

# Marsh Hill Primary School

Marsh Hill, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 7HY

**Inspection dates** 22–23 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement.

- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons.
- Not all teachers know how to adapt their teaching effectively to ensure all pupils, especially the more able, are always working as hard they can.
- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is uneven across different year groups. Not enough pupils make better than expected progress.
- Progress in writing is slower than in reading and mathematics. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length or apply their writing skills in other subjects
- Marking in books does not always give pupils enough advice on how to improve or opportunities to act on that advice in order to improve.
- Activities in the outside space in the Reception classes are not planned effectively. As a result pupils make insufficient progress in their learning when outside. Adults do not talk to children enough when they are playing independently to extend their learning or make sure that their play is always purposeful.
- The challenge governors offer the school is not fully effective because information they receive from leaders is not detailed enough.
- Some senior and subject leaders are new to their role and recently implemented projects to improve writing or analyse assessment information have not yet been checked to see if they are having sufficient impact on pupils' achievement.
- Attendance is now broadly average. However, some parents, despite the school's best efforts, still do not send their children into school every day.

### The school has the following strengths

- There has been a significant improvement in the behaviour of all pupils and the school has a purposeful, friendly atmosphere.
- Leaders at all levels are ambitious for the school and have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve further.
- Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and achieve as well or better than similar groups nationally.
- Parents are pleased with the increased opportunities for them to come to school to learn how to help their children learn.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the deputy headteacher who also accompanied inspectors on a learning walk to look at the way different subjects were taught.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' books and spoke to them about their work. They listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 reading and met a group of pupils to talk about behaviour and bullying. They also spoke to pupils informally around the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, including the Chair and vice chair, senior leaders, and leaders responsible for English and mathematics, special educational needs and pastoral care and attendance. They also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority and with the headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View and to the school's own recently conducted survey. They also spoke informally to some parents at the end of the first day.
- The headteacher was on an educational visit to China with the British Council during the inspection.
- The inspection team looked at a number of documents including the school's own assessment information on pupil progress and standards; the school's current development plan and self-evaluation; records of checks on the quality of teaching; minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Penny Spencer, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Enid Korn	Additional Inspector
Dennis Brittain	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average- sized primary school with two classes in each year group.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is almost double the national average. This additional funding from the government is for pupils entitled to free school meals, those who may be looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services. There are currently no looked after pupils or those with parents in the armed services on roll.
- Two thirds of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds with the two main groups being of Pakistani and Caribbean heritage. A large proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language, with some at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a number of changes of staff at all levels since the last inspection.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after school activities that are managed by the governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that all teachers:
  - become more adept at assessing the progress of pupils during lessons and alter activities to make sure work is always hard enough for them, particularly for the most-able
  - give more opportunities in all subjects, including English, for pupils to write at length to practise and improve their skills
  - give pupils clear advice when marking their work on what needs to be done to improve and to ensure there are regular opportunities for them to respond to this feedback.
- Improve the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that adults:
  - plan activities for the outside space that have clear learning objectives and which build on children's prior understanding and learning
  - engage with children more effectively to extend their language and communication skills when they are playing independently and ensure that their play is always purposeful.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring:
  - that governors are given sufficiently detailed information about pupils' progress to allow them to challenge the school more effectively
  - leaders check new projects quickly to be sure that they are having an impact on pupils' achievement and the teaching of writing.
  - the school continues to work with every parent to help them understand the importance of their child attending school every day and to improve attendance further.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is not yet good because it is uneven across the school and too few pupils make more than expected progress. This is especially the case for the most-able pupils.
- The unvalidated results from the 2013 tests show that pupils' progress improved greatly in English and mathematics. The school's checks on pupils' progress shows a marked improvement in reading and mathematics in most classes. However progress in writing does not match this. As a result standards in writing are not high enough.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2013 maintained their improvement from the previous year especially in mathematics. However standards at the higher levels in reading and writing remained below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils making at least expected progress by the end of Year 6 has improved and in 2013 all pupils made at least expected progress in writing and most pupils did so in reading and mathematics. Standards have risen steadily and were broadly average in 2012 in reading and mathematics although the number of pupils achieving at the higher levels were below national averages. In 2013 the number of pupils achieving at the higher levels increased markedly.
- Pupils who receive support through the pupil premium are now making better progress and standards are rising to match those of their classmates. Assessment information provided by the school shows the gap narrowing in most classes in reading and mathematics, and in some year groups pupils supported by the pupil premium are achieving better than their classmates. However in writing the gap is closing more slowly. Despite the gap having narrowed during the year, pupils supported by the pupil premium at the end of Year 6 in 2013 were approximately a year behind their classmates in writing and mathematics and nine months behind in reading.
- As a result of a concerted and effective approach to teaching the linking of letters to sounds (phonics) pupils' achievement in reading is improving. For the past two years the proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check has been above the national averages. Pupils who read to inspectors were confident when using this method to sound out unfamiliar words.
- Children enter the Reception classes with skills and understanding that are below those typically seen nationally. They make at least expected progress and move into Year 1 with good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress and achieve in line or above similar groups nationally.
- Additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is carefully matched to their individual needs. For some pupils specific activities to boost confidence, self-esteem and behaviour have helped them overcome some of the barriers to learning. They are supported well by teaching assistants. Overall they make similar progress to their peers often from very low starting points.
- The school helps pupils develop a healthy lifestyle through regular physical education lessons

