

Marlpool Junior School

Claramount Road, Heanor, Derbyshire DE75 7HS

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although the efforts of leaders and governors are now leading to improvement, some of their actions have been hindered by previous staff and leadership changes.
- Not enough staff are involved in subject leadership to check the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Leaders do not have an accurate picture of the impact of support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- There are inconsistencies in how well teachers develop pupils' writing skills and mathematical reasoning.
- Teachers do not routinely expect enough of all pupils and, sometimes, the work given to the lower-attaining pupils does not enable them to build their basic skills strongly.
- The most able pupils do not reach their full potential in mathematics as work is not sufficiently challenging.
- Pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils, do not yet make consistently good progress to ensure that they build strongly upon their previous learning by the end of Year 6.
- Aspects of pupils' personal development and their understanding of important values are not as well developed as they might be.
- Although improving due to leaders' actions, attendance is below average.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and governors accurately identify the main priorities for improvement and act well upon external advice.
- Good teamwork among staff leads to new approaches to improve the curriculum and pupils' achievement, particularly in reading.
- Pupils enjoy their learning. Interesting topics stimulate their enthusiasm and aid their knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. Relationships are positive. New ways to ensure good behaviour are taking effect, and most pupils behave well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - have high expectations and provide work that is well matched to pupils' abilities, especially for the lower-attaining pupils
 - develop pupils' writing skills so that they move on strongly from what they can already do and use their grammar, punctuation and spelling knowledge well whenever they write
 - expect pupils to reason and apply what they know in mathematics and extend the opportunities for the most able pupils to make more rapid progress.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - widening the leadership roles of all staff for more effective monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum
 - ensuring that there is a more precise evaluation of the effect of extra support on the achievement of pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that the teaching of disadvantaged pupils is fully effective and leads to strong progress
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to contribute positively to school life and to deepen their understanding of fundamental British values
 - continuing to improve the attendance of all groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Despite the efforts of senior leaders and governors, frequent staff changes since the previous inspection have hindered plans for improvement and prevented leaders from maintaining consistently good teaching. Although teaching is now improving, leaders have not yet ironed out inconsistencies to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Staffing uncertainty and change has meant that leadership roles across the curriculum are not as well developed as they could be. While the headteacher and assistant headteacher check the quality of teaching and learning, not enough staff are involved in understanding how well pupils are doing in a range of subjects.
- When leaders identify pupils with SEND as a group, they also include pupils who are lower-attainers. This increases the workload of leaders in providing extra help for pupils. It prevents clear evaluation of the impact of the school's work and the spending of additional funding on the learning of pupils with SEND.
- There is not enough rigour in promoting good attendance and helping parents to see the effect of absence on their children's learning. However, the school's efforts are leading to some improvement and a reduction in the number of pupils who stay away frequently.
- Activities do not enable pupils to take an active part in demonstrating British values, such as democracy, for themselves. This reduces their understanding of important aspects of life in modern Britain. Overall, however, the curriculum suitably promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher, supported by the assistant headteacher, is dedicated to improvement. She builds positive relationships with pupils and parents. She ensures that staff share expertise with each other and with colleagues in other schools, with positive effect on improving teaching.
- Leaders have introduced new systems to nurture pupils' positive attitudes to school and good behaviour. These systems, which are understood by staff and pupils, are becoming established. As a result, behaviour is improving.
- Senior leaders are well supported by governors and the federation in identifying and working towards the school's main priorities. They act upon effective advice from the local authority and external consultants to improve the curriculum, teaching and leadership.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is interesting and motivates learning. The headteacher encourages staff to work together to improve the curriculum. For example, recent work in literacy to improve pupils' vocabulary and their inference and comprehension skills is now consistently adopted by teachers and is strengthening pupils' progress in reading.
- An external review of the use of the pupil premium funding is leading to more effective provision to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Although at an early stage, there is already marked improvement in the self-esteem and behaviour of individual pupils due to well-placed support.

