

# Marsden Junior School

Manchester Road, Marsden, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD7 6EP

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The teaching of reading, including phonics, does not meet pupils' needs sufficiently well. As a result, pupils' progress in reading has been too slow.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing is not good enough. It is not as good as other pupils nationally.
- Approaches to assessing and recording pupils' progress are developing. Some teachers do not use these consistently. Consequently, some records are not fully complete and the use of pupil progress information for planning teaching is variable.
- Previous leadership for English did not respond promptly enough to the weaknesses in the teaching of reading and writing. The current subject leader for English, in place since September 2017, understands the priorities for improvement and takes appropriate action to address these areas.
- Overall, governors provide appropriate support and challenge in most areas. However, they do not hold leaders sufficiently to account on the effect of pupil premium spending on disadvantaged pupils' progress and outcomes.
- Leaders have identified the right priorities in their improvement plans. However, in some aspects they have not been sharp enough in analysing the effect of their actions against pupils' progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The principal provides strong and determined leadership. From a very low point, with support from the multi-academy trust, she has greatly improved the school. Parents' and carers' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive.
- Following a period of turbulence, leaders have now established settled staffing arrangements. The current staff are dedicated, hardworking and keen to improve their practice.
- The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils develop good citizenship skills and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour is good across school and at times exemplary. The school is a safe, friendly place to learn. Overall pupil attendance compares well to national averages.
- The multi-academy trust (MAT) provides effective support. This has beneficial effects on the quality of leadership and teaching.

## Full report

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

- Improve all pupils' progress in reading by:
  - ensuring that the texts used are well matched to pupils' abilities; for example, ensure that the less-able younger pupils have books which are well matched to their phonics development and that older higher-attaining pupils have books which stretch their abilities and build their reading stamina
  - improving the teaching of phonics to ensure that this supports pupils with their reading and spelling
  - embedding the recently introduced approaches to teaching reading to ensure that pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills improve.
- Improve disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment, particularly in reading and writing, by:
  - ensuring that catch-up interventions are evaluated rigorously and that they have a demonstrable effect on pupils' progress
  - making effective use of recently introduced assessment systems to monitor pupils' learning and ensuring that teaching and interventions accelerate their progress and diminish differences in their outcomes compared to other pupils nationally.
- Improve the impact of leadership further by:
  - sharpening the measurable outcomes in the school's improvement plans
  - using pupil progress information in the recently developed assessment records to check the effect of the actions taken by leaders and staff, including the impact of interventions to help pupils to catch up
  - continuing to support the development of the subject leader for English who is new to this role
  - governors providing more focused challenge to leaders regarding disadvantaged pupils' academic outcomes.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since her appointment in September 2015, the principal, well supported by the current vice principal and the MAT's executive principal and governors, has provided ambitious and determined leadership. This has restored parents' confidence in the school and improved staff morale. There is now an improving picture in the quality of teaching and learning and this is having a positive impact upon pupils' attainment. However, there is still more to do to accelerate pupils' progress in reading and to address remaining gaps in learning, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have introduced rigorous approaches to the performance management of staff. This has improved levels of accountability and, at the same time, identified where staff need support and training. Regular professional development, including coaching from a lead practitioner provided by the trust, has a positive effect on staff skills and confidence. Current staff engage positively with the clear direction set by the principal and the opportunities this training is creating. Responses to the staff survey show high levels of confidence in leaders and staff value the new approach to their professional development.
- Leaders have made good use of self-evaluation and checked regularly the quality of teaching. The school's improvement plans focus on appropriate priorities. These include specific plans to improve outcomes in writing for disadvantaged pupils and reading across the school. However, on occasions, the measures of success have not been focused sharply enough on pupils' progress. Leaders are beginning to use the recently developed assessment approaches to better analyse the effect of their actions and interventions that aim to accelerate pupils' progress.
- The vice principal provides subject leadership for mathematics. She has a thorough understanding of the priorities for improvement in this subject. The actions she has taken, including modelling effective practice for teachers new to the school, have had a substantial effect upon improving the quality of teaching in this subject. She regularly checks for improvements across the school and provides additional guidance to staff where required. Actions taken to improve pupils' outcomes in mathematics are bearing fruit. This is reflected in improved pupils' outcomes in this subject across the school.
- The subject leader for English assumed the role in September 2017. She has a clear overview of the priorities and actions required to improve pupils' outcomes in this subject area. She is receiving relevant leadership development, including guidance from the lead practitioner, support from senior leaders and mentor support from a subject leader in another school.
- The school's topic-based curriculum ensures effective coverage of the national curriculum subjects. Stimulating topics, and interesting visits that enliven the theme, motivate pupils to learn. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in music, French and physical education (PE). Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) initiatives and enterprise projects provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their learning to different subject areas. Pupils have access to a good range of after-school clubs which enrich the curriculum. Leaders and staff have established a curriculum that widens pupils' horizons, raises their aspirations and prepares them well for life in

