

Inspection of Marlborough Primary School

Marlborough Road, Sulgrave Village, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE37 3BG

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

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

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone receives a warm welcome at Marlborough. Staff and pupils understand the importance of including everyone in work and play. The school's 5 'R's aim to develop 'relationships, resilience, reflectiveness, risk-taking and resourcefulness' in all that pupils do. The introduction of a new approach to playtimes supports this mission well. Pupils enjoy the new range of activities and resources available to them across the school site. Pupils feel happy, safe and supported. Their behaviour is good. While pupils say that bullying has happened, they are confident that adults sort this out quickly.

Over time, the school has experienced significant turbulence in staffing. This has slowed progress in some areas of the school's work. The new headteacher has built a settled and cohesive team. They have focused on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development first. These are now strengths of the school. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' academic development, but these aspirations are not currently being realised. Too few pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), keep up with the curriculum in some subjects, such as reading and mathematics. In computing, however, pupils fly. This is because staff are implementing the planned curriculum with expertise. However, pupils' experiences across the curriculum remain too variable.

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

There is a sense of calmness across the school. Leaders deliberately create this through their warm interactions and considered learning environment. The school is awash with pleasant smells, music and flowers. Pupils' behaviours mirror this calmness. In corridors, pupils move around the school sensibly. In lessons, they listen, work hard and respect each other. This harmony starts as soon as children join the school. Children from the two-year-old provision onwards are gently guided to follow the 'golden school rules' to be part of the school team.

Children in the early years receive a strong and nurturing start to their schooling. They enjoy an engaging environment. From the giant land snails to the array of role play resources, children play and learn together well. Adults guide and question children to help them to think about the world around them. These strong foundations for language development are not, however, securely built upon as pupils move through the school. Expectations of how older pupils should articulate themselves are too low.

Leaders' aspirations across the whole curriculum are high. Leaders aim for pupils to experience a rich and exciting curriculum offer. Much of this is now in place and staff are being well supported to deliver it. Where this is well embedded, in subjects such as computing, pupils develop strong knowledge and confidence. The impact of this

work in some subjects, however, is not cemented. In mathematics, for example, pupils do not secure the key mathematical knowledge that they need to keep up with the curriculum. They rely too heavily on resources to complete calculations they should be able to do mentally. The support for pupils with SEND is variable. Some pupils' support plans detail exactly what they need to work on and how staff can support them to achieve these goals. Not all plans are as useful. Some lack clarity and do not help pupils to keep up with the curriculum effectively.

Leaders have prioritised developing Marlborough into a 'reading school'. Interesting books are everywhere. They have designed the English curriculum around high-quality books. Pupils are gaining a growing knowledge of authors and what they enjoy reading. All staff have had training and support to deliver the chosen phonics curriculum. They assess pupils' growing phonic knowledge to find the gaps in what pupils know. Staff plan carefully how to help pupils to catch up. Still, far too many pupils in key stage 1 are not reading fluently. There is insufficient focus on developing fluency. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise reading words at pace, containing the sounds they know. Many pupils continue to segment and blend when reading words they know well. As such, too many pupils enter key stage 2 unable to read age-appropriate materials with understanding.

Leaders' work to ensure the personal development of pupils is effective. They aim to open up the world to pupils. Trips to the Lake District, theatres, museums and local industry helps to raise aspiration. The school is bursting with budding graphic designers, mathematicians, game coders and comedians. Staff promote the world of work well. Pupils follow a detailed personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) programme. They learn to stay safe online, understand the importance of physical and mental health and how to manage finances. Pupils readily take on school and community responsibilities, such as being playground ambassadors and helping to run the local food bank. These experiences help to develop pupils' good character.

Staff feel part of a cohesive team. They feel valued and cared for. Governors check staff wellbeing and workload. The governing body has recently appointed new members to ensure a more robust challenge of school performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders responsible for safeguarding know families and their needs well. Leaders are passionate about the services that families receive and as such, they have employed their own family liaison officer. Leaders keep detailed records of minutes of formal meetings and agreed actions. When these actions are not followed through, leaders are not afraid to challenge this with other professionals. Governors make checks on the daily safeguarding procedures of the school.

Pupils feel safe. They can turn to any adult for help. They also experience a well-planned PSHE curriculum which teaches them how to be safe outside of school, such as road, bicycle and fire safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are not developing fluency with their reading quickly enough. Pupils continue to segment and blend when reading words they know well. This is hindering some pupils from learning to read with fluency and understanding. Adults should support pupils to develop fluency when reading words containing the phonics sounds they know.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to recall important mathematical number facts efficiently. This results in too many pupils unable to keep up with the mathematics curriculum content. Leaders should ensure that teaching is designed to ensure that pupils are confident in number fact recall, so they can apply this knowledge across the mathematics curriculum.
- Some pupils with SEND do not have support plans that identify appropriate targets. There is variability in the quality and quantity of additional support for these pupils to meet their needs. Leaders should check that targets on support plans are appropriate, ensuring that pupils' needs are met consistently.
- Leaders' expectations for pupils' oracy development are not ambitious enough. Pupils do not develop a wide vocabulary and confidence when speaking. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum includes sufficient opportunities for pupils to gain the vocabulary and skills they need to speak and debate with confidence.

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	108822
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10242148
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vanessa Winspear
Headteacher	Wendy Buddle
Website	www.marlboroughprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have joined the school. Both of these appointments were made within the current school year.
- The school does not currently use any alternative education providers, but has one child dual-registered in partnership with another school within the same local authority.
- The school provides a breakfast club for its pupils.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing, and art and design. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils. Inspectors also looked at the curriculum for early years.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- Inspectors met with subject leaders, the headteacher, special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, early years lead, members of the governing body, school business manager, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and spoke to leaders, staff, governing body members, and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons visits, at lunchtime, playtime and during a visit to the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil questionnaires. Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Mark Dent, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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