- Leaders hold regular meetings with staff to discuss pupils' progress and to identify how to help them to improve, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds who need to catch up and those not reaching their full potential.
- The primary sports funding is used effectively to widen pupils' skills and to increase their participation in physical activity. Its use is leading to success in inter-school competitions. The spending is having a positive impact on pupils' health, well-being and enjoyment.

Governance of the school

- Governors seek and act upon external advice in order to overcome the challenges presented by recent changes within their ranks. They review the skills that governors bring to the governing body and are keen to utilise their expertise.
- The governing body is stepping up its actions to improve attendance, but strategies by school leaders and governors are not yet fully effective.
- Governors help to set the school's main priorities and have improved their involvement in checking how well the school is doing towards its aims. They know about the impact of spending on pupils' achievement but recognise that, until recently, the pupil premium funding was not used effectively enough.
- Governors are supportive of the headteacher and staff and make relevant decisions about leadership roles. They know about the training that teachers receive to improve their teaching and how this has an impact on the curriculum and pupils' achievement, for example in reading.
- Governors recognise that previous circumstances influenced the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They now make sure that current school leaders are well supported but held to account for the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors ensure that the school's systems and procedures are fit for purpose. They provide staff with relevant training and updates so that they know how to recognise and report any concerns they may have. The vetting of adults who work with pupils is thorough.
- Leaders maintain secure and confidential systems to record any child protection concerns that may arise. They work closely with external agencies and have positive relationships with parents in order to deal with cases effectively.
- Pupils learn during assemblies and lessons about staying safe, including when using technology and the internet. Leaders use visitors from outside the school, such as the local police force, to provide pupils with further guidance on how to keep safe.
- The school's records show that any bullying incidents that occur are recorded and followed up. The new behaviour systems are taking effect and helping pupils to see the importance of safe and acceptable behaviour.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make strong progress as they move through the school.
- Teachers do not routinely use what they know about pupils' abilities to provide suitable tasks. For some lower-attaining pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, the work is too difficult, which weakens their progress. Sometimes, teachers do not expect enough of pupils to enable them to make the best possible gains in their learning.
- The teaching of writing does not focus strongly on building upon pupils' previous learning. This means that pupils do not make rapid gains in improving their basic skills and developing greater complexity in using grammar, punctuation and spelling whenever they write.
- In mathematics, tasks often repeat what pupils can already do and do not move them on quickly enough. Opportunities for pupils to reason and apply their skills are not fully developed across the school and some pupils, especially the most able, do not receive the right level of challenge from the start of lessons.
- However, the teaching of calculation is consistent. Pupils' knowledge of number facts is improving, with positive effect on the progress they make in lessons. Teachers use mathematical vocabulary effectively and encourage pupils to do the same.
- Teachers inspire pupils to think and to extend their vocabulary. They use resources, such as 'word walls', to introduce pupils to new words and encourage them to use them in their writing. They expect pupils to share their ideas with each other and to contribute to class discussions.
- Staff work well together to plan topics which spark pupils' interest and often link to real-life experiences. For example, during the inspection, pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class prepared for writing a news account by watching a news report about extreme winter weather. The teacher skilfully used this resource to check pupils' understanding and to encourage interesting writing.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Leaders ensure that there is a good range of reading material which interests pupils. During the inspection, pupils spoke keenly about their learning on inference and comprehension, saying that it has helped them to make sense of what they read and to improve.
- Teaching assistants aid pupils' learning and social development. They often work with individual pupils, especially those with SEND, to help them to understand their tasks and complete them successfully. The external review of the pupil premium funding is leading to more effective use of additional staff to improve pupils' academic and personal achievement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of

responsibility by taking an active part in the school community and to experience for themselves important values such as democracy.