and after school clubs, taken by specialist sports coaches. The school is part of a scheme to promote cycling or scooting to school and this is becoming increasingly popular with pupils.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is uneven across the school. Some teachers do not demand enough of pupils in lessons and as a result many pupils, especially the more able do not produce as much work as they could. This is further hampered in some classes by an over reliance on printed worksheets which restrict pupils' responses.
- In the Reception classes adults do not always develop and extend children's language skills when working alongside them or intervene and move learning forward when children are playing independently. Learning opportunities in the outside area are not consistently well planned. Activities do not have a clear learning focus and children do not have a clear understanding of what they are expected to be doing. As a result children make less progress than when inside or when working with an adult.
- Where teaching is good teachers assess the learning and progress of pupils' in lessons and adapt their plans to ensure activities have the right level of challenge. For example in a Year 3 English lesson the teacher recognised that pupils had not fully understood, from the previous day's lesson, how to write instructions. Her adapted plans allowed for a quick recap and specific individual support for those pupils who were struggling whilst the more able pupils used laptops to word process their work ready for presentation. However this good practice is not found in all classes and too many pupils, especially the more able spend too long doing work that is too easy.
- Teachers mark books regularly and in some classes pupils respond frequently to this feedback. However, in some instances the marking is limited to whether the task has been completed successfully rather than to developing the overall quality of writing or mathematics. Activities designed to help pupils catch up are not used consistently to ensure all pupils correct their mistakes.
- The school understands that writing needs to be a focus for all pupils. However, opportunities for more extended writing to take place have only just been introduced and the impact is yet to be seen. Opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects are not frequent enough in some classes.
- The relationship between teachers and teaching assistants is good and as a result there is very effective support for different groups of pupils in most classes. Teaching assistants have benefitted from the many training opportunities that have been designed to improve their skills and understanding, including some work on developing mathematical skills, undertaken with the local university.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- Most pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the activities that teachers provide. However, when work is too easy or they have to listen too long to explanations that they already understand they become fidgety and their concentration wanders. As a result the pace of learning slows.
- Attendance has improved from below average in the last academic year to broadly average at the time of the inspection. The school has undertaken a significant amount of work with families to make sure children attend regularly and the work of the pastoral care manager has been

instrumental in supporting parents and children to come to school every day. However despite the school's best endeavours, including taking legal measures, there are still some parents who do not recognise the importance of regular attendance

- Pupils who spoke to inspectors said they felt safe and were adamant that behaviour had improved. Parents who spoke to inspectors and responded to the school's survey agree with their children's views. However, a very small minority of parents and pupils were not fully satisfied that occasional incidents of bullying are dealt with to their complete satisfaction. Records kept by the school record a few incidents of bullying and explain how these are resolved effectively by members of the school's leadership team
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors knew how to keep safe in and around the school. They were aware of different types of bullying, including that posed by social media. They had varying degrees of understanding about how to keep safe when using the internet.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour policy and most respond quickly to instructions. Where some pupils have more challenging behaviour the consistent approach taken by all adults means potential disruptions are avoided.
- The school has worked very successfully to improve the behaviour in the playground and around the school and this is demonstrated by the significant decrease in the number of reported incidents and in the number of pupils having to attend the 'learning zone'. No incidents of poor behaviour were seen during the inspection and pupils were polite and friendly at all times.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching has improved and the proportion of teaching that is good is increasing. This is a result of carefully targeted training opportunities and support from senior leaders. However there are still some classes where teaching is not yet good.
- Leaders new to their posts have not had sufficient time to check the impact of new initiatives on pupils' achievement or the teaching of writing.
- Plans to bring about improvements in teaching and learning have clear priorities and specific timescales for their completion. However the steps by which their effectiveness can be checked are not easily measurable so that leaders can quickly check that they are having the desired impact on improving pupils' achievement.
- The pupil premium funding is having some effect in closing gaps in attainment for those pupils who receive additional support, particularly in reading and mathematics. Reports from leaders explain how the money is being spent and if it is being successful overall. However these reports do not always clearly explain the link between how the money is spent and the progress of individual pupils.
- The measures to check on the quality of teaching have been improved and leaders now ensure that information from assessments, reviews of pupils' progress, lesson observations and work in books is all looked at to gain an accurate view of teaching and learning. This information is now securely linked to teachers' progression up the salary scale.
- Relationships with parents are good and the school is well respected. The number of parents attending celebration assemblies, parent workshops and opportunities to sit in on lessons has

increased considerably and parents are appreciative of the opportunities to help their children with their education.

- Pupils study a good balance of subjects and the multicultural nature of the school is promoted strongly. Teaching promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There is a good awareness and appreciation of different societies and their traditions including British culture. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and practise their skills across a range of subjects to help improve the overall quality of their writing.
- The school leaders, in partnership with the local authority, have provided support to improve teaching through training courses and nationally recognised improvement programmes. It is continuing its support by brokering partnerships with good and outstanding schools in conjunction with the school's own work as part of a local consortium.
- Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the continued improvement of the school and are determined to improve the outcomes for pupils.
- Extra government funding to promote physical activity and improve the teaching of sport has yet to be allocated by the local authority. However plans are in place to recruit further sports coaches to offer a wider variety of sports to pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are experienced and some have a good working knowledge of education and school improvement. They are a very visible presence in the school. As well as providing support they also challenge leaders to make further improvements. The governor with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been very proactive in supporting the special educational needs coordinator in assessing pupils and ensuring that support is of a high quality. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. However reports they receive on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils are not sufficiently detailed to allow them hold the school to account precisely. The governing body has not ensured that the pupil premium has been used effectively. Governors know how the money has been spent but do not have enough information on the impact of the funding on pupils' achievement in all classes. Governors are fully involved in checking that teachers pay is linked to the quality of their teaching and in checking the performance of the headteacher. They are also responsible for ensuring the school fully meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding and for child protection.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103233
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	429477

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	419
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Donna Murrall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marlene Douglas
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4642920
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