

Inspection of Marpool Primary School

Moorfield Road, Exmouth, Devon EX8 3QW

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do not receive an acceptable standard of education at this school. Leaders' lack of focus on the quality of education means that they have not identified the weaknesses that exist. Leaders' actions have not resulted in a well-sequenced curriculum. As a result, pupils do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to be ready for the next stage of their education.

Pupils feel safe and are safe at this school. However, behaviour is not consistently good. While most pupils behave well, some do not. Pupils are not clear about the rules and expectations that leaders have of them. When bullying happens, pupils are confident to tell adults, but their concerns are not always dealt with swiftly and effectively. Most parents and pupils say that bullying is rare.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through the clubs they attend. They develop their sense of citizenship through activities such as fundraising events. They also take on leadership roles within the school from Year 1.

Experiences such as forest school, caring for the school goats, sporting events and trips all contribute positively to pupils' personal development. However, pupils do not know about different faiths or cultures that are different to their own. Consequently, they are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.

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

Changes in leadership, low expectations and a weak curriculum have led to a decline in the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders know that the curriculum needs to improve but the pace of change has been slow. Leaders have not remedied the weaknesses in the school. Governors do not recognise the extent of the school's weaknesses. Therefore, they have not focused on the right priorities for improvement.

Leaders want pupils to succeed academically. However, pupils' academic achievement across the curriculum is poor, including children in the early years.

Despite this, children in the early years, and pupils throughout the school, are benefiting from a suitable phonics programme. Pupils read and are read to regularly in school. Staff are well trained to teach phonics. They support pupils to practise and apply their phonic knowledge. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they are learning. Pupils who struggle with reading are supported to catch up. This means that, over time, pupils become fluent readers. Beyond phonics, however, the reading curriculum is not coherently organised. It is still under development. This means that pupils do not build on reading skills they have learned before. Older pupils have gaps in their reading knowledge.

The curriculums for subjects other than early reading and mathematics lack precision and coherence. Leaders have not identified precisely the knowledge they

want pupils to learn from Reception to Year 6, or when they should do so. Therefore, pupils cannot build on prior learning successfully. As a result, pupils, including those attending the specially resourced provision, do not learn all that they should.

The curriculum is disjointed and does not enable pupils to learn enough. Subject leaders have not designed a coherent curriculum. Consequently, some teaching is a series of disconnected activities that do not build knowledge or a secure foundation for future learning. Pupils remember little of what they have been taught. They are unable to connect to earlier learning when something new is introduced. For example, in geography, older pupils do not know the difference between cities and countries and are unsure of the world's oceans. Leaders do not check on the impact of actions they have taken so they do not know where weaknesses exist.

Leaders and teachers accurately identify pupils who may have SEND. However, staff do not use the information that they receive about pupils with SEND to inform how they adapt the delivery of lessons. The curriculum that these pupils receive is as weak as it is for their peers. It does not meet their academic needs, nor does it allow them to achieve all that they should.

Teachers do not make adequate checks on what pupils are learning. At times, work is not matched well to what pupils are able to achieve. Too often, staff do not notice or act on pupils' misconceptions. As a result, pupils continue to make the same mistakes and do not make the progress they could.

Staff feel well supported by the headteacher and appreciate that their workload is considered when introducing change. Staff are committed to improving the school. A small number of parents expressed concerns about how leaders communicate with them. However, most of the parents and carers who shared their views are positive about the school. Many value the nurture and support that their children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. They understand pupils' backgrounds and the additional challenges that some families face. Systems and processes to keep pupils safe in the school are robust. Leaders ensure that all staff are trained and know how to report concerns. All concerns are recorded comprehensively. Leaders follow up on concerns swiftly. They work with other agencies to ensure pupils and their families get the support they need.

Pupils know who to talk to if they need help or are worried. Pupils learn how to stay safe online and can explain how to keep personal information secure.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not well planned in most subjects. It is not clear what pupils should learn and when. Leaders and governors must ensure the curriculum enables pupils to build their knowledge in all subjects over time.
- The curriculum for reading in key stage 2 is underdeveloped. Consequently, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders need to ensure that the content of the key stage 2 reading curriculum prepares pupils for their next stages of education.
- Leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the impact of their actions. They do not know which areas are, and are not, improving. As a result, the curriculum remains poor in many areas. Leaders, including governors, must ensure that they have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Senior leaders and governors do not have a coherent, strategic vision that provides direction and support for all staff. This means that subject leaders have little understanding of how to improve the curriculum and the quality of education. Leaders, including governors, need to ensure that staff have the support and expertise to enable them to bring about improvements.
- Leaders and teachers do not make adequate checks on what pupils are learning. This means they do not know how well the curriculum is working or whether pupils know and remember more. Leaders need to ensure that assessment information is used to improve the curriculum and close gaps in learning.

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	113096
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10256685
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Claire Foster
Executive Headteacher	Rachel Pattison
Website	www.marpoolprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Marpool Primary School is part of the Exe Estuary Federation, with Clyst Heath Primary School and Countess Wear Community School, which formed in June 2022. All three schools share an executive headteacher and governing body.
- The school makes use of three unregistered alternative providers and one registered alternative provider.
- The school has a nursery for three- and four-year-old children.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club.
- There are a high proportion of pupils with special educational and/or disabilities in the school.
- In May 2023, the school opened an eight-place resource base for pupils with complex needs within the local authority.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, the head of school, members of the leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, and subject leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, art and physical education. In each subject, inspectors met with senior and curriculum leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors reviewed behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Carl Thornton	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Costello	Ofsted Inspector

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