

Inspection of a good school: Marsh Baldon Church of England Primary School

The Green, Marsh Baldon, Oxfordshire OX44 9LJ

Inspection date: 11 October 2023

Outcome

Marsh Baldon Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy each and every day at Marsh Baldon. They are happy in the warm and friendly atmosphere created by every member of the school community. Pupils feel safe. They know that if they need help, they can go to a trusted adult. They appreciate the opportunities they have to come together for shared experiences, such as playing on the sports equipment at playtime, attending clubs and taking part in whole-school activities, such as exploring the climbing wall.

Everyone is clear about how pupils are expected to behave. As a result, pupils behave well. They move around the school calmly and respectfully. They are well mannered and polite. Older pupils enjoy being role models. They take a leading role in assemblies and they support younger pupils to learn routines during lunchtimes. Pupils feel valued. They particularly enjoy the 'golden awards' assembly and the chance to have a cup of hot chocolate with the headteacher.

Pupils enjoy learning, and most are achieving well. This is because the school has set high expectations for what pupils will achieve. There is a focus on helping pupils to love learning and to make links between different subjects. Pupils are excited to discuss the learning experiences they have had on the trips and experiences they have.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers understand the challenges of mixed-age-group teaching. They have adapted the curriculum to ensure that pupils build their knowledge and skills over time. Staff plan and teach the content and vocabulary in the right order. In some subjects, including English and mathematics, pupils are provided with lots of opportunities to practise and revisit what they have previously learned. This ensures that pupils are secure in their knowledge before moving on. Practical activities support younger pupils to develop their knowledge of early mathematics, such as building number bonds to ten.

Pupils talk confidently and with enthusiasm about the links between different subjects. For example, pupils can explain how the Ancient Egyptians used multiplication, as well as what they know about the different techniques used in Egyptian art. However, in some foundation subjects, there are not enough planned opportunities to check what pupils know and can do. As a result, teachers do not always know how well all pupils are achieving or what support pupils need if they have gaps in their understanding.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Teachers and teaching assistants know what to do to support them. Occasionally, when pupils are not supported by an adult, they lose focus and do not learn as well. This is especially so when pupils are writing. The school recognises this and has introduced new strategies to help pupils improve their writing. However, these are not yet fully in place.

The reading curriculum is ambitious. Pupils read a wide variety of books. The school has carefully considered what pupils need to be successful readers. Pupils enjoy the books they read at home and in school. The teaching of reading is a priority and starts in early years. Younger pupils are developing their phonic knowledge quickly. The school has ensured that there is a regular programme of training for all staff. The school tracks progress very carefully to ensure younger pupils are keeping up. However, in key stage 1, some pupils do not yet read as confidently and fluently as they could. The school recognises this and the need for further support for these pupils.

Pupils know and understand the school rules. They explain why these are important and make links with what they learn to their school values. Disruption to learning is rare. However, there are times when pupils talk during lessons. Pupils say that when this happens, it makes it difficult to concentrate.

Pupils have many opportunities to grow and develop their talents. They experience a range of visits, speakers, special events and activities in and out of school. As part of the local sports partnership, they compete in a range of sports. Parents and carers value the opportunities to see their child perform at the Christmas concert and end-of-year event. Pupils regularly visit the church and support the community by collecting items for the 'community larder'. Pupils learn about difference through the curriculum and in assemblies, such as a recent one that focused on diverse and influential women in history.

The new headteacher and governors know the school well. They have rightly identified those areas that need greater focus. Workload and well-being are regularly discussed, and staff are appreciative of this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The current support to help pupils in key stage 1 who find reading more difficult is not as effective as it could be. As a result, these pupils are not yet confident and fluent readers. The school should ensure that the help pupils receive is more precise, so that these pupils make even more rapid progress in reading.
- In the foundation subjects, teachers do not always precisely check what pupils know and remember from what they have previously been taught. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding and therefore find it more difficult to explore new learning. The school should continue to develop teachers' knowledge and expertise in checking what all pupils know and can do.
- The new strategies to help pupils improve their writing are not yet fully embedded. Consequently, some pupils are not writing as well as leaders intend. The school must continue to monitor the recent improvements to ensure that pupils have the necessary skills for the next stage of their education.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2018.

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	123131
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10296292
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Thomas James
Headteacher	Carolyn Hanwell
Website	www.marshbaldonschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 September 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher started at the school in September 2023.
- This is a Church of England school and it is part of the Diocese of Oxford. The school's religious character was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in April 2023.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the school business manager and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. She had phone calls with a representative of the diocese and a representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 observed pupils' behaviour around the school during lessons, in assembly and at lunch- and playtime. Inspectors also spoke to staff and pupils to hear their views.
- Inspectors considered the views of those parents and carers, pupils and staff who had completed Ofsted's surveys and the views of parents and carers at the school gate.

Inspection team

Charlotte Wilson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Paul Hemmings

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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