

Inspection of a good school: Marsh Gibbon CofE Primary School

Castle Street, Marsh Gibbon, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX27 0HJ

Inspection dates: 31 January and 1 February 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Values such as compassion, respect and friendship are at the heart of this school. Pupils know these values are important for making everyone feel happy, welcomed and cared for. They feel proud when they get a 'value band' for demonstrating the school's values in their behaviour towards others. Pupils enthuse about the many activities on offer and opportunities for leadership. This includes leading worship and serving on the school council.

Classrooms are happy, purposeful environments for learning. Most pupils behave sensibly during lessons. They enjoy school and value their learning. Pupils are keen to live up to their teachers' expectations for them to 'succeed together' and do their best. Relationships are warm and welcoming. During lunchtimes, pupils like being physically active and playing with their friends. Sometimes, upsets and a bit of rough play occur, but pupils are confident that any concerns are quickly dealt with by staff.

Most pupils achieve well and feel proud of their accomplishments and the school. However, the curriculum in some subjects limits pupils' opportunities to learn deeply enough. Weaknesses in the school's processes for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) risk these pupils' needs not being considered and met well enough.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced an unsettled period including turbulence in leadership and staffing. The current leadership team has brought stability and renewed positive direction to the school. Staff are 'on board', enjoy working at the school and feel supported and part of the 'push' for improvement. The school has worked

hard to strengthen all aspects of provision. However, there is still work to do to improve some aspects of strategic leadership and some areas of the curriculum.

The school identifies pupils who have SEND and ensures that these pupils are supported so that they can access the curriculum. However, the school's planning and review processes for pupils with SEND are not fully effective. Weaknesses in the school's work mean some aspects of pupils' needs are overlooked and are not addressed as well as they should be. Some parents express frustration about the provision for SEND and that their views are not considered fully enough.

The school's curriculum is ambitious. The curriculums in English and mathematics are designed effectively and help most pupils to achieve well. Important knowledge is identified and sequenced logically to meet the school's curriculum goals. Opportunities for repetition and practice are interwoven with new content to help pupils remember knowledge. However, in some other subjects, the curriculum is not so well considered. The school has not sifted or sequenced content well enough so that the most important knowledge is selected and emphasised. This limits pupils' opportunities to gain a deep enough understanding.

There is a strong culture of reading at the school. Most younger pupils get off to a good start with their reading journey. They delight in their new-found knowledge of letter sounds. Good-quality texts are at the core of the English curriculum. Over time, pupils acquire new vocabulary, learn to read with understanding and develop a love of reading. Staff are adept at spotting gaps in pupils' knowledge so that these can be addressed. However, the school's guidance and teaching strategies for some pupils who find reading more challenging are not as helpful as they could be. This risks these pupils falling further behind.

Leaders have prioritised training in mathematics and reading to ensure that staff have strong subject knowledge. Teachers break learning down into smaller manageable chunks when appropriate. They do this particularly successfully in mathematics to ensure that pupils are secure with important concepts that are key to their future success. 'Flash-back fours', regular assessments and day-to-day checks enable staff to keep track of pupils' learning.

The school's work to improve attendance and behaviour is having a positive impact overall. A more consistent approach means that pupils understand what is expected. Absence rates for some pupils with previous low attendance have improved markedly. However, the school's analysis of attendance and behaviour is not sufficiently robust. This means that the school does not have a clear enough picture to inform its strategic work to make further improvements, especially for more vulnerable pupils. This includes analysis of information about pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils, and trends over time.

Leaders go out of their way to provide well for pupils' all-round development, particularly for those who have more limited experiences out of school. Wide-ranging opportunities enable pupils to gain a window into the world beyond the immediate locality. Pupils learn that everyone is unique and that every family is different. As one pupil commented, 'What matters is what you are like on the inside.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's processes for reviewing and planning provision for pupils with SEND are not fully effective. The school does not engage well enough with the parents of children with SEND, and some parents do not feel that their views are listened to or considered. This also risks some aspects of pupils' needs not being met as well as they should be. The school needs to improve its processes, especially concerning pupils' support plans and reviews, and strengthen its partnership working with the parents of children with SEND.
- The school's record-keeping and analysis of attendance and behaviour are not sufficiently robust. This limits the school's work to identify and address any further issues or patterns and inform its decision-making and improvement planning. The school needs to strengthen its strategic leadership of these aspects of its work.
- The school's provision to support the lowest-attaining pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read is not always as helpful as it could be. These pupils are in danger of falling further behind their peers. The school needs to ensure that staff use the most effective teaching strategies to help pupils to catch up and gain the knowledge they need to become competent, fluent readers.
- In some foundation subjects, the school hasn't considered the sequencing of curriculum content well enough to take account of the newly introduced two-year cycle. Additionally, some subjects have too much content for staff to meaningfully cover. This limits opportunities for pupils to acquire appropriate depth in their learning. The school needs to refine the sequencing of the curriculum in the foundation subjects and select the most important content for pupils to learn.

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	110411
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10296169
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jayne Sinclair
Headteacher	Beth Brown
Website	www.marshgibbon.bucks.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2021. Since the previous inspection, there have been many leadership and staffing changes, as well as changes to the membership of the governing body.
- In recent years, the number of pupils on roll has declined. Children in Reception are taught in a mixed-age class with pupils in Year 1. There is one class in each of the other year groups.
- The school has a religious character as a Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxford. The most recent section 48 inspection took place on 28 February 2018. The next section 48 inspection will take place within eight years of the date of the last inspection.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. 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 work. The inspector also listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders. She held a meeting with a group of governors, including the chair of governors. The inspector held an online discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 pupils' behaviour at various times of the day, including in lessons and during lunchtime. The inspector considered information about pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector considered the views of staff and pupils during discussions and through staff's responses to Ofsted's survey.
- The inspector took account of parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments. The inspector spoke to some parents at the end of the second day of the inspection, held a telephone discussion with a parent and considered other written communication from a parent.

Inspection team

Sue Cox, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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