

Marlpool Infant School

Prospect Road, Marlpool, Heanor, DE75 7NF

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Early years provision | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides good leadership. She has played a key role in moving the school forward by identifying what needed to be improved and taking appropriate action.
- The headteacher is well supported by the senior teacher, including through modelling consistently effective teaching and working with colleagues to improve teaching and learning.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years make good progress in all areas of their development because teaching promotes a range of basic skills well.
- Pupils across the school have positive attitudes to learning. They behave well and develop as confident young learners.
- For their age, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their friends safe. They develop an understanding of their responsibilities as part of a community.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and support staff have strong working relationships with the pupils and encourage them to try hard. Staff use questions well to check their understanding.
- Governors have a good grasp of their role and responsibilities. They support school leaders in helping to improve teaching and achievement.
- All of the parents spoken to and all who responded to the inspection questionnaire were unanimous in their praise for the quality of education and care their children receive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the work for the more-able pupils does not challenge them enough to make the best possible progress.
- Pupils do not develop a wide vocabulary or speak correctly because they do not take part often enough in focused discussions to develop their confidence.
- The marking of pupils' work does not consistently identify what they need to do to improve.
- The outdoor area for children in the early years does not provide an imaginative and stimulating environment for learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in parts of eight lessons or group tasks and in a range of other activities. All the lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also looked in detail at the work in pupils' books and heard several pupils read.
- The inspector held planned and informal discussions with pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspector had discussions with the headteacher and staff members. A joint discussion was held with representatives of the shared governing body of the aligned junior school. A discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- There were 19 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). The inspector also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the inspection and received a small number of written communications from parents. She also took account of eight responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' progress. She also took account of records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is much smaller than the average-sized school.
- Children attend the Reception group as full time pupils.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by additional funding (the pupil premium) is a little below the national average. This includes pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are currently no pupils looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- Children work in either the mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class, or the Year 1 and 2 class.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and senior teacher have been appointed.
- The school shares its governing body with Marlpool Junior School. The two schools are entirely separate. They are on different sites, but linked in a soft federation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - making sure that activities contain a high level of challenge for all, and especially the more-able pupils
 - checking that pupils across the school have plenty of opportunities to develop their ability to speak grammatically, at length and in greater depth
 - ensure that the marking of pupils' work is consistently effective and makes it clear to all pupils what they need to do to improve further.
- Improve the outdoor area for children in the early years to ensure this provides an exciting and vibrant learning environment.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides a good steer to school improvement in all areas, and especially through the strong focus on improving teaching and learning. Leaders have created a culture in the school where good behaviour and progress are expected and communicated clearly to pupils, staff and parents.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher shows she has an accurate grasp of what works well in teaching and what needs to improve. School records and observations during the inspection show that the headteacher correctly identifies strengths and weaknesses in a range of activities. This information is then linked to teachers' performance targets and training activities.
- The senior teacher gives good support to the headteacher in the drive towards further improvement. There is consistently effective teaching for children in the early years, as shown in observations and the high quality records of the activities undertaken. Leaders try hard to overcome the limitations of the school building.
- Staff work well together as a team to share good practice and continually review the strategies used to boost pupils' achievement. Senior staff regularly review the quality of work in pupils' books, which gives them a secure understanding of pupils' progress.
- School leaders ensure that staff make regular and accurate checks on the progress of different groups of pupils. They share such information with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure activities meet the range of pupils' needs. The school has extended the links with the aligned junior school to bring about greater consistency in assessment routines.
- The school has successfully reviewed the subjects taught to ensure they are interesting and relevant. Activities focus effectively on developing basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff work well together to review planning and successfully prepare pupils for the next stage of their learning.
- Staff carefully consider the guidance on the development of British values and provide a good range of activities that match the age and stage of development of the pupils. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils have been fully involved in drawing up school and class rules as part of a focus on their rights and responsibilities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This includes in assemblies where they are able to say 'a parable is a message in the Bible' and know that 'there is always a moral to each story'. Colourful displays show they celebrate a range of festivals including the recent Chinese New Year.
- Links with parents are excellent. All of the parents spoken to and who responded to the inspection questionnaire were unanimous in their praise of how well the staff know and care for their children. Parents speak with considerable warmth about how everyone is valued as individuals. The school supports pupils with additional needs and their families very well during difficult periods of their lives.
- Leaders take good care to ensure that the safeguarding of pupils meets current requirements and is effective. They check that staff training is up to date and that records of such activities are updated regularly. Procedures to keep pupils safe are known to, and followed by, everyone.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding well to support the academic progress and personal development of disadvantaged pupils. The work of support staff is often of high quality; it provides help and challenge for individuals and small groups of pupils. The school has invested in resources and additional training for teachers and support staff. Leaders monitor the impact of such expenditure. This illustrates the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all and to countering discrimination of any kind.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is used effectively to support a range of relevant

