

Marlborough Infant School

Redvers Buller Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 2HR

Inspection dates

4–6 July 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

- Leaders have not maintained the overall quality of education since the last inspection.
- The headteacher does not have an accurate view of the quality of teaching or the progress that pupils are making. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is too optimistic.
- Staff are unclear about what the priorities are in the school and do not feel that leaders' communication is as effective as it could be.
- Staff do not always feel well supported by leaders. Many staff, particularly teaching assistants, do not feel that leaders help them to improve their work.
- Leaders now have a system to track the progress that groups of pupils are making in English and mathematics. However, this information is not yet used well enough to plan for improvement and raise standards.
- Leaders do not know how well pupils are progressing in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Teaching is inconsistent. Planned learning does not always build on what pupils know and can do. Adults' expectations of pupils' spelling and handwriting are not always high enough.
- Pupils, including the most able, make inconsistent progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Children in the early years do not get a good start. The teaching of phonics and writing in Reception does not enable those children who start school with the age-appropriate skills to make good progress. Some of the learning opportunities presented to children are not exciting or stimulating enough.
- The good levels of pupils' attendance at the beginning of the school year are not sustained.

The school has the following strengths

- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's weaknesses.
- The deputy headteacher has a very clear understanding about the strengths and weaknesses in the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils who can find it difficult to manage their behaviours are well supported.
- The support for pupils' personal development and welfare is good, particularly for the many pupils who arrive at different points in the year.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by ensuring that:
 - all leaders, including the headteacher, have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, particularly in teaching and learning
 - plans for improvement are based on an accurate view of what improvements are required and that staff understand these
 - leaders know how well pupils are learning in all subjects, not just mathematics and English
 - staff, including teaching assistants, feel well supported in their work and know what improvements they need to make to further pupils' progress.

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment to secure good progress across the curriculum, by ensuring that:
 - planned learning takes account of and builds on what pupils know and can do, particularly in mathematics
 - the most able pupils make greater progress in all subjects
 - pupils' spelling and handwriting improve, so that more pupils, particularly boys, are working at the expected standard in writing
 - pupils, particularly in Year 1, use their phonics knowledge and other strategies to read with greater confidence and fluency.

- Improve and sustain pupils' attendance.

- Improve the early years by ensuring that:
 - children develop their writing skills and phonics knowledge more rapidly
 - planned learning takes account of what children know and can do, so it is not too easy or too difficult
 - all areas of the indoor classroom provide children with interesting and stimulating opportunities to learn.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher does not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The written self-evaluation of the school is too optimistic about teaching and pupils' progress.
- Many staff do not feel well supported by leaders. Teaching assistants get very little or no feedback about their work. Staff feel that some messages are inconsistent or overly negative. As a result, staff morale is not as good as it should be.
- Staff and pupils are not always clear about the new initiatives that leaders bring into school. Staff feel that there are too many and that they do not benefit pupils, for example the school's seven values and the similar but different 'six strands' for behaviour. Younger pupils and the most vulnerable do not know what 'self-regulation' or 'resilience' mean.
- Throughout this year, leaders have developed a new assessment tracking process. They can now see that different groups of pupils are making different levels of progress in mathematics and English. However, the information is not used well enough to improve teaching and learning. The deputy headteacher recognises this, particularly in relation to the most able pupils.
- Leaders regularly seek the views of parents. Most feedback that the school gets is positive. However, over half the parents who expressed a view through the online survey, Parent View, or who spoke to inspectors were not positive about the leadership of the school.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school recognises and values the community it serves. As a result, opportunities are sought to link aspects of the curriculum to army life, including, for example, a trip to the military museum to look at vehicles as part of design and technology work. However, leaders do not know how well subjects other than English and mathematics are taught or the progress that pupils are making.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the pupil premium are not used effectively as they could be because pupils make inconsistent progress in their learning. However, funding is used effectively to support the personal development, behaviour and welfare of service families and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Additional sport premium funding is used effectively. Pupils have a wide range of well-maintained sports equipment that they access at break and lunchtimes. As a result, pupils are very active and purposeful.
- The provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils understand what it is to be respectful. Staff provide good support for pupils' social development, particularly those pupils who can find learning and playing alongside others difficult. A member of the local garrison chaplaincy team visits the school regularly and provides opportunities for pupils to be reflective. Staff provide good opportunities to learn about other cultures and/or faiths. For example, pupils have

learned about the customs associated with traditional Nepalese weddings.

- The deputy headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the school. Teachers and the local authority value the deputy headteacher's leadership.
- The local authority has absolute clarity about the weaknesses in the school. They have high levels of support in place and track the progress that leaders are and are not making.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has an accurate view of the school. New governors are committed and ambitious. Governors are working well with the local authority.
- Governors ask the right questions to hold leaders to account. Governors have visited other schools to see first-hand how they could improve their governance further.
- Documents to support governing body monitoring visits are crystal clear about what a governor visit should involve. As a result, visits last summer and this autumn were rigorous and challenging. Recent changes in governing body membership have meant that the frequency of their visits has declined. The acting chair knows this.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safety and well-being of pupils are given high priority by all. Governors undertake detailed reviews of health and safety and the single central record of recruitment checks. Information for visitors and supply staff regarding safeguarding is clear and concise.
- The school works well with other agencies, including when pupils arrive at the school at short notice. Leaders are tenacious in their pursuit of information when it is not forthcoming from other agencies or schools. Concerns about pupils' well-being are well recorded and leaders' referrals to outside agencies are swift and well documented.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The teaching of mathematics is inconsistent. Older pupils make better progress because planned learning builds on what they know and can do. However, some pupils who do not have secure understanding of basic concepts are asked over time to complete work that is demonstrably too difficult. The deputy headteacher has rightly identified that the most able mathematicians sometimes require greater challenge.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as good as it could be. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are not taught well enough. As a result, too many, including the most able pupils, make basic errors. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting. The quality of some pupils' handwriting, particularly boys, does not improve over time. Teachers and leaders are currently exploring why the oldest and most able writers do not produce the length and quality of writing that the school is hoping for.

