

Inspection of Marshfields School

Eastern Close, Dogsthorpe, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE1 4PP

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 September 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Marshfields are happy and thrive. They become confident to take part in class discussions and to undertake tasks independently. Pupils have positive and supportive relationships with other pupils and staff. They look out for each other and help when someone is finding something tricky.

Most pupils join the school from mainstream settings. They continue a similar educational experience to their peers, with careful adaptations to meet their needs. The curriculum is ambitious, and most pupils leave with qualifications that will help them in their next steps in learning, work or adult life. Pupils confidently use their planners to organise themselves and know where the next lesson is. They access a wide range of specialist teaching and facilities, including art, technology, and science rooms. Pupils are smartly dressed and proud of their school.

Nearly all pupils listen and work hard. A few find it harder to be in the classroom all the time. Most of the time, staff can support them to get back to learning quickly. Incidents of more challenging behaviour have reduced over the last six months.

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

The curriculum at Marshfields is well designed. Content builds in each subject, year on year towards clear end goals. Each department has adapted the curriculum well to meet the needs of each class and then pupils in turn. For key stage 4 and 5, pupils work towards useful, nationally recognised qualifications. All pupils continue to study English and mathematics to the end of key stage 5.

The pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are taught in their own building and garden area. This gives them plenty of opportunities to learn formally and through play. From Year 6 onwards, pupils are taught by specialists, who have excellent understanding of how to teach their subjects to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has made sure that teachers are well supported to develop the knowledge and skills they need to teach their subject well.

Teachers choose ways to teach core ideas that help pupils remember them. They carefully plan activities that motivate, interest and challenge pupils. Teachers provide carefully considered support and technology to help pupils write. Some pupils build up to writing at much greater length and quality across the curriculum.

Reading is celebrated at Marshfields. The library is a welcoming place with a large selection of books that are high interest, but match pupils' reading stage. English lessons are based around stories and books. The school has made sure that pupils access age-appropriate texts, such as Twelfth Night and modern classics, adapted or abridged to ensure they are accessible.

All pupils in key stage 2 and 3, as well as some older pupils, have both direct phonics teaching and online practice. Teachers are confident in teaching phonics and

make use of this as a strategy for reading and spelling across the school. This means that pupils make steady progress in learning to read.

The school gives careers education high value. Regular visitors from different industries enhance pupils' understanding of possible choices once they leave school. All pupils in key stage 5 undertake weekly work experience and college visits. Pupils across the school take part in lots of trips out, both to sites in the local area and further afield, for example studying tourism by interviewing people at a seaside resort.

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum has recently been reviewed and specialist teachers appointed. This is at a very early stage of implementation. However, pupils are clear about the teaching they have had about right and wrong. They know how to keep themselves safe online. The school has ensured that pupils understand consent. The school ensures that pupils who find social boundaries difficult to understand have the help they need to succeed and not upset others.

The school is a calm place. At lunchtimes, all pupils take part in clubs, such as creativity, dance and being active. This keeps pupils focused and busy. Key stage 5 students act as mentors, supporting the younger ones during this time. There are times in lessons when pupils are less willing to do what adults ask them. Generally, these instances are resolved quickly.

The leadership team is highly cohesive. It is newly formed, but works effectively to further the school's success. Staff feel well supported and are positive about the changes that have been made over the last few years.

Governors are highly supportive of the school's work. They have focused on ensuring that the school is in a stable position and ready to move forward. Some governors have had more training for their role than others. This means that some routine checks have not been made. Regular curriculum visits take place, but the focus and follow up of these is not as clear as it could be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of pupils can exhibit challenging behaviour. The school should ensure that actions and strategies continue to improve pupils' behaviour.
- Some governors do not have the training or knowledge to carry out their roles as effectively as others. They have not given leaders enough challenge around the impact of the curriculum and all aspects of the school's work. The school should

ensure that all members of the governing body have the skills to support and challenge appropriately.

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

Unique reference number	110943
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10288432
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Isabel Clark
Headteacher	Ian Graham-Wells
Website	www.marshfields.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher is currently in the role on an interim basis. They are normally in the role of deputy headteacher. The previous headteacher left in July 2023.
- The school provides places for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties.
- The school provides outreach support to other schools in the local authority in how to support pupils with SEND.
- The school uses four unregistered alternative provision providers to enhance pupils' education. It also uses three registered further education colleges for additional tuition for pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 met with the acting headteacher and other members of the leadership team. They met with members of staff. They also spoke with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, humanities, art, and personal and social education. For each subject, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding files. Inspectors spoke to leaders, including the designated safeguarding leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 28 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the 33 responses to the Ofsted survey for school staff.

Inspection team

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