

Inspection of Marsh School

Abbey Barn Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 1RW

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Marsh love coming to school. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive, respectful and kind. Pupils trust staff to listen to any worries that they may have. Adults help pupils to resolve any occasional bullying or unkindness quickly. Pupils understand the high expectations leaders have of them. Consequently, there is a purposeful learning atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils play happily together in the playground and move safely around the school.

Leaders work tirelessly to create a strong, nurturing environment. They make sure that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are included in all aspects of school life. This includes supporting pupils to overcome personal challenges, for example improving their concentration skills and the playing of inclusive sports such as wheelchair rugby. Staff find out and follow pupils' interests. They take account of this information when they plan the curriculum. As a result, pupils are full of curiosity and keen to learn. However, the strong emphasis on caring for pupils is not carefully balanced with a sharp enough focus on making sure that pupils who have fallen behind catch up quickly. As a result, some pupils do not learn and achieve as well as leaders intend.

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

Leaders have not ensured that an ambitious curriculum is provided for every subject. In some subjects, leaders have introduced well-designed and logically sequenced curriculums. These clearly state what pupils will learn and when. They are carefully set out to show how pupils' knowledge and skills build over time. However, this is not the case for some of the foundation subjects.

The teaching of reading is not as developed as leaders would like. There are some strengths in the reading curriculum. For example, adults read regularly to children, starting from the time they join the Nursery class. Staff bring books to life with their lively and expressive retelling of popular stories. The school's scheme to unwrap and read a book a day during Advent excites pupils about reading. However, some pupils are not well supported to develop their vocabulary and learn the skills they need to read fluently. Some pupils who need extra help with reading are not identified quickly enough. Leaders have recently adopted a phonics scheme, but this is not yet used well enough to support struggling readers.

Leaders have provided some effective training for staff to improve their subject knowledge in phonics and mathematics. However, they do not consistently support teachers to develop their teaching strategies so that pupils learn as much as leaders intend. For example, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop and practise number fluency. Furthermore, teachers are not fully aware of the most effective ways in which to support pupils with SEND in the classroom.

Teachers and leaders do not routinely check, precisely enough, what pupils know and remember. This means that sometimes the work given to pupils is too easy or

too hard. Some pupils do not always get the best support that they need. Pupils with education, health and care plans have well-targeted support based on clear identification of their needs. For other pupils with SEND, the targets in their individual plans are not precisely related to their learning.

Pupils' wider development is thoughtfully considered. Pupils benefit from a broad range of experiences, including enrichment activities such as clubs and visits. For example, pupils visit a local farm. This builds their understanding of the world and provides real-life examples of some of the vocabulary they have encountered. There is a coherent personal, social and health education curriculum which promotes inclusivity and develops pupils' knowledge and understanding about themselves and others. Pupils are taught to respect others and celebrate differences, and they enjoy learning about each other's faiths and cultures.

Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of right and wrong and they are beginning to understand moral choices. For example, pupils know that working hard and being kind 'makes you a better adult'. They learn about healthy and positive relationships. They are supported to stay safe, including when online and through cycling safety schemes. They know that they should report anything 'scary' to adults. Pupils have recently learned about aspects of democracy through the election of their school council.

Leaders are mindful of staff workload. They have tried to remove unnecessary administrative tasks that do not contribute to pupils' learning. Leaders provide additional time for staff to undertake their work when needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are trained to recognise if a pupil may be at risk of harm. Through the school's curriculum, pupils are taught what to do if they need help. Staff know their pupils well. They use their knowledge of pupils and their training to identify pupils who may need help at an early stage. Leaders respond swiftly to any referrals made by staff and access the help that pupils need quickly. This includes support from safeguarding professionals and partners. During the recruitment process for staff, the appropriate checks are made to confirm that adults are safe to work in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not always use effective strategies to help pupils learn. Consequently, pupils do not always learn as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that staff know how best to help pupils understand and remember what they are taught.

- In some subjects, the curriculum is under-developed. It is, therefore, not taught effectively. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum for all subjects is coherently planned and sequenced.
- Reading is not taught well enough. Some pupils do not learn to read as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that there is a sharp focus on ensuring that all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, learn to read.
- Teachers do not systematically check pupils' learning. This means that the curriculum is not sufficiently well adapted to meet pupils' needs. Leaders should ensure that teachers know what to assess and how to use the information to match the curriculum closely to what pupils need to learn next.

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	110234
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10242195
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kat Collins
Headteacher	Lesley Godwin
Website	www.marshschool.com
Date of previous inspection	20 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a nursery and infant school.
- The school does not currently use 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 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.
- Inspectors discussed the provision in the school with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, and representatives from the governing body, including the chair. An inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, religious education and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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