- The teaching of phonics has improved. However, the teaching of reading is inconsistent. Pupils do not use what they know about letters and the sounds they make well enough in their reading. The deputy headteacher knows this. Too many pupils do not give enough consideration to other strategies to help them read, such as looking at the pictures or stopping to think whether what they have just read makes sense.
- The quality of planned learning in subjects such as religious education and history is inconsistent. Sometimes pupils are given opportunities to think carefully, reflect and then record their learning in a way that also enables them to further develop their literacy skills. However, some planned learning is too easy, too simplistic and not engaging or challenging enough.
- Subjects such as art and design and technology are often experienced by pupils during themed days or events. As a result, pupils do not get systematically taught subject-specific skills that would enable them to make greater progress.
- Science teaching and learning are good. Pupils are taught to observe closely and record their findings when undertaking practical experiments.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm, trusting and respectful.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff place great importance on the well-being of pupils and their families. Individual support is targeted and highly effective. Leaders have used the additional funding to support pupils of service families effectively. The school has a wide range of specific resources and staff who are trained to support pupils who suddenly move in and out of the area or where a parent suddenly has to travel overseas.
- Staff have recently identified and trained some pupils to take on the role of 'new arrival ambassadors'. These pupils have already supported new pupils in the school this term to make friends and settle well.
- Most pupils take pride in their work and their school. Pupils will habitually pick something up if they see it on the floor and return it to its rightful place. Some work is not presented as well as it could be, but that is because not all adults have the highest expectations of pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and purposeful place to learn. Pupils move around the school with the minimum of fuss. This includes the youngest pupils who navigate the stairs to go up and down for lunch. This inspection took place during 'Victorian Day' and even the pupils who looked like they had recently been up a chimney stood perfectly still for their hands and nail inspection before lunch!

- Marlborough Infant school is inclusive. Staff provide very good support for pupils who do not manage their own behaviours well. Consequently, significant incidents of poor behaviour are declining, as are the number of exclusions.
- Pupils' levels of attendance are inconsistent. More pupils attended school regularly at the beginning of the year than in the spring and summer. The attendance levels of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have improved this year compared to the last academic year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils, including the most able, make variable progress across the school and within subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In Year 1, not enough boys are working at the expected standard in writing. Girls are making better progress than boys, and so the differences are not diminishing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged make inconsistent progress in all subjects because the quality of teaching is variable.
- Pupils make inconsistent progress in art, design and technology, history and religious education because teaching does not always build on what pupils know and can do.
- Pupils make good progress in science. They develop age-appropriate knowledge and skills.
- A greater proportion of current Year 1 pupils met the expected standard in the phonics screening check than in previous years.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children do not get a good enough start in the early years. They make inconsistent progress and, as a result, are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they should be.
- Leaders do not have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years. Staff do not feel well supported in their work and do not know what it is that they need to be better at.
- The quality of the learning experiences offered to children is variable. The learning environment outside is enticing, stimulating and attractive. However, some of the inside areas, such as the 'creative station', are uninspiring and poorly resourced.
- Teaching is not as good as it should be. Children who arrive at school with very good pen control and a desire to make marks and write do not make good enough progress. Children do not acquire phonics knowledge quickly enough.
- Planned learning does not always build on what children know and can do, particularly in mathematics. Some work is too easy and some work is too difficult.
- Staff support children's personal and social development well. Additional funding is used effectively to ensure that families and children are given access to the support

they need.

- Children work together well. They share, take turns and show great levels of perseverance when they are working on their own projects and creations.
- Leaders have plans to form greater links with local nursery providers.

School details

Unique reference number	116143
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024610

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Bridger (acting chair)
Headteacher	Sarah Court
Telephone number	01252323910
Website	www.marlborough.hants.sch.uk
Email address	adminoffice@marlborough.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a Year 3 class.
- The school is adjacent to the Aldershot garrison. Three quarters of the pupils are from service families. As a result, the school has a very high proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding.
- A high proportion of pupils arrive and leave the school throughout the year.
- All of the teachers and the deputy headteacher are leaving this term.

Information about this inspection

- The headteacher was absent for the final third of the inspection. A teacher in the early years was absent for two thirds of the inspection. The early years and mathematics leader was not present for the duration of the inspection. The deputy headteacher, with support from a senior local authority officer, led the school for the last day of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and with a senior officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed learning across the school, always with a senior leader. Several in-depth scrutinies of pupils' work were undertaken with leaders. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors evaluated a wide range of documentation relating to attendance, behaviour, governance, improvement plans and the school's self-evaluation.
- Staff views were considered through 10 responses to the staff survey, and a meeting of 16 staff and staff who approached inspectors during the inspection.
- Pupils' views were considered through eight survey responses and talking to them at breaktime, lunchtime and around the school.
- Parents' views were considered through 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and through conversations with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Mark Cole, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Good, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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