

Inspection of Marlborough Primary Academy

Morice Square, Devonport, Plymouth, Devon PL1 4NJ

Inspection dates: 1 and 3 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The executive headteacher of this school is Jackie Green. This school is part of Reach South 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, Dean Ashton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marcus Agius. There is also a head of school, Andy Dore.

What is it like to attend this school?

Marlborough is a welcoming and inclusive school. Pupils enjoy their time here and form positive relationships with staff. The school is ambitious for its pupils. There is a sense of togetherness and community spirit. Pupils are resilient when faced with challenges. They experience a well-planned and sequenced curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

The school has high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour. Most pupils work hard in lessons and are polite and respectful to staff and their peers. However, a minority of pupils struggle to meet these expectations at times. This leads to some instances of low-level disruption in lessons or silly behaviour at playtimes. Nevertheless, pupils feel safe in school. They are confident to talk to an adult about any worries they have.

Pupils appreciate the rewards they receive for demonstrating the school's values. For example, they receive medals and prizes in celebration assemblies or an invitation to the headteacher's tea party. Pupils take on leadership roles at the school. These include being head pupils, prefects, and sports ambassadors. The formal application process for such roles includes an interview, which develops pupils' confidence and prepares them well for similar situations in the future.

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

The school has developed a broad and balanced curriculum. Staff have a secure knowledge of different subjects and how best to teach them. While published outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are lower than are typical nationally, leaders know the reasons for this and have taken action. This is reflected in much improved outcomes for pupils by the end of key stage 1. Nonetheless, at times, some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned. Staff do not use assessment well enough to check pupils' learning, so these gaps or lack of knowledge persist.

Staff understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and support them to learn the curriculum successfully. A small number of pupils with SEND spend part of their day in the 'little oaks' provision based at the school. These pupils are well supported to make progress through the curriculum.

The school ensures that reading is at the centre of the curriculum. All classes visit the local library and enjoy being immersed in books. Pupils are introduced to a range of rich and diverse texts throughout their time at school. Pupils start the school's chosen phonics programme as soon as they join in Reception Year. Staff carefully track pupils' progress and intervene quickly when pupils struggle. This means they catch up quickly and learn to read well. Staff receive expert feedback on how best to teach phonics, which helps them to continually refine their practice. The school regularly involves parents in celebrating their children's phonics journey. Staff advise them on how they can provide further support at home.

Pupils enjoy their social times. They make positive use of the play equipment they are provided with. Staff support pupils to make the right choices. Children in Reception Year are guided to take turns and share with each other.

The school carefully analyses the reasons why some pupils do not attend school regularly. They work well with families to overcome the barriers that exist. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved.

Pupils follow a well-planned personal development programme. They learn about online safety, different types of families and the importance of looking after their physical and mental health. Pupils learn about different cultures. For example, they create Chinese art on vases in the school's art week and hear African and Cuban songs as part of a music project.

Pupils widen their horizons, such as through trips to the theatre. Pupils learn about possible career options through visits from junior doctors and a yacht manufacturer, for example. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how such events have inspired them.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the changes that leaders have made to improve the school. They say they have many opportunities for professional development. Most agree that leaders consider their well-being when introducing something new.

The trust has supported the school by providing expertise in areas such as safeguarding, SEND provision and curriculum development. Trust leaders and governors understand the school's priorities. They hold school leaders to account for how well they are meeting these.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, teachers do not use assessment well to check what pupils know and remember. Therefore, teaching does not remedy gaps or misconceptions in some pupils' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that assessment supports pupils to build their knowledge and retain it in their long-term memory.
- Staff do not always apply the behaviour policy consistently. Therefore, a minority of pupils demonstrate some disruptive behaviour in lessons or during unstructured times. The school should ensure that all staff implement the agreed approaches to managing behaviour, so these incidents reduce.

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	143891
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10288215
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marcus Agius
Headteacher	Jackie Green
Website	www.marlborough.plymouth.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has an executive headteacher and a head of school.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 held discussions with the executive headteacher; the head of school, who is also the special educational needs coordinator; subject leaders; the early years leader; members of the local governing body and the director and deputy director of education for the trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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, 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 responses to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Kelly Olive, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kevin Martin

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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