

# Inspection of a good school: Marsden Primary School

Mill Lane, Whitburn, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR6 7HJ

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Inspection dates:

20 and 21 September 2023

## Outcome

Marsden Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Marsden Primary is a welcoming, inclusive and caring school. Leaders and staff provide nurture and guidance that enable pupils to thrive. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Leaders have established a curriculum that successfully meets pupils' needs. Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics. In other subjects, leaders have improved the curriculum. This ensures that pupils gain important knowledge. Leaders are not complacent and continue to improve how some subjects are taught.

The school has clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. From starting school in Nursery, children are sensitively taught the school's routines. Children in early years listen carefully to staff and work well together. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying. Pupils and parents and carers are confident about how the school deals with this aspect.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Several parents commented that they liked the way the school developed 'the whole child'. There is a range of after-school clubs to enrich the interests of all pupils. The school widens pupils' experiences through well-considered visits. Pupils have important leadership roles in school. Their contribution to the community enhances their citizenship qualities.

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

The school has a suitably sequenced curriculum to help pupils progress well from early years to Year 6. In most subjects, leaders have successfully identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know. For example, in mathematics, this knowledge is broken down into clear steps that help pupils to build their knowledge securely. Teachers adapt their teaching effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use appropriate checks to determine

how well pupils are retaining important knowledge. Specialist teaching of Mandarin Chinese in key stage 2 prepares pupils well for learning languages in secondary school.

In a small number of foundation subjects, such as geography, some of the sequencing of what pupils will learn is not as clear. Also, approaches to help pupils recall important knowledge are not as effectively applied. Where this is the case, teaching of some of the knowledge and skills does not build as effectively as it does in other subjects. Leaders know the next steps required to further refine the curriculum in these subjects. The school makes effective use of a wide range of training to enhance staff expertise. However, the school's staff training programme for the revised curriculum has not yet been completed for some foundation subjects.

The school has prioritised the teaching of reading. All staff receive suitable training to improve their knowledge of teaching phonics and early reading. Phonics is taught through a consistent approach. Pupils have books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. Reading is taught regularly using good-quality texts as pupils progress through school. Virtual online visits by authors enthuse pupils about the books that they are reading. The school's approaches ensure that pupils become confident, fluent readers who have a growing love of reading.

The school is a calm, positive place to learn. Staff help children to settle quickly and successfully into early years. Children listen attentively to staff and work sensibly when selecting learning activities. Pupils are focused and hard-working in lessons. They have pride in their work and produce good-quality work of a high standard. Playtimes and lunchtimes are sociable and friendly. Throughout the school, there are positive, respectful relationships between staff and pupils.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Before- and after-school clubs enrich the curriculum. The school has a range of clubs in place for all age ranges, including early years children. Pupils are proud of their leadership roles, such as those of school councillor and house captain. The school works with several community groups, which develops pupils' citizenship qualities. Visits, including residential trips, enrich pupils' experience. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their visit to London. Carefully considered pastoral support helps pupils with social and emotional needs. The school's 'eyes on the child' approach ensures that staff are vigilant for any pupils who may be vulnerable or need extra support.

Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Governors fulfil their roles well and provide suitable challenge and support. Staff are positive about how leaders support their well-being and take account of workload when introducing change. Parents are very positive about the school. They find leaders and staff approachable and value the academic and personal development provided for their children.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a small number of foundation subjects, the school has not sequenced some of the knowledge that pupils need to learn clearly enough. At times, opportunities to help pupils recall important knowledge in foundation subjects are not used effectively. Where this is the case, pupils do not systematically develop their knowledge. The school should continue its work to sequence knowledge more clearly across all foundation subjects and to refine opportunities to help pupils recall their previous learning.
- In some foundation subjects, the school has not yet completed the planned training to support the teaching of the revised curriculum. At times, this can restrict how effectively pupils develop their knowledge and build on prior learning. The school should complete its programme of staff training to ensure that its revised curriculum enables pupils gain the intended knowledge in all foundation subjects.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2014.

## 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and](#)

[protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	108687
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10289981
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Teresa Lawton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caroline Marshall
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.marsdenprimary.org.uk">www.marsdenprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date(s) of previous inspection</b>	18 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The deputy headteacher has changed since the previous inspection.
- The school uses three registered alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. He met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector completed a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, he 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.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector met with school leaders to discuss pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the school's provision for pupils' personal development.
- The inspector analysed the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys and the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Michael Reeves, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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