modern Britain.

- The development of pupils' social, moral and spiritual awareness is a strength of the school. Links with pupils in schools in other local authorities, and France and Germany, help pupils to understand the views of others nationally and internationally. The school's values, which permeate all aspects of the school, provide pupils with clear guidance on how to relate to and respect others. Links with the community, such as the local care home, and forums such as the eco-warriors, enable pupils to develop their citizenship skills well. Visits and visitors ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of world faiths.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional funding for PE and sport in primary schools. Teaching by a specialist PE teacher enhances PE teaching for pupils and develops teachers' expertise. There are good opportunities for pupils to enjoy a wide range of physical activities and sports, both within school and with pupils from other schools. As a result, opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sports and to develop healthy lifestyles have improved. Staff, parents and pupils are rightly proud of pupils' achievements in a range of sports at both local and national level.
- The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities has been spent to good effect. Partnership working with parents and other agencies ensures that planning for the outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities meets their needs. As a result, generally, these pupils currently make sound progress.
- Pupil premium spending has a variable impact on improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. Additional support for pupils' personal development and welfare, including the work of the learning mentor, is helping pupils develop positive behaviour for learning and attitudes to school. Recent work with a small group of pupils and their families is starting to reduce pupils' levels of absence that have previously been too high. However, the effect of this funding on disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading and writing has had a limited effect. Over the last two years, progress made by disadvantaged pupils in these subjects has not been good enough. Current school information shows that across the school generally, these pupils are still making variable progress. Leaders' analysis of the effect of this spending has not been sharp enough and governors have not held leaders to account sufficiently well on this aspect.

## **Governance of the school**

- A meeting with representatives from the school's governance groups demonstrated their ambition for achieving the best education for pupils. Governors understand the community the school serves well. They have a clear understanding of the school's journey since becoming an academy, the current priorities and the future aims. They provide good support for staff and leaders and generally challenge where required. However, the level of challenge in relation to pupils' progress, including the progress of disadvantaged pupils, is sometimes not sufficiently rigorous.
- Support from the MAT, of which this school is a part, has been highly beneficial for the school and has had a positive effect on leadership and the quality of teaching and learning. The executive principal provides guidance and support in a way that enables the school's senior leaders to steer the direction for improvement. The lead practitioner provides regular coaching for teachers and middle leaders. Additional services support,

