

Inspection of Marlpool Junior School

Claramount Road, Heanor, Derbyshire DE75 7HS

Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

'School is my favourite place to be.' This view of one pupil is shared by many others. Pupils work hard and take pride in their achievements. Leaders ensure that the school's 'Reach' values are at the heart of everything they do. They are ambitious for all pupils to succeed.

Pupils behave well and appreciate the rewards system. They love to earn letters on their rainbows for demonstrating the school's values. As they grow in this nurturing environment, pupils develop confidence and resilience. They feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that bullying is rare. If bullying does occur, they are confident that adults deal with it well. Pupils say that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem. They use the 'Worry-asaurus' to share their concerns.

The school's 'thrive' approach means that pupils' mental health and well-being are supported. Pupils learn how to manage their feelings and emotions. The pastoral support is a strength of the school.

Pupils are proud of their responsibilities, including being reading and attendance ambassadors. They care about their community. For example, pupils wrote to residents at the local retirement home during the national COVID-19 restrictions.

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

Leaders ensure that the curriculum is ambitious and meets the needs of all pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have identified the important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn in each subject. They have sequenced this knowledge so that it builds over time. In some subjects, leaders have not checked what gaps pupils may have in their knowledge. Teachers do not sufficiently check and adapt lessons to help pupils learn as well as they could. Some pupils remember the activities they have done, but not all the knowledge that they have learned.

Leaders prioritise reading. There is a strong love of reading across the school. Staff take every opportunity to share and read books in lessons. Pupils talk about the stories they read and look forward to choosing books from the well-stocked library. One pupil told inspectors, 'My teacher has really got me into reading and books.' Teachers check pupils' reading skills carefully and are clear about their needs. They encourage pupils to read often. The new phonics programme helps pupils who struggle to catch up. Not all staff have received training in the new programme. Leaders have already started to address this.

Lessons are purposeful and interesting. Teachers are well trained. Staff ensure that pupils develop their subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils use this to improve their writing and spelling. Leaders work alongside staff to identify any additional needs

pupils may have. Staff adapt resources to support pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND access their learning alongside their peers.

Pupils are polite and respectful. They follow well-established school routines. This means that learning is rarely disrupted. There is a harmonious ethos around classrooms and corridors. There are signs that levels of attendance are improving. However, the number of pupils who are regularly absent from school remains high.

The personal development programme is well structured so that pupils know why it is important to show respect to others. Pupils say that anyone who joins the school will receive a 'very big welcome'. Equality is taught and modelled throughout the school. Pupils know that it is unacceptable to judge someone based on their appearance, faith or gender. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils take additional responsibilities, such as being a school councillor, seriously. They run their own tuck shop to raise money. This helps to build a strong sense of community. Pupils enjoy the after-school clubs, including film and sports clubs. They look forward to residential trips and visits to enhance their experiences.

Governors support and challenge school leaders well. They know the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Staff feel well supported by leaders and appreciate that their workload and well-being are considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Staff receive up-to-date briefings and training. They know what to be aware of, and what to do, to keep pupils safe. Effective reporting and recording systems are in place. Leaders make sure that pupils and families who need support are identified quickly and given the help that they need. Leaders make the appropriate checks on adults before they join the school.

Pupils trust that adults in school will keep them safe. They learn how to stay safe, including when online, through the school's personal development programme.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, there is not a consistent approach in how teachers check on what pupils know and remember. Some pupils are left with gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that there is an effective approach to checking what pupils know and understand in each subject, to enable teachers to check what pupils have learned, and to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- The current level of persistent absenteeism is too high. As a result, some pupils are not accessing the full curriculum and are therefore at risk of falling behind.

Leaders should work with parents and carers to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

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.

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	112561
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10241093
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	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Debbie Wright
Headteacher	Louise Thorpe
Website	www.marlpool-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 and 31 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders and a range of staff.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, spoke with teachers and spoke with pupils about their learning. They

visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, inspectors reviewed school policies, procedures and records. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors also spoke with staff, governors and pupils about the school's approach to keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors met with staff and considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Kirsty Norbury, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ged Philbin

Ofsted Inspector

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