

Inspection of The Marston Thorold's Charity Church of England School

School Lane, Marston, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG32 2HQ

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and nurturing. Parents say it is like a 'family'. Pupils told us that bullying happens only occasionally and that adults sort it out quickly and well. Pupils enjoy coming to school because 'there are great opportunities to learn'.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and their learning. Pupils value the 'behaviour ladders' introduced by leaders. They behave well because they know what is expected of them. Pupils move around the school calmly and safely.

Leaders provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to play a part in the local and wider community. Pupils support the local food bank and raise money for national and international causes, such as an education charity in Kenya.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They are full of praise for leaders and other staff. Every parent who responded to the online questionnaire said they would recommend the school to others. One commented that this is 'a truly unique school'.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Reading is a priority. Leaders have established a clear and well-sequenced approach to teaching phonics. Teachers introduce the sounds that letters make as soon as children join the school. Teachers give children reading books that match the sounds that they know. This allows them to practise their reading skills confidently. Pupils enjoy reading. They read regularly at school and at home. One pupil told me, 'You learn more when you read.' Pupils enjoy listening to adults read to them in class. They say it helps them understand the book's characters. By the time they leave the school, pupils are confident readers.

Mathematics is well taught. The carefully designed curriculum helps teachers to plan lessons that build step-by-step on what pupils know and can do. Teachers give pupils lots of opportunities to practise what they have learned. Staff are well trained and supported by the knowledgeable subject leader. Pupils achieve well in mathematics.

The science subject plan sets out the topics that teachers must cover and in what order. Pupils are beginning to know more and remember more. They enjoy their science lessons. Enrichment activities, such as the recent science day, bring the subject to life. The curriculum has not always been as well planned. Some older pupils have gaps in their knowledge, for example about how light travels or how to conduct a fair test.

Some other subjects are not planned well enough. Leaders have identified some of the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn. However, the important knowledge that pupils must remember is not as clear. Some of the work that pupils produce is not of a good enough quality in these subjects.

Pupils behave well in class. They respond well to questions and display a love of learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and to each other.

Leaders plan a wide range of activities to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves healthy. They know it is important to be active and they enjoy their physical education (PE) lessons.

Pupils have roles and responsibilities to make the school even better. Play leaders support others during playtimes and school councillors help with weekly assemblies. Pupils understand fundamental British values well. Leaders give pupils opportunities to think deeply about issues. Pupils recently discussed climate change and considered the importance of actions as well as words.

In Reception, staff make sure that children develop their language skills. While washing baby dolls, children talked about the importance of keeping clean. Children practise their writing, using their phonics skills. Children share their classroom with key stage 1 pupils. They learn the school's expectations quickly because they see positive role models for behaviour and attitudes from the very start.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Staff break down activities so that these pupils can access a task in manageable chunks. Staff give pupils time to think for themselves before stepping in.

Staff told us that they feel well supported by leaders. Staff have time to undertake their subject responsibilities. They told us that the school is well led and managed. One described the headteacher as 'inspiring'. Leaders and governors have managed the transition to the new federation well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The strong safeguarding culture is evident in all aspects of school life. Staff and governors receive regular training. Staff know what signs to look out for and who to tell if they have any concerns. Leaders follow up these concerns quickly and effectively.

Safeguarding records, including the single central record of pre-employment checks, are well maintained.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They learn about fire safety and how to stay safe near water. They know how to use the internet safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. Leaders are already taking action to bring this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied in this case. Leaders must make clear the key knowledge and skills that pupils should learn in all subjects and when they should learn them.
- In the past, the curriculum has not been well planned in some subjects. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to ensure that teachers use their assessment information well to address these gaps.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	120605
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10110062
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	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Anne Schaanning
Headteacher	Michelle Waddell
Website	www.marstonthorolds.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- On 1 January 2020, The Marston Thorold's Charity Church of England School joined with Saint Sebastian's Church of England Primary School in Great Gonerby to form the Grantham Villages' Church of England Primary Schools Federation.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2019.
- The school's last section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place on 17 June 2015.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and members of staff. We also met with members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority. We spoke with a representative of the Diocese of Lincoln by telephone.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. For each of these subjects, we held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with staff and pupils, and looked at pupils' work. We also listened to pupils read.

- We spoke with pupils and observed their behaviour around school. We also visited the breakfast club.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans for improvement, an evaluation of the school's effectiveness and information relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- We spoke with parents and considered the 23 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text responses. We also took account of the 10 responses to the questionnaire for staff and the 16 responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Caroline Poole Ofsted Inspector

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