

Inspection of Marden Vale CofE Academy

William Street, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 9BD

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September, and 5 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Louise Scrivens. This school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Lacey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Rosemary Tong.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has prioritised the development of the curriculum. The school is aspirational and determined that all pupils will learn well and be successful. The school's actions are beginning to make a difference in some subjects. However, pupils do not yet build their knowledge well enough across the whole curriculum.

Pupils are happy at Marden Vale Church of England Academy. They enjoy attending school and feel safe. Relationships between pupils, including those in the specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and adults are positive. Pupils say that adults help them if they have any worries or concerns. They know they can go to the 'nest' to talk when they need to.

The school has high expectations of behaviour. Older pupils work hard and focus on their learning. Pupils respond well in turn-taking and listening to others. At times, when some pupils lose focus, staff are quick to intervene to limit any disruption to learning to others.

Pupils enjoy the clubs that are on offer, including football and netball. They welcome visitors to their school, who share important messages with them, including about fire safety. Pupils understand the importance of inclusion. The school's values support pupils to be tolerant and respectful of one another.

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

Leaders are determined that all pupils will receive a strengthened curriculum. However, it is too early to see the impact of this. Many changes in staffing have hampered the school's progress to bring about intended improvements.

The school has not ensured that the curriculum is coherently designed and sequenced across all subjects. Many subject leaders are new to their role. The key knowledge they want pupils to learn is not clearly set out. This means the curriculum does not take into consideration pupils' prior knowledge or any gaps they may have.

The school has not ensured that it has an accurate understanding of what pupils know and remember. Some subject leaders have not yet carried out checks on the effectiveness of the subject they lead. Pupils struggle to remember what they have learned over time. For example, in art, the work in pupils' sketchbooks demonstrates that pupils do not build knowledge well because learning is disconnected.

In some subjects, the school has identified the important knowledge it wants pupils to know. Teachers revisit previous learning to make sure pupils remember the key knowledge. This helps pupils to build on what they already know. For example, older pupils can explain the water cycle and the formation of volcanoes.

The school prioritises reading. However, the implementation of the phonics programme is not effective for all pupils. Pupils have significant gaps in the sounds they should know. This means that some find it difficult to read with fluency and confidence. Pupils who struggle are not catching up quickly enough. Routines in Reception are well established. Children learn to recognise letters and sounds as soon as they start school, which should prepare them well for Year 1. This has not always been the case previously.

Adults know the pupils well. They support pupils with complex learning needs effectively. However, some pupils with individual support plans have targets that are too broad. This makes it difficult to identify the small steps they need to be successful and to know if they have met their targets. The school has already identified this issue. There is a plan in place to ensure that teachers break down individual targets to support pupils' learning.

The school has worked hard to build relationships with parents. Parents are highly positive about the school and appreciate the care and understanding that adults have. They recognise the changes that the school is making and support the community events, such as 'tea and toast' in Reception Year.

The school is developing a clear approach to support pupils' personal development. Pupils understand the importance of equality. They accept difference and are courteous towards each other. However, pupils do not demonstrate a deep understanding of different faiths and cultures. Pupils know that democracy makes things fair. They can relate this to the recent appointment of head boy and girl. Pupils know that it is important to help others. They raise funds for different charities, including the air ambulance. The school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves healthy, including with regard to their mental health. Pupils talk positively about the support they get from adults.

Adults feel well supported by the school. They appreciate the support they get to manage their workload. Staff value working with colleagues from across the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the phonics programme does not support all pupils to read well. This means that the gaps they have developed over time in their phonic knowledge remain. The trust needs to ensure that the phonics programme is implemented effectively so that all pupils learn to read fluently and confidently.
- Some subject leaders do not know how effectively the subject they lead is implemented. As a result, pupils do not build knowledge well. The trust should

ensure that subject leaders check the effectiveness of the subject they lead to ensure that pupils build knowledge well and remember more.

- In some wider curriculum subjects, the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember has not been clearly identified. This means that pupils do not build their knowledge well over time. The trust needs to ensure that the key knowledge is identified and that learning is adapted to close any gaps in pupils' knowledge across all subjects.

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	141988
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10288205
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rosemary Tong
Headteacher	Louise Scrivens
Website	www.mardenvale.dsat.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 June 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities for 14 pupils with complex needs. Pupils who attend the resource base have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has a larger proportion of disadvantaged pupils than that found nationally.
- Since the last inspection, there have been significant staffing changes. The headteacher took up post in January 2023. There have been other staffing changes, including a deputy headteacher, a special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and an early years leader.
- The school does not use an alternative provider.

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.
- Very occasionally, Ofsted's quality assurance process may suggest there are gaps in the inspection evidence base, which will cause Ofsted to conclude that the inspection is incomplete. This happened at Marden Vale CofE Academy. One of His Majesty's Inspectors, accompanied by an Ofsted Inspector, returned to the school on 5 October 2023 to gather additional information to secure the evidence base. In such cases, the inspection report is not published until Ofsted is satisfied that the inspection is secure.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including art and design, music, design and technology, history, computing and modern foreign languages.
- 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.

Inspection team

Wendy D'Arcy, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Wendy Hanrahan	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Barraclough	His Majesty's Inspector
Kathy Maddocks	Ofsted Inspector

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