

# Marsh Hill Primary School

Marsh Hill, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 7HY

## Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, leaders have improved achievement and created a 'can-do' culture for pupils across the school. Staff are united and highly motivated to make this school the best that it can be.
- External support has enabled leadership at all levels to raise attainment for all groups of pupils. Due to good teaching, pupils meet age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. However, too few most-able pupils are attaining greater depth in writing in key stage 1, where they do not write sufficiently in other subjects.
- Outstanding provision in Reception ensures that children make rapid gains in learning. They have many opportunities to learn through well-structured play activities.
- Improved tracking and assessment systems allow leaders to track all pupils' progress, which enables any gaps in learning to be identified. As a result, these are quickly addressed. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve well.
- The pupil premium grant is used appropriately, resulting in disadvantaged pupils making good progress. However, the analysis of the impact that interventions have on pupils' progress is not sufficiently detailed to inform future spending decisions.
- The school is in the process of developing its wider curriculum. Although topics are interesting, they are not sufficiently developed to broaden pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in science.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties and hold the school to account for the progress of different groups of pupils. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.
- Parents are very pleased with all that the school provides. They know that their children are safe and that they make good progress.
- The progress of pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils attend well. Their orderly conduct is supported by the emphasis placed by the school on implementing British values.

## Full report

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

- Raise attainment in writing in different subjects for the most able pupils in key stage 1.
- Improve the curriculum by identifying the progressive development of skills in all subjects, particularly science.
- Identify in more detail the impact that interventions, funded by the pupil premium grant, have on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils so that governors can more easily evaluate the interventions that impact on progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher, together with her deputy headteacher and the senior leadership team, is determined to improve all aspects of provision for the pupils. She has sought support and advice from external consultants from Wolverhampton University, a national leader of education. She has ensured that teaching is regularly evaluated and that teachers are given effective support to improve their practice. In the past two years, staff have benefited from high-quality training. This has been successful in the improved progress that all groups of pupils, and especially boys, make in reading, writing and in mathematics across the school.
- External support is no longer required because the school now has the expertise and capacity to improve itself. Teachers and leaders work collaboratively with others in the locality. They share best practice and several schools have already visited the school's Reception Year to learn how to improve early years provision in their own settings.
- Responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire unanimously demonstrate that staff are committed to the headteacher's vision for the school and that they are proud to be members of the school. Comments such as 'the school is a great place to be ... it has helped me improve my practice' are typical of those received by inspectors. Teamwork is a strong feature of the school, where even 'corridor coaching' (quick-passing conversations) as to what works in lessons is common.
- Leadership at all levels is strong. Subject leaders and phase leaders have ensured that teachers understand how to use information from assessments when planning tasks. However, subject leaders are currently not providing enough guidance for teachers to ensure that greater proportions of pupils are working in greater depth in writing.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders know the school well. They analyse a wide range of information meticulously. Leaders review the progress of all groups of pupils to ensure that anyone falling behind gets appropriate support.
- Governors receive effective support from the challenge adviser, a national leader of education, as well as the support from Wolverhampton University that has improved teaching, especially in mathematics. They now ask challenging questions and have a better understanding of data.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that planning and provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective. Funds are used wisely and the impact of spending on pupils' progress is evaluated. Pupils are supported well, both by mentors and support staff. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are fully integrated into the life of the school. Parents say that the school has 'worked wonders' for their children.
- The additional funding received by the school for the PE and sport premium and the pupil premium grant is appropriately spent and used to support the needs of pupils effectively. Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities, and this in turn develops their skills of teamwork. Disadvantaged pupils access the wide range of

after-school activities and the popular breakfast club and catch-up club for Year 2 and Year 6.

- The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure that it is exciting and engaging, especially for boys. Topics such as 'Time Travellers' have helped Year 1 pupils study the Victorians. During the inspection, pupils from lower key stage 2 dressed up as Romans and explored the Roman way of life. They learned about democracy and its similarities to modern British values.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, through an eco-project, pupils learn about the scarcity of natural resources and how to play their role in raising awareness of the benefits of growing vegetables and looking after our planet.
- Leaders do not yet ensure that the progressive development of pupils' skills in all subjects is clearly identified, especially in science. Further, in key stage 1 the most able pupils do not sufficiently practise writing at length in different subjects.
- The leadership of the school by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has successfully implemented all the issues identified in the previous inspection of May 2016, and is now in a much stronger position to bring about further improvements.
- The consistent teaching of both the school's values and British values, both in lessons and assemblies, has ensured that pupils learn about diversity, tolerance and social harmony. They explore issues such as gang culture, radicalisation and extremism in a safe environment.
- The school prepares pupils effectively for life beyond the school by helping them to become confident learners.

