

# Inspection of Marwood School

Whiddon, Muddiford, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 4HF

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 September 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Marwood School provides a supportive and nurturing environment where pupils feel safe. From the start of the Reception Year, children and their parents are made to feel welcome. There is a focus on kindness. Older pupils are encouraged to support the younger ones at playtime.

Pupils' behaviour is good. They listen well in class and get along well during social times. Leaders take any behaviour issues, including bullying, seriously. They address any problems that arise. Leaders have started to raise expectations of what pupils can learn through the curriculum. Pupils enjoy their learning, but they do not remember important subject knowledge well enough. This makes it hard for them to build up secure knowledge over time.

Pupils lead active lives. As much as possible, they spend time outdoors. Everyone joins in with the adventurous activities organised by staff. Each year, pupils on the school council help to organise a special interest day. For example, on 'animals day', professionals involved in animal care, and working animals, were brought into school to enrich pupils' learning.

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

In reading and mathematics, leaders provide an ambitious curriculum that is well taught. However, in the wider curriculum, leaders have not thought enough about what they want all pupils to learn. The curriculum has not been constructed in such a way as to help pupils to deepen their knowledge year on year. It is not clear which are the most important ideas for all to learn.

Leaders do not fully understand how to use assessment to help pupils to remember essential knowledge. As a result, teachers do not use assessment purposefully. They do not focus enough on checking that pupils have learned the important ideas that they will later build on. Assessment is not used to identify which curriculum points need to be revisited. Consequently, pupils' learning is insecure and they do not remember some of the most important subject knowledge.

Leaders have introduced a new, ambitious curriculum for early reading. Children in the Reception Year are learning to read more quickly than before. They are meeting the raised expectations of staff well. The new phonics curriculum is well taught and well resourced. Leaders ensure that pupils practise their reading using books well matched to their knowledge of letters and sounds.

In key stage 1, however, some pupils have fallen behind with their reading. This has affected pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) the most. The arrangements to help these pupils to catch up are not sufficient or effective. Although staff have received training to improve their knowledge of phonics, their knowledge is not yet well embedded. This means that the pupils who need carefully

targeted support to catch up do not receive this. There is a lack of clarity in the school around the leadership of early reading. Consequently, support for pupils who need to catch up has not been treated with sufficient urgency.

Leaders and staff form strong relationships with parents of pupils with SEND. This helps leaders to refine the support they provide for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders adapt their provision in an ongoing way. This helps pupils with SEND to make the most of learning, both inside and outside of the classroom. Leaders fully include pupils with SEND in trips, including challenging residential experiences.

Pupils benefit from lessons and assemblies, where they learn to respect one another's feelings. In Reception, teachers respond to the social and emotional needs of the children by choosing books with relevant themes.

Leaders encourage pupils to keep physically healthy. Many pupils join after-school sports clubs. The school is part of the Braunton Learning Cooperative Trust. Through this organisation, leaders arrange sports festivals, where pupils compete with other local schools.

Governors are a visible presence in the school. They have a good understanding of leaders' challenges. Staff are well supported by both leaders and governors, who are considerate of their workload. However, the strategic oversight of leaders and governors is weak. There is a lack of attention to detail, in both policy and practice. Although leaders gather information, they do not ask the right questions of it to fully gauge the school's effectiveness. As a result, their understanding of issues affecting pupils is reduced.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have appropriate training. They are vigilant and know that 'it could happen here'. They keep detailed records of any concerns. Leaders partner with other agencies to support families.

Leaders use the curriculum to make pupils aware of risks. They dedicate resources to support pupils who have difficulties with their emotional and mental health. Pupils feel safe and can identify trusted adults with whom they would share their worries.

Appropriate vetting checks are carried out on adults working within the school. Leaders and governors make regular checks on the single central record. They assess and limit any risks to pupils.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The arrangements for the leadership of early reading are unclear. As a result, pupils who have fallen behind with their reading do not receive the support they need to catch up. Leaders should clarify the leadership of early reading and ensure that pupils catch up quickly.
- Staff do not yet have the specialist knowledge they need to support struggling readers effectively. Consequently, the support for pupils who have gaps in their phonic knowledge impacts weakly on their progress. Leaders should develop staff expertise in early reading. This will help them to support struggling readers more effectively.
- Beyond the core subjects of reading and mathematics, the curriculum lacks coherence. Leaders have not identified the essential ideas that they want all pupils to grasp. This makes it difficult for pupils to remember and add to their knowledge over time. Leaders should make clear the most important knowledge of each subject curriculum, so that teachers and pupils can prioritise this.
- In several subjects, assessment is not used purposefully. It is not clear what pupils are expected to know and be able to do. The information gathered does not inform future teaching well enough. Leaders should ensure that the approach to assessment helps pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders and governors are not sufficiently rigorous in their evaluation of the school's work. Consequently, they do not pick up on areas of weakness quickly enough. Leaders and governors should strengthen their systems for evaluating the impact of school policies and practices.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113161
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10228972
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Elizabeth Quick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alun Dobson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.marwood.devon.sch.uk">www.marwood.devon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 April 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The previous inspection took place in 2008. All governors, including the chair of governors, have joined the board since then.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders and a group of governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector spoke with the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors also spoke to the headteacher about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held discussions with leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector considered a range of supporting documentation, such as policies and records.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View, and to the surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Lydia Pride, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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