

Inspection of Marnel Community Infant School

Shetland Road, Popley Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 9PT

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where all pupils, regardless of their background, thrive.

Staff are wonderfully ambitious about what pupils can learn. They know their subjects well and teach exciting and inspirational lessons. Pupils flourish here. They are eager to learn and they work very hard. Teachers promote a love of books. The 'snug' is a very special space to read and be lost in the world of stories.

Leaders think very carefully about everything they offer. They use special events as 'hooks in learning', such as 'The Cinderella Ball', where children showcase their ballroom dancing. There is something for everyone, and no one is left out.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. They play and learn well together, treating each other with respect and consideration. Bullying is rare. Pupils feel safe. They know what bullying is and are confident that, should it ever happen, staff would help them immediately. Pupils consistently demonstrate wonderful self-control. They are polite and positive.

Leaders have created a culture where everyone wants to be their best in everything they do. Their good work extends beyond the school gates and into the community. Staff feel incredibly proud. Parents and carers are full of praise for the school.

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

The curriculum is extremely ambitious. Leaders have identified the precise knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Staff use their expertise to skilfully shape how lessons are taught. Consequently, teaching is highly effective and inspires and motivates all pupils. Teachers routinely check pupils' knowledge and understanding. They skilfully make sure that any gaps in learning or points where pupils are a bit confused are addressed quickly and effectively.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They demonstrate high levels of self-control and consideration for each other. They quickly become engrossed in their learning and concentrate on tasks. No time is wasted. Right from the start, children learn to follow clear and consistent routines. They play exceptionally well together, learning to take turns and to listen to each other carefully.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) blossom in this school. Leaders have ensured that staff have the time and expertise to identify and address pupils' needs effectively. Teachers adapt learning to meet pupils' needs. They check carefully how pupils are doing. The curriculum for pupils with SEND is neither narrowed nor unnecessarily simplified. As a result, these pupils progress well. This is exactly the same for pupils without SEND but who may be at risk of falling behind. They too are given precise support so that they keep up with their

learning. The support pupils receive helps them to remember what they have learned over time.

Leaders make staff training a priority. They check that all staff are confident in teaching the key curriculum knowledge. New staff say how much they appreciate the coaching and mentoring provided by leaders. All staff say that they enjoy working in this school. Governors know their school very well and support leaders effectively.

Children in early years get off to an exceptionally strong start. Leaders meticulously plan how children learn to read. As a result, children quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. They are given books that exactly match their phonic knowledge and they become enthusiastic readers. Teachers create stimulating activities to enrich children's learning. Children work well and complete tasks with joy and determination. Children who need extra help are expertly supported by skilled staff who access the right resources. The early years environment is vibrant and inviting. Children are excited about what they are learning and are extremely well prepared for key stage 1.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' character development through an exceptionally rich range of experiences. Pupils are given many opportunities to take part in things that are new to them. They are all expected to participate in clubs and they show resilience by sticking with this commitment. Leaders ensure that cost is no barrier, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. There is a culture of inclusivity and celebration at the school. Pupils are proud that their voices are important and listened to by leaders.

Leaders' ambition for all pupils is unmissable. Nothing is left to chance, and there is deep and careful thought behind every decision. This means that every opportunity is grasped in making this a quite exceptional school. Parents recognise this. One, typical of many, commented, 'I can't speak highly enough of the teachers, the facilities and the support offered to the children. It is a wonderful school community to be part of.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture that prioritises keeping pupils safe. All staff know that they have a shared responsibility to be alert to signs of harm or worry. Adults know how to identify any pupils who may be at risk. Leaders work effectively with local partners. All appropriate checks are carried out on adults who work and volunteer in the school.

Pupils are taught the importance of keeping themselves physically and mentally healthy. They know how to recognise risks and how to stay safe, including when online.

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	116023
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10256348
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andrew Dillan
Headteacher	Susan Giles-Cox
Website	www.marnel-inf.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2013.
- The school operates its own before- and after-school club.
- 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 met with the headteacher and other school leaders, governors (including the chair of governors), and local authority representatives.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, religious education, history and physical education. 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 evaluated the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements in the school through document checks, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. Inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents from responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including free-text comments, and also spoke to several parents before school.
- The views of staff were considered through Ofsted's confidential survey and from meetings and conversations.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally. They spoke to pupils about their learning and experiences at school. They observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Ginny Rhodes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Toye	Ofsted Inspector
Neil Wilson	Ofsted Inspector

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