## **Governance**

- Having undertaken an external review of governance, governors are clear about what is expected of them. They provide a strong steer to the school's work and bring expertise from beyond the school into their skilled team. Well led by the chair of governors, they know the school's strengths and weaknesses from their frequent visits and questioning approach. Governors ask for and receive detailed information from the headteacher. They use this information systematically to check on the school's performance, holding staff to account for the progress that different groups of pupils make.
- Individual governors are not afraid to challenge and have set demanding targets for the headteacher to ensure that the school is constantly improving.
- Governors understand their strategic role well, holding senior leaders to account for the effect of improvement actions intended to raise pupils' achievement. They maintain an effective oversight of additional funding and how this is spent. However, for future strategic planning, they require further information on the effectiveness of specific interventions that help diminish differences in academic outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties and follow the progress of all groups of pupils, seeking to ensure that the school does its best for them. They have worked closely

with the school's challenge adviser, conducting a learning walk to focus on the progress of the most able pupils, looking at the work of all pupils and evaluating behaviour around the school.

- Governors ensure that their statutory duties to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils are met. Their training on safer recruitment has enabled them to ensure that all safeguarding requirements are effective.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff who completed the Ofsted staff questionnaire, and the overwhelming majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children were safe in school. Systems to keep pupils safe are appropriate and well managed. The school has five staff trained as designated leads on safeguarding. The inclusion manager knows all parents, carers and families and keeps very detailed records of work carried out with other agencies. Where necessary, wider support networks are created and appropriate referrals made.
- There is a culture of vigilance across the school. Staff build on the trusting relationships with parents. They are kept up to date with information on how to keep their children safe online through appropriate use of the internet. Parents value the signposting that they receive on any issues facing the community.
- Governors oversee safeguarding diligently. They ensure that the school carefully checks all staff and adults who are recruited to the school and they make regular checks on ensuring that the single central record is properly maintained.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use information from assessments well to shape the tasks that are set in lessons to help pupils secure their knowledge. They plan engaging lessons that are linked to real-life learning. For example, in a science lesson in Year 6, pupils were exploring whether it is possible to inherit strong genes from parents. All pupils, but especially the boys, were deeply engaged in group work as they debated this topic. Pupils told inspectors that the best aspect of school is the teaching because 'teachers can make boring things seem fun'.
- Support staff make effective contributions to lessons. They support pupils who are falling behind and use a range of strategies to keep pupils engaged in learning. They help pupils develop personalised strategies to improve their learning.
- Displays around the school demonstrate that teachers have high expectations of their pupils, especially in English and in mathematics. Pupils' written work is well presented and shows that they know how to engage a reader by using devices that they have studied in texts and poems.
- In Year 5, pupils were able to present a balanced argument, on whether children should be allowed to watch television, using vocabulary from Roald Dahl's poem 'Television'. They explained how the author's use of commas affects meaning and how his use of figurative language affects the reader. In key stage 2, leaders'

expectations of presentation of work and grammatical aspects of writing are consistently high.

- In key stage 1, some teachers' expectations are not consistently high, because of an overuse of worksheets resulting in too few of the most able pupils writing at greater depth across a range of subjects. Leaders have appropriate action plans in place to improve the consistency of teachers' expectations in writing.
- Pupils are engaged in both partner work and group work. They use electronic devices to develop their research skills and use dictionaries to find the meaning of words that they do not understand.
- In mathematics, teachers have ensured that their pupils have the necessary quick recall skills to help them reason effectively. A common feature across the school is the consistent checking of understanding, and giving pupils the opportunity to explain their thinking. This is having a positive effect on pupils' skills of mathematical reasoning.
- Detailed analysis of test results and vigilance in lessons provide teachers with accurate assessments of pupils' progress. This information is used well in pupil progress meetings to discuss strategies to further improve pupils' progress.
- Effective phonics teaching supports pupils in both their reading and their spelling. In a phonics session in Year 1, the teacher skilfully helped pupils to identify a range of sounds and then to have a go at developing spelling patterns.
- Pupils are competent and fluent readers. They enjoy reading because guided reading is well taught. Teachers model intonation and ask pupils to find the meaning of unknown words in the context of a sentence. A Year 6 pupil said that he loved reading so much that he had read all of C. S. Lewis's books and could not understand why he had not written more!
- Teachers make good use of feedback sessions with pupils, providing personalised extra help as needed. Pupils interviewed were very appreciative of the help that they received from teachers. They said that they learn from their mistakes. Pupils' willingness to confront their barriers to learning reflects the school's aspirational values system. When exploring the value of the month, 'understanding', pupils immediately made reference to the fact that it takes effort to understand your work.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to support pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils take a pride in their school by working hard in lessons and following the school's 'Golden Rules'. They appreciate the well-maintained, clean and attractive school environment. Pupils willingly play their part in caring for the school by ensuring that it is litter free and by conserving energy. Playground buddies, members of the school council and eco-group members were keen to tell inspectors how they carry out their duties.

