

Inspection of a good school: Marsh Hill Primary School

Marsh Hill, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 7HY

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2023

Outcome

Marsh Hill Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Marsh Hill Primary is a happy and welcoming place to be. Pupils' well-being and sense of worth are high priorities for the school. The obvious care that staff have for the pupils helps them to feel valued and safe.

The school has high expectations of pupils' learning, behaviour and attitudes. Pupils often go beyond these expectations and show high levels of respect to staff and each other. Pupils are attentive in lessons and work hard. They are polite and friendly to visitors and can talk with confidence about their views on school life.

Pupils can also talk confidently about their learning. They remember a lot about what they have learned in different subjects. Pupils have a good recall of number facts. They can talk with confidence about the layers of the rainforest and the vocabulary they have been learning about in Spanish. Many pupils also talk about their love of reading and favourite authors.

The wider curriculum helps to develop pupils' character. Roles such as anti-bullying ambassadors and house captains, help pupils to contribute positively to the school community. Pupils also enjoy a range of clubs that cater for their talents and interests.

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

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve their full potential. Pupils' specific needs are identified and the school works closely with external agencies to get the right support and provision in place. For most pupils with SEND, this happens in the classroom with their peers. Teachers are increasingly skilled at adapting their teaching to ensure all pupils can access the same ambitious curriculum. For some pupils with SEND, the school has created bespoke provision to enable some of the young children to have a positive transition into school. This has been very successful in a short space of time.

Learning to read is a high priority. The school has designed its own phonics programme so that it meets the specific needs of their pupils. All staff have regular training which ensures that the approach is both consistent and effective. Children in Reception make a quick start to learning to read. They can blend sounds together to read simple words containing the sounds they know. Pupils build on this successfully in Year 1. Ongoing assessment helps to identify when pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Staff provide extra support to help them catch up. For some pupils, including some with SEND, an online programme is also used. This extra support has helped pupils to gain both confidence and fluency. Staff ensure that promoting a love of reading is also high profile. They read high-quality texts to pupils daily, including poetry. Authors and poets have visited the school which has helped inspire some to write their own poetry. Pupils were very proud of their poetry performance at the public library during the inspection.

From the time they start, children in the Reception Year learn to count and understand number. The curriculum ensures that this knowledge builds steadily. Pupils across the school have a good understanding of number and other key concepts in mathematics, such as fractions. Teachers give clear explanations and use practical resources to enable pupils to access the learning in lessons. Sometimes, however, the use of these resources is not necessary for all pupils as they already have a secure understanding of the concepts being explored. This can lead to some pupils finding the work they do too easy.

The school has thought carefully about some of the knowledge and skills pupils will develop over time in many areas of the curriculum. For example, in geography pupils build their knowledge of different types of maps and the skill of interpreting them. They also learn about a wide range of locations around the world. However, in some parts of the curriculum there is more focus on a breadth of knowledge than a deep understanding of some important themes. This means pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils across the school behave very well. This ensures that all classrooms are places where pupils can learn without disruption.

Pupils' wider development is as important as the academic curriculum. Pupils develop a sense of responsibility through the many leadership roles available. The school actively promotes fundamental British values through providing pupils with genuine opportunities to take part in a democratic process. They work alongside the police to promote pupils' understanding of the rule of law.

Staff are rightly proud to be part of a supportive team at Marsh Hill Primary. They know that leaders care about their well-being and their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum there is a focus on pupils gaining a broad knowledge of a subject rather than a deep understanding. Pupils do not always explore key themes in as much depth as they could. As a result, there are missed opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge over time. The school should ensure that there is a focus on depth of understanding as well as breadth of knowledge across all areas of the curriculum.
- There are minor inconsistencies in staff expertise in relation to the mathematics curriculum. This results in some pupils, at times, finding the work they are given does not enable them to make the progress they are capable of. The school should continue to develop staff expertise so that pupils make the best possible progress.

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 June 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	103233
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294474
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Eleanor Langston-Jones
Headteacher	John Cusack
Website	www.marshall.bham.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	19 and 20 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 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 inspector spoke to the headteacher and other leaders.
- The inspector spoke to the chair of governors and other governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. The inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at the school.
- 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.
- The inspector considered the responses to the free text comments on Ofsted Parent View, the pupil survey and the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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