- Pupils say that they feel safe. They say that they receive guidance on how to keep safe from bullying and they know the different forms that bullying may take, including when using technology. Those spoken to during the inspection agreed that, if bullying does happen, the school deals with it.
- Pupils work together and share ideas with each other. They learn about moral issues such as pollution and the destruction of the rainforests. Pupils enjoy new experiences and learn about eras, places and people, including those from faiths and backgrounds that are different to their own. This contributes to their understanding of respect and tolerance.
- Staff establish positive relationships. They offer effective support to promote emotional well-being for those pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. New ways to instil good behaviour are not yet fully established in all aspects of school life. Some pupils still rely on adults to help them to maintain concentration and work well during lessons. However, the new systems are taking effect and classrooms are calm and orderly.
- Attendance is below average. Pupils know the importance of coming to school regularly and they are keen to achieve the school's awards for good attendance. However, there is some way to go to ensure that attendance is in line with that seen nationally.
- Most pupils behave well. Those spoken to during the inspection agreed that pupils who find it difficult to conform are helped to behave positively by adults. Pupils understand the school's rules and like the rewards they gain for good behaviour and effort.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which aids their progress during lessons. They listen to staff and contribute their ideas. They answer questions well and respond eagerly to exciting topics which interest them.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress made by pupils, including lower-attaining pupils and the most able, is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that they achieve as well as they can. There is variation in how well pupils build upon what they already know in writing and mathematics.
- Although pupils write for a variety of purposes in a range subjects, they do not develop their skills systematically to improve the complexity of their writing. As a result, lower-attaining pupils do not build strongly upon their basic skills and the most able, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do not solidly develop mature and well-structured writing.
- In mathematics, the most able pupils are not sufficiently well challenged during lessons to reach their full potential. There is too much repetition and these pupils do not apply their knowledge and skills quickly enough to make rapid gains.

- Disadvantaged pupils were not previously supported well enough to make good progress. This is now being addressed. More precise and effective support for pupils who need to catch up mean that they are starting to make better progress than previously. However, they are not yet making the strong progress needed to reach the standards expected for their age.
- Pupils with SEND make progress in line with their capabilities. There are some good examples of the school's provision leading to the good progress of individual pupils, often as the result of extra adult help and suitable resources.
- Improvements to the teaching of reading are leading to consistently stronger progress. Pupils extend their vocabulary and make good gains in higher-level reading skills, such as comprehension, and standards are rising.
- The school's information shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving better than in recent years. A greater proportion are on track to reach the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school. This means that they are better prepared for the next stage of their education than previous Year 6 pupils.
- Pupils' positive response to interesting topics means that they quickly gather information in subjects such as geography and science to extend their knowledge and understanding. During the inspection, pupils spoke knowledgeably about geographical features such as tsunamis, volcanoes and hurricanes. They recalled facts very well and used appropriate vocabulary such as 'dormant', 'lava' and 'extinct'.

School details

Unique reference number	112561
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10052951

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Wright
Headteacher	Louise Thorpe
Telephone number	01773 712505
Website	www.marlpool-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk
Email address	info@marlpool-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average.
- The school is in a federation with Marlpool Infant School. Both schools have the same governing body and the same headteacher.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant changes to staffing, school leadership and governance. The headteacher of Marlpool Infant School took up post as headteacher of the junior school in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in 12 lessons, three of which were seen jointly with the headteacher. In all, six members of staff were observed teaching.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across the school. They spoke with pupils about their work during lessons and met with groups of pupils. They listened to pupils in Year 3 and Year 6 read.
- The inspectors held meetings with governors, school leaders and staff. An inspector also met a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors analysed 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and took account of 19 written comments from parents. An inspector spoke with parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors analysed 32 responses to the pupil survey and five responses to the questionnaire submitted by staff.
- The inspectors scrutinised the school's systems and documentation relating to safeguarding. They reviewed information about pupils' attainment and progress, and about their attendance. The inspectors evaluated the school's improvement plans and evidence of its checks on the quality of teaching. They looked at the school's records of inappropriate behaviour and bullying incidents.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

Rob Cruise

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