- Pupils care about one another. Their recent participation in 'Breaking Boundaries' (an equality and human rights commission project on diversity) has further developed pupils' attitudes to diversity in our society. Pupils are given a wealth of experiences through visits, trips and extra-curricular activities to both socialise and develop learning. Regular curriculum sessions on aspects of safety, such as e-safety and anti-bullying, support pupils in keeping themselves safe
- Pupils are confident learners because they are taught how to overcome obstacles and that learning is a process that has its ups and downs. This has a positive effect on their self-esteem. They know how to persevere and are rewarded for their efforts in praise assemblies.
- Parents say that their children love coming to school because they get the help that they need and that teachers are exceptionally supportive. This is echoed by the pupils who say that without their teachers school would not be as much fun.
- The school's popular breakfast club encourages healthy eating. The well-attended sports clubs in which pupils participate with great enthusiasm further develops healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils' attendance has risen to above that seen nationally. Effective support from the deputy headteacher, attendance, and the pastoral team has resulted in the improved attendance of some disadvantaged pupils. The school's own minibuss is used regularly to help a few families who struggle to get their children to school on time.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and orderly community where pupils conduct themselves very well throughout the day, including during breakfast club and after-school activities. Their interactions with one another at playtimes and in lessons are a delight to see. The school's mission of providing a caring, respectful and tolerant environment in which pupils are enabled to fulfil their potential is apparent in all daily routines.
- Pupils regulate their own behaviour because they are taught how to identify their emotions and how to use strategies to stay safe. Behaviour in lessons is focused. However, in the lower school some pupils become distracted when they have to listen to detailed explanations. Staff deal with any rare instances of misbehaviour quickly and calmly and pupils have many strategies to call on when emotions escalate. Reported incidents of misbehaviour have dropped sharply due to effective behaviour management strategies.
- Parents of pupils who have challenging behaviours say that both they and their children have expert support from the school's SENCo and the pastoral manager.

## Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, national test results show that pupils made average progress in reading and writing and above average progress in mathematics. The school's current in-house data shows that pupils are continuing to make good progress.
- In 2017, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was above that seen nationally, but the proportions of pupils achieving the higher standard was below that seen nationally for all pupils, including those who were disadvantaged.
- In the national tests, girls did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics combined and the school took immediate action to implement 'boy friendly' strategies to accelerate boys' learning. Inspection findings show that this is having a marked impact on present rates of progress. Differences are diminishing due to the high levels of engagement of boys in learning as a result of curriculum and teaching adaptations.
- All groups of pupils do well in English grammar, punctuation and spelling and attain standards above those seen nationally. They are able to apply grammar rules well to writing in English. However, in key stage 1, pupils need to practise writing at length in other subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils narrowly missed attaining the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics with only half of the group attaining a higher standard in all three subjects. Current work in books, progress seen in lessons and scrutiny of assessment information show that current disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and are catching up quickly with other pupils nationally. This is because, expertly led by the deputy headteacher, staff know these pupils well and they are given extra support through catch-up clubs and individual interventions.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1 is consistently above the national average. All groups of pupils are making good progress due to good-quality teaching and consistent implementation of spelling rules in writing.
- Current progress for all groups of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good. This is because teachers know precisely the gaps in pupils' learning and the skills that they need to teach. Subject leaders and the assistant headteachers ensure that bespoke help is given to any pupil who has not mastered a concept in lessons.
- In the 2017 national tests, pupils did not attain well in science, because not enough emphasis had been placed on the progressive development of skills and in working scientifically.
- Pupils are enthusiastic readers, writers and mathematicians. In reading, they develop phonics skills securely, getting off to a very good start in Reception. They develop comprehension skills securely. This means that by the time they are in Years 5 and 6, they can debate their preferences for authors and genres and justify their reasons.
- Writing develops strongly so that by Year 5 almost all pupils are fluent writers,



demonstrating skill in using sentences that engage the reader, and which are grammatically correct. However, not enough opportunities are given to pupils in key stage 1 to write at length in other subjects.

