan more opportunities for pupils to work with apparatus and equipment to aid their computation skills. There are reasonable opportunities for problem-solving and reasoning. However, these developments are relatively recent and as such their impact is still variable.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in classrooms, around the school and outside. Pupils know that any inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with promptly. This ensures that they are able to concentrate on their learning. Older pupils are confident and keen to do their best in lessons.
- Pupils recognise that behaviour has improved and they say that staff help everyone, including those pupils who sometimes find it difficult to behave well. The use of the pastoral support room and the structured programme of guidance and support for vulnerable pupils is helping these pupils to improve their attitudes to learning. This has contributed to improved attendance and learning for this small group of pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including racism, and say that bullying is rare. They say that any fall-outs are dealt with fairly by staff. Older pupils talk with confidence about the need to treat everyone equally and fairly. They have discussed sensitive subjects within their lessons. For example, older pupils understood that some people feel their body does not fit with their gender identity.
- Older pupils are able to talk about some of the dangers associated with using the internet and social media.
- British values are promoted effectively. For example, pupils are taught about a wide range of world religions. Older pupils explained that understanding different peoples' beliefs will help everyone to get on better.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders have ensured that policies are clear and well understood. Consequently, behaviour has improved. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They say that recent improvements mean that behaviour is better in classrooms and around the school. Exclusions are rare and pupils say the school is a happy place in which to learn and play. Pupils enjoy playing in the playground because they are well supervised. They develop good social skills.
- Pupils move around the school safely. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are orderly and pupils say that this is the norm. Pupils value 'Fantastic Fridays', which are scheduled every four weeks, where all pupils who have behaved well are able to take part in a choice of interesting and enriching activities.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and declined over the last three years and is currently below average. Attendance rates for different groups of pupils vary. The proportions of boys and disadvantaged pupils who are persistent absentees are well above average. There is evidence that once identified, and where staff have worked with parents, the attendance of some individual pupils has successfully improved. However, this has not been part of a coherent strategy, connected to the use of the pupil premium, to address attendance issues before they adversely affect the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Variability in the quality of teaching and learning means that pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is uneven and not enough pupils make the progress they should from their different starting points. The school's assessment information shows that more pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations by the end of the year.
- When children join the foundation stage, their skills and knowledge are below what would be typical for their age. The proportions of pupils reaching a good level of development has increased over the last three years and is closer to average. The proportions of boys who reach the early learning goal in reading and writing is below average.
- The proportion of pupils succeeding in the Year 1 phonic check has increased each year since 2014. This reflects improvements to the teaching of early reading. However, within this positive picture, boys do not do as well as girls.
- In 2016, the proportions of pupils at age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were below average and reflected some variability in pupils' progress from their starting points. At the end of Year 6, attainment in reading was close to average but in mathematics and writing was below average. This reflects some recent improvements to the teaching of reading but also the variability in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress from their starting points.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils did less well than other pupils in the early years and at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. Work in pupils' books shows some signs of improvement in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, though this is not consistent in all classes. In some classes and subjects, disadvantaged pupils do less well than other pupils in school and pupils nationally.
- In several year groups, the most able pupils do not make as much progress from their starting points as they should. This is sometimes because the expectations of these pupils are not high enough and the level of challenge is not always at just the right level.
- Pupils make gains in a range of subjects. Some of these gains are related to pupils' interests and enthusiasm for the new topics being studied. Older pupils, for example, were able to talk with confidence about their work in science, history, geography and RE. They were able to name a range of world religions and outline some similarities and differences between different beliefs.
- The progress made by pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is equally as variable as that of other pupils at the school. There are clear examples of pupils who are supported well and who are beginning to make clear gains in their basic skills but equally there are some pupils who are not making quite as much progress as they could be.
- The small proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are generally well supported. They have been integrated well and, due to their immersion in English, have made good gains and are largely working at a similar standard to their class peers.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Although there are strengths in the leadership of the early years, variability in teaching means that not all children benefit fully from their time in the setting. Sometimes, the adults do not encourage children to talk when they are playing outdoors. Opportunities are missed for adults to model spoken language and extend children's vocabulary.
- Resources are generally of good quality and the planned activities are often well thought out, specifically to appeal to both boys and girls. However, not all children are encouraged to take part in the planned activities. Consequently, some pupils do not benefit from these activities and opportunities are missed to develop every child's speaking, early reading and writing skills.
- From their often below-typical starting points, children make good gains in their personal and social skills. Children, including the recently admitted two-year-olds, settle quickly and get on well with one another.
- The early years leader has a good overview of the strengths of this area of the school and the impact on children's learning and progress. Leaders have correctly identified the need to improve boys' learning so that they develop early reading and writing skills. Although topics and activities have been planned to appeal to boys and girls alike, these have not led to enough boys making rapid progress in speaking, reading and writing.
- The early years team have successfully extended the provision to three-year-olds and very recently to two-year-olds. The learning environments indoors and outdoors are safe, well supervised and provide a range of interesting activities for children. Relationships between staff and children are warm. As a consequence, children settle quickly, are happy and are keen to enjoy their time in the setting.
- Appropriate adjustments have been put in place to cater for the needs of two-year-olds. For example, furniture at suitable heights is used to present activities that children enjoy, along with toys and games that can be used on the carpet.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors about their children's experiences in the foundation stage spoke very positively about the work of staff in caring for children and helping them to settle quickly.

School details

Unique reference number	106690
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10032086

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Oldknow
Executive Headteacher	Sarah Hall
Telephone number	01405 812 693
Website	www.marshland.doncaster.sch.uk
Email address	admin@marshland.doncaster.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	December 2012

Information about this school

- Marshland is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. The school is federated with Thorne Brooke Primary School, a short distance away. The executive headteacher and a single governing body have responsibility for both schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average at almost two thirds of the school population. There are more boys than girls in the school. The proportion of pupils who have a minority ethnic heritage is small. A small, but increasing, number of pupils have a first language that is not English.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, or education, health and care plans, is just below average.
- Three-year-olds were admitted into the early years for the first time in October 2016. In April 2017, a small number of two-year-olds were admitted.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and leadership since the time of the previous inspection. A new executive headteacher took up her post in September 2014. The substantive deputy headteacher moved to a headship position in January 2015 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2015. This post was then upgraded to head of school in April 2016.
- As a result of staff movement, there was a period of change in middle leadership between 2014 and 2016. Only one teacher at the time of the previous inspection remains at the school. Almost half of the current teaching team have been at the school for less than two years.
- The school provides a well-attended breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body. A private provider uses the site to provide before- and after-school care for pupils from this and other local schools.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about the previous year's pupil premium expenditure and its impact on educational attainment, barriers to learning and how these will be tackled.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups. Some lessons were observed jointly with the executive headteacher or the head of school. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and looked at examples of their work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and the head of school, two middle leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, a member of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. A telephone conversation was conducted with the chair of governors.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement, information relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the school's most recent information on the attainment and progress of pupils, minutes of meetings of the governing body, performance management records and the school's most recent information relating to pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start and end of the school day. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire (Parent View) to allow a summary of parents' views to be considered. Responses from 25 staff to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Amraz Ali, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Beverley Riddle	Ofsted Inspector
Larissa Thorpe	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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