activities. The school employs a sports coach to improve the skills of staff and pupils. The school is part of a local sports partnership which has extended the opportunities to take part in sports festivals and competitions.

- The local authority has provided good support to the school during the recent period of change and improvement. Advisors work with the headteacher and staff to check the quality of teaching and learning, including the work in pupils' books. Such activities help ensure that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is effective. The joint governing body of the separate infant and junior schools is well informed of the work of both schools. Leaders of the governing body have a strong grasp of their roles and are able to act as 'critical friends' by asking challenging questions and holding leaders to account for the standards achieved. They know what the data tell them about progress and about the quality of teaching and learning. Through a developing programme of focused visits, they gain first-hand information about the life and work of both schools.
- Governors use a range of information when making decisions about teachers' pay awards. They ensure there is a clear link between salary progression for teachers and their effectiveness in raising pupils' achievement. They understand how the school tackles any underperformance.
- Governors check that procedures to safeguard the pupils are kept up to date and meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave consistently well in and around the school. Sometimes their behaviour is excellent, such as in assemblies where they listen very carefully to a story with only light-touch supervision. They cooperate well in the playground where they play very happily together with no sign of conflict.
- All of the parents spoken to emphasise how pleased they are with the strong working relationships between the children and staff. Some comment with great warmth about how well the school looks after them and their children in times of difficulty. They are fully confident that the staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, value their children and prepare them well for the future.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Most concentrate well in lessons and try hard with their work. Very occasionally, some do not push themselves to take part in discussions. When this happens, they do not extend their vocabulary or develop their skills in speaking to others.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their classmates safe, including when playing in the small hard-surface playground. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- For their age, pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. They know this is 'being mean' to others either by saying or doing unkind things. They are able to explain what cyber bullying is and some of the other types of bullying that could occur. They know bullying of any type is not allowed in school and are confident that the staff listen to them if they have any worries.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Punctuality is good. The school works closely with the education welfare service to monitor the attendance of the small number of persistent absentees. Leaders take a strong stance on persistent absence.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good throughout the school and promotes pupils' learning and personal development well. The

learning observed in classrooms during the inspection confirmed the school's own evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching over time. Teaching is good in literacy and numeracy, as shown in the work in pupils' books and records of the progress made.

- Teachers and support staff have very strong working relations with pupils and offer them lots of support and praise. Pupils try hard with their work because they are keen to please the adults around them. Staff create a happy and secure environment where pupils thrive. Good quality displays around the school show the pupils' efforts are valued.
- Staff are enthusiastic in their teaching and try to make activities interesting for all. Tasks often contain a practical element, for example, when the younger children drew a very large picture of the giant from Jack and the Beanstalk. Because they could clearly recognise the difference in size between the two characters, they came up with good ideas of words to use to label their pictures.
- Staff use questions well to check pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. For example, staff ask Reception children to describe the giant's face and his teeth in more detail. Learning is then extended well when more-able children try to write more descriptive words by 'thinking and saying' the words they want to write.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils and sometimes this is of high quality. This includes work with groups of more-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. For example, Year 1 discussions about shapes developed well through additional questions to identify more properties of a range of shapes.
- Activities are often planned at different levels to take account of the mixed ages and abilities in each class. However, the sample of pupils' work, particularly of the older pupils, shows that tasks are sometimes the same or similar for all pupils and lack challenge for the more able. Very