- In mathematics, pupils are becoming increasingly adept at tackling problems and explaining their reasoning due to the encouragement given by teachers to explain their answers.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- Since the last inspection, the assistant headteacher with responsibility for early years has worked very hard at improving all aspects of provision, resulting in children making outstanding progress in relation to their starting points.
- Most children enter the school with skills across the different areas of learning that are below that typical for their age. They leave Reception having reached a good level of development, with a high proportion of the most able children exceeding this standard. They are very well prepared for learning in Year 1. This is because they can manage distractions, concentrate for longer periods of time and have good speaking and listening skills.
- The early years team has a very secure understanding of the curriculum and they know each child as an individual. Teaching over time is very strong and is reflected in the rapid gains that all groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make in their learning.
- Teachers are very well supported by assistants who know how to intervene in learning to ensure that children are helped to extend their thinking.
- A strength of the curriculum is the outdoor play and activities. The expertly designed outdoor area mirrors learning indoors, resulting in children having a seamless approach to their learning.
- Differences in attainment between girls and boys have been diminished. From the start, boys are encouraged to engage in learning by making inventories of tools and tyres in the garage, write up jobs for mechanics to undertake and calculate how many cars are due for an MOT.
- Children are actively engaged in creative activities that challenge them to work cooperatively, solve problems and learn from their mistakes. In the construction area, children are asked to construct models according to the designs that they have created and to evaluate how well outcomes have matched the original design.
- Every day, there is a dedicated focus on developing children's reading, writing and mathematical skills and, consequently, children make very rapid progress. This is because they can apply what they have learned to the well-structured activities designed to embed learning.
- Adults make excellent use of detailed daily day-to-day assessments to plan the next steps in learning meticulously. Parents regularly contribute to children's learning journeys and are seen as valued partners in their children's learning. They are happy with the way that their children settle and make rapid progress. They appreciate having regular communication and participating in a wide variety of workshops that

help them engage with their children's learning. One parent was typical of many in describing 'the huge respect for the staff's teaching ability and wonderful environment that they have created'.

- Safeguarding is effective. The excellent relationships that adults have with children ensure that children are keen to share any concerns that they might have.

## School details

Unique reference number	103233
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10047462

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Davies
Headteacher	Marlene Douglas
Telephone number	01214 642 920
Website	<a href="http://www.marshall.bham.sch.uk">www.marshall.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@marshall.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@marshall.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	24–25 May 2016

## Information about this school

- Marsh Hill Primary School is larger than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than other schools nationally. However, none of these pupils are at the very early stage of acquiring English as an additional language.
  - The largest minority ethnic groups are of Pakistani or Caribbean heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than other schools nationally.
- Approximately half of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, which is twice the national average.
- Since the last inspection in May 2016, the school has received additional support from a national leader of schools, an independent challenge adviser, including additional

support from the University of Wolverhampton for developing expertise in the teaching of English and mathematics. The school has also received visits from a school improvement partner from the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP).

- Children in the Reception attend full time. The school runs a breakfast club every morning.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 30 lessons, including classroom visits and intervention groups. Some of these were jointly observed with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior leaders across a range of subjects and in all classes.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books covering a range of subjects, abilities and year groups. They discussed assessment procedures, recent analysis of information from test results and the school's internal analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils. They particularly looked at the current progress that boys and disadvantaged pupils make.
- Inspectors met with parents, the headteacher, the senior leadership team, subject leaders, the inclusion manager, the leader with responsibility for the early years and the SENCo. Inspectors also met with teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors and one member of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the national leader of schools, the school's challenge adviser and had a telephone conversation with the adviser from the BEP.
- Inspectors heard six pupils read and also spoke to a group of pupils about their opinions on various aspects of school life, including safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered 96 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and analysed 19 responses from staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of governors' meetings attendance records, the school's current information on pupils' progress and achievement, attendance records and documents pertaining to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Dr B Matusiak-Varley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Dorothy Stenson	Ofsted Inspector

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