

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Marlborough St Mary's CE Primary School

Ducks Meadow, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 4BX

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 January 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), flourish at this welcoming and inclusive school. They are immensely proud of their school. Pupils know that it is important to do their best. They meet the high expectations staff have for them.

Pupils demonstrate the school's distinctive values, which include respect and fairness. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They show high levels of care and consideration for each other. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and respectful. Pupils are safe and enjoy coming to school. Parents and carers are equally positive about their children's school experience. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying at their school. They know that staff will help them if they have any worries.

Pupils take on a range of leadership roles. For example, playground leaders support younger children to play games in the playground. Through these roles pupils develop a sense of responsibility.

Pupils socialise happily. They develop their talents and interests through clubs such as history and Mandarin. Pupils are appreciative of opportunities to contribute to local events, such as the town literature festival. These support them to become active citizens in their community.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious. It is constructed around the important knowledge and skills pupils need to learn. Across the school, pupils remember what they have learned with ease and are eager to share this. This includes the very youngest children, who demonstrate perseverance and tenacity in acquiring new skills. Teachers select a variety of ways to check that new learning is secure and address where pupils may have gaps in their understanding or require additional support. Consequently, pupils use and apply their knowledge daily. Current published outcomes, while positive, conceal the strong impact the curriculum is having on accelerating pupils' progress from their starting points.

Children get off to an excellent start to their education in the Reception Year. They transition smoothly into school from a variety of settings. Staff get to know children as individuals. They use this knowledge to tailor learning. Staff build rapidly on what children know. Staff support children to develop a rich vocabulary. They make sure children pronounce words accurately and build in opportunities for them to practise new words. This is done through storytelling and high-quality conversation.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start school. Books match the phonics sounds they know. Those who fall behind receive precise support to help them catch up. Pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers. Their learning is often linked to a book that is rich in vocabulary, structure or content. As a result, pupils gain important skills by unpicking and exploring the text. They then use these well in their own writing.

The school has equally high expectations of pupils with SEND. Staff know pupils needs well and carefully consider the support they require. The school works in partnership with parents and external professionals to ensure pupils receive appropriate, individualised support when necessary. Consequently, pupils progress well through the intended curriculum.

The school places great importance on pupils' regular attendance and punctuality. Pupils' attendance is frequently checked. The school takes swift action to support families if their child's attendance starts to decrease. The school's actions to improve pupils' attendance have proved successful in individual cases. This has helped to bring about recent improvements in pupils' attendance. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. There is no low-level disruption in lessons. This means that pupils learn without interruption.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is exceptional. Opportunities to support pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are ever present in the school. Pupils have a personal commitment to equality. They value and respect the views of others and understand that everyone should be treated fairly. Pupils debate moral issues across subjects, including challenging stereotypes. Meaningful daily discussion sessions enable them to engage with, and increasingly understand, the world around them.

The school helps pupils learn how to manage their feelings and emotions. This helps them to maintain positive mental health. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a mature understanding of how to maintain healthy relationships.

Leaders at all levels maintain a relentless commitment to ensuring the very best for pupils and families. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They keep a clear oversight of the school's strategic direction. They take decisions that are rooted in the school's values. Staff are highly positive about the guidance they receive to hone their practice. They appreciate how leaders are mindful of the impact on workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2020.

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	142335
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10344698
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Hughes
Headteacher	Dan Crossman
Website	www.marlboroughstmarys.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This caters for pupils with specific learning difficulty, visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech, language and communication needs, autistic spectrum disorder, multi-sensory impairment, physical disability, moderate and severe learning difficulty, and profound and multiple learning difficulty. There are currently 18 pupils attending this provision.
- The school uses six registered providers of alternative provision.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in September 2023. The school is awaiting confirmation from the diocese about its next section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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 spoke with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, the school improvement associate, a representative from the diocese, a representative from the regional SEND team and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector focused inspection activity on the following groups of subjects: reading and mathematics and geography, history and science. For each group of subjects, the inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Throughout the inspection, the inspector met with staff and considered the opinions expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspector met with some parents at the start of the day and had regard to the views expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Liz Geller, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025