

# Inspection of a good school: Marple Hall School

Hill Top Drive, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 6LB

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Inspection dates:

19 and 20 September 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

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

Pupils at Marple Hall School work hard and they achieve well. The school has exceptionally high expectations for all learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils readily rise to the challenges that the school sets for them and, as a result, they are very well prepared for the next steps in their education, employment or training.

The 'Marple Hall Spirit' underpins the sensible behaviour and the positive attitudes to learning that pupils consistently display around the school. Staff and pupils have extremely positive relationships. Disruption to learning is rare. Pupils said that they have a trusted adult who they can talk to in school should they have any worries. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Pupils are happy with the wide range of subjects that they can choose to study and the extensive opportunities for their wider personal development. The school provides a wealth of activities for pupils to participate in, including football, dance, hockey and debating club. Many pupils told inspectors that they are excited to be involved in the upcoming school production.

Staff share their great enthusiasm for the subjects that they teach with pupils. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and they enjoy their learning.

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

The school has a meticulously designed and well-organised curriculum. The curriculum is suitably broad and ambitious across a range of subjects. This affords pupils considerable choice when selecting their options in key stage 4. A high proportion of pupils study the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects. Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as

their peers. This includes those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision).

Teachers have strong subject expertise and they explain new concepts to pupils clearly and with confidence. They design appropriate learning activities carefully so that pupils build a rich body of subject knowledge over time. Teachers are adept at supporting pupils to acquire and apply new subject-specific vocabulary. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding of concepts and learn with fervour.

Teachers employ a range of effective techniques to check pupils' knowledge and understanding. Skilled teachers identify and remedy any misconceptions or forgotten learning that pupils may have before introducing new content. Pupils were full of praise for the guidance that their teachers provide. They told inspectors that this support helps them to learn confidently across the curriculum.

The school prioritises reading. The school has provided teachers with suitable training to enable them to promote a love of reading across the curriculum. For example, teachers read aloud to pupils during dedicated reading time. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the high-quality books that they have enjoyed. Added to this, pupils were proud of the rewards that they have received for their reading achievements. Expert staff quickly identify those pupils who find reading more difficult. Suitable support is provided for these pupils so that they catch up quickly with their peers.

The school has ensured that staff are well equipped to accurately identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. The school works closely with parents and carers, and external agencies, to ensure that staff are furnished with the information that they need to successfully adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This includes for those pupils in the specially resourced provision. However, from time to time, some staff do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND as well as they could. As a result, a small number of pupils with SEND develop a few gaps in their knowledge in some subjects.

Staff are provided with the tools that they need to manage pupils' behaviour effectively while promoting opportunities for curiosity and creativity in classrooms. The positive interactions between staff and pupils make this skilful work seem effortless. On occasions, where pupils' behaviour falls short of the school's high expectations, staff deal with incidents effectively and proportionately. Pupils appreciate being rewarded for consistently behaving well.

The school places great emphasis on pupils' wider development. A robust careers programme provides pupils with the experiences and information that they need to prepare sufficiently well for their next steps. The well-designed personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum ensures that pupils learn about a range of topics, including staying safe online and how to develop healthy relationships.

Leaders work with quiet tenacity. They value all members of the school community. The school actively seeks the views of pupils, parents and staff before making changes or introducing new initiatives.

Staff are proud to work at Marple Hall School. They said that they feel incredibly well supported with their well-being and workload. Staff reported that they are empowered to manage their own professional development. Leaders at all levels are ambitious for the future developments of the school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- On occasion, some staff do not adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND as well as they could. This means that, from time to time, some pupils with SEND learn less well. The school should ensure that staff are fully equipped to tailor their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can learn successfully.

## 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 September 2013.

## 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>	106138
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	10294244
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,570
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Cavanagh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joe Barker
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.marplehall.stockport.sch.uk">www.marplehall.stockport.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for 14 pupils with SEND, aged between 11 and 13. The provision provides specialist support for pupils with moderate learning needs.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers and one unregistered alternative provider for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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 that 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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history, modern foreign languages, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and an external school improvement partner.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Eleanor Overland, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Phil Lloyd

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