such as human resources, finance and data management, has enabled the principal and leaders to focus on improving the quality of teaching, curriculum development, pupils' outcomes and behaviour in school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A positive safeguarding culture permeates the school. This is exemplified by the principal's determined approach to ensure that safeguarding issues are addressed promptly and effectively. Staff understand the safeguarding procedures and their own responsibilities. Governors and staff receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe. They have a good understanding of the safeguarding risks that are specific to the community the school serves, including those linked to radicalisation and extremism. Leaders and staff, including the learning mentor, work effectively with other agencies and parents to ensure that they meet the needs of pupils and families who may be vulnerable.
- Leaders complete careful safeguarding checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. The safeguarding policy meets the current national requirements. Regular safeguarding audits by leaders, including governors, check that safeguarding arrangements are of a high quality.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has been inconsistent and there has been a period of staffing turbulence. This has had a detrimental effect on pupils' outcomes. Leaders have now established stable staffing across all year groups. This is enabling a more consistent approach to teaching. Present staff are responding positively to further training and they value this professional development. However, the teaching of reading is still not good enough. Additionally, disadvantaged pupils are not being taught well enough to enable them to make good progress and reach outcomes in line with their peers nationally.
- Some teachers' planning does not meet the needs of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. At times, the most able pupils complete tasks, for example in reading, which they have already demonstrated they have successfully mastered. Equally, sometimes teaching does not take account of gaps in pupils' learning that are often linked to a legacy of previous weaker teaching.
- Leaders and staff have developed their approaches to assessment and systems for tracking pupils' progress. The recently introduced assessment records are beginning to provide useful information about pupils' progress and identify where pupils have gaps in their learning. However, these approaches are not fully embedded and inconsistencies exist in some teachers' recording of pupils' progress and assessments.
- Recognising that pupils' progress in reading was not good enough, leaders have very recently introduced a different approach to teaching reading. Staff are generally adopting this approach consistently in lessons, although work in pupils' books indicates that it is still not fully embedded in practice. It is too early to determine fully the effect on pupils' outcomes.

- Recent adjustments to the teaching of phonics and spelling are enabling a closer match of teaching to pupils' learning needs. These approaches were very new at the time of the inspection and need refining to maximise the use of time and to ensure consistency of approach in all classes.
- Leaders and staff are encouraging pupils to read more widely through initiatives such as 'the reading challenge' and 'buddy readers'. Pupils are able to identify favourite authors and books that they enjoy. However, assessment and recording of pupils' reading skills are still developing and this makes it difficult for leaders and staff to determine pupils' progress in reading. In addition, staff give insufficient thought to the match of books to pupils' abilities. Sometimes, in lessons and for home reading, the most able pupils read books or texts that do not stretch or challenge their abilities. Equally, staff provide some less able and younger readers with books that do not suitably match their phonetic development.
- Leaders have recently put in place additional teaching and interventions to address pupils' gaps in their learning. Pupils engage well in these opportunities and there is evidence in books that this support is helping some pupils to catch up. However, leaders have not fully analysed the effect of these interventions and this makes it difficult to determine the effect of the wide range of interventions in place.
- A focused approach and regular opportunities to develop grammar, punctuation and spelling is, in the main, bearing fruit. As a result, pupils' grammar and punctuation is secure. However, pupils' spelling competency is still not where it should be.
- Mathematics teaching has improved following staff training, the introduction of new resources and regular assessments well linked to teaching. Teachers make effective use of assessments in this subject to identify pupils' current learning and then match their teaching effectively to pupils' needs. Teachers ensure that pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their number, reasoning, and problem-solving skills in mathematics. Science books show that Year 6 pupils have some opportunities to use their mathematical understanding of data and graphs in this subject and so this deepens their understanding further.
- Support by teaching assistants is effectively deployed. This helps pupils, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, to access their learning and generally make sound progress.
- Pupils complete a range of homework activities, including half-termly projects. Parents value the opportunities to visit school when pupils showcase their work.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Opportunities for responsibility in a number of roles across school develop pupils' self-confidence. For example, pupils are proud of their work with the school council and as junior leaders. This gives them a good understanding of democracy and the value of contributing to school life and the wider community.
- Leaders and staff plan a wide range of visits and visitors aimed to raise pupils'

aspirations and broaden their horizons. Links with schools beyond the locality and in France and Germany ensure that pupils develop an understanding, tolerance and respect for people who come from a range of backgrounds.

- Pupils develop an effective understanding of how to stay safe. This is because they receive regular guidance in lessons and assemblies. Pupils have a clear picture of the different forms that bullying can take. They believe that bullying in their school is rare, and are confident that staff will help them if they have any concerns. Parents were very positive about pupils' behaviour and raised no concerns about bullying.
- The learning mentor works well to establish relationships with pupils and their families where some additional support may assist the pupils' success in school. This has a positive effect upon pupils' behaviour, emotional well-being and attendance. She works effectively with other agencies to secure appropriate support for pupils and families where required.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to teachers and their peers, cooperate well and work hard. Clear expectations, consistently used by staff, have a positive effect on how pupils behave during teaching times. A range of rewards, such as the 'golden welly', 'golden box', and 'eager beaver', are appreciated by pupils and encourage positive behaviour. Pupils are courteous, polite and well-mannered.
- Pupils socialise well at playtimes and lunchtimes. They engage in active games or enjoy quieter group activities with their friends. Staff provide good levels of supervision and organise games that encourage pupils' engagement.
- Overall, pupils' attendance levels are higher than those found nationally. Pupils enjoy being in school and value the experiences this brings. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is not as good and a small minority of these pupils have high levels of absence. Recent work by the learning mentor with these pupils and their families is beginning to address this issue. There are early signs that attendance levels are improving for these pupils. The school also benefits from the work of the attendance pupil support officer, who works with pupils and families across the MAT.
- Exclusion rates were above the average found nationally in 2016/17. However, the implementation of a well-structured behaviour policy, combined with improved pastoral support, has seen exclusion rates fall recently.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in reading has not been good enough in the last two years and remains slow. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils have not made enough progress in reading and writing during this time, and this still persists. The progress of disadvantaged pupils remains variable across a range of subjects. Consequently, pupils' outcomes require improvement.
- Leaders' analysis shows that currently disadvantaged pupils make variable progress and, in some subjects, such as reading, make weak progress in some year groups. In 2017, by the end of Year 6, the progress and attainment of these pupils in reading and

writing were well below those of other pupils nationally.

- Pupils' progress in reading has been significantly below the average found nationally for the last two years. While there is emerging evidence that this is improving in some year groups, this is not a consistent picture across the school. Leaders have taken action to improve the quality of teaching of reading and approaches to assessing and recording pupils' progress. However, these are not embedded across the school.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, while generally making progress that is below that of other pupils in school, are beginning to make sound progress.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 6 grammar, punctuation and spelling assessment improved substantially in 2017. This improvement in grammar and punctuation is reflected in pupils' work in books across the school. However, the Year 6 assessment results and pupils' work in books confirm pupils' accuracy of spelling is still not secure.
- In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined increased substantially from the previous year and the school's results were above the national averages. Consequently, an increasing number of pupils are well prepared for starting secondary school.



## School details

Unique reference number	141687
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10042146

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

Type of school	Junior school
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mrs Anne Midgley
Principal	Mrs Sarah Mansell
Telephone number	01484 843588
Website	<a href="http://www.themjs.org/">www.themjs.org/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@themjs.org">office@themjs.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is similar to that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school opened as an academy 1 April 2015. It is part of The Mirfield Free Grammar and Sixth Form Multi-Academy Trust, which includes two other schools.

- The trust's organisation structure includes a board of directors with oversight across all schools in the MAT. There is a local governing board with specific responsibilities for Marsden Junior.
- The current principal was appointed in September 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons and part lessons. The principal joined the lead inspector for all of the observations of lessons during day 1 of the inspection.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school and noted the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The inspectors observed pupils on the playground and during lunchtime.
- Eight pupils, from Years 3 to Year 6, read to inspectors.
- The inspectors held meetings with the principal, the vice principal, the subject leader for English with the MAT's lead practitioner, and the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with a representative group from the local governing body and trust directors. He also met with a representative from the local authority. An inspector held a telephone call with the chair of the local governing board.
- A group of pupils representative of Year 3 to Year 6 discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector.
- Inspectors took account of the 54 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View. They considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. An inspector met with parents at the beginning and end of the school day to seek their views about the school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including minutes from the local governing body meetings, information about pupils' achievement, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plans. Reviews were made of behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding. The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in their books.

## Inspection team

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Shaw

Her Majesty's Inspector

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