

Inspection of a good school: Marlfields Primary School

Waggs Road, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4BT

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 May 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff provide a warm welcome for pupils each morning at this friendly school. Leaders ensure that a caring and nurturing ethos underpins all aspects of the school's work. They have high expectations regarding pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well and get on with one another.

Staff and leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that pupils learn well in English and mathematics. However, the quality of education that pupils receive in other subjects is not as strong. This means that pupils are not as well prepared as they should be for the next stage of their education when they leave Year 6.

Pupils are safe and well looked after. They are taught about bullying and know who to speak to if they have any concerns. They told the inspector that if any form of bullying is reported to staff it is always dealt with effectively.

Pupils enjoy school. They appreciate the wide selection of clubs that leaders provide, which range from managing the school allotment to football and music. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in residential visits. Many pupils enjoy attending the breakfast and after-school clubs that are held each day.

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

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Teachers are trained to become early reading experts. They keep a close eye on the progress that children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 are making as they begin to develop their early reading knowledge. Teachers are quick to step in and support those who begin to fall behind. Pupils develop their ability to read independently. Teachers ensure that pupils read books

that match their phonics knowledge. This helps pupils develop into confident, competent readers. Many older pupils develop a love of reading and read widely and often.

Children in the early years, including two-year-olds, quickly learn the school routines and develop good learning behaviours which stay with them as they move into key stage 1. The early years curriculum also prepares children well for their future learning. For example, when learning about number, teachers make sure that children learn and use the correct mathematical vocabulary.

Leaders have developed a broad and balanced curriculum from Year 1 to Year 6 that matches the scope and challenge of the national curriculum. However, some teachers do not follow the school's curriculum closely enough when teaching subjects such as history and science. This means that pupils' learning often fails to build effectively on what they already know. It also means that pupils are not well prepared for future learning.

Leaders have established effective systems to support pupils with SEND. Leaders work with staff to ensure that the needs of these pupils are identified early. They support staff in adapting their approaches in order to make the curriculum accessible to all. This means that pupils with SEND can study alongside their classmates. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND are well supported and fully included in school life.

In mathematics and English, teachers make regular checks on how well pupils are progressing through these curriculums. Teachers are skilled at using assessment information to identify where pupils need additional support and guidance. However, in other subjects this is not the case. Teachers often fail to identify or address errors and misconceptions in pupils' learning. This hinders pupils' progress in these subjects.

Leaders have developed a well-thought-out programme of activities to support pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about healthy living and the importance of exercise. They also learn about age-appropriate relationships education. Leaders also provide many opportunities for pupils to expand their interests and expertise. Pupils have the opportunity to learn musical instruments and take part in a wide range of sporting activities, including rugby and yoga. Older pupils also enjoy helping to maintain the school's allotment.

Pupils behave well in lessons and when playing out with their friends in the school's extensive and well-maintained grounds. Some pupils occasionally find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. However, staff are skilled in resolving any negative behaviour quickly and effectively.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They are appreciative of the support that leaders, including governors, provide and the consideration that they give to staff well-being.

Governors are highly supportive of the school. However, they do not have an accurate picture of how well pupils are learning in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They appreciate the care, guidance and support that staff provide for their children each day.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that science and history may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The members of the safeguarding team ensure that all members of staff are well trained in safeguarding matters. As a result, staff know exactly what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils and their families are provided with appropriate support when it is needed. Leaders also ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They make sure that pupils learn about road safety and how to stay safe when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not implement the curriculum that leaders have developed. This means that some pupils do not learn the intended curriculum or develop their knowledge and skills across subjects sequentially. This hinders their achievement. Leaders should ensure that all teachers follow the school's curriculum in all subjects.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics teachers do not use assessment well enough to check on how well pupils are learning. As a result, they do not have a clear understanding of how well pupils are gaining the knowledge that they need in the wider curriculum. Leaders should ensure that effective assessment systems are developed and embedded across all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Marlfields Primary School, to be good in January 2010.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	140895
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10226110
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Gartside
Principal	Sandra Isherwood
Website	www.marlfieldsprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- School leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The governing body manages the breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school recently opened a specially resourced provision which caters for up to seven pupils. There were two pupils attending at the time of this inspection. Pupils with education, health and care plans relating to social, emotional and mental health needs, are referred to this provision by the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the principal and other members of the leadership team.
- The inspector held a meeting with three governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in English and early reading, mathematics and history. As part of this process, he met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with

pupils, listened to pupils reading and looked their work in books. The inspector also talked about other curriculum subjects and scrutinised pupils' work.

- The inspector examined safeguarding records. He also met with safeguarding leaders and spoke with staff about safeguarding.
- The inspector visited the early years classrooms as part of the deep dives and spoke with staff and children.
- The inspector visited the specially resourced provision and spoke with leaders about this resource.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experience of school. He also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during lunchtime.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. He also looked at the responses to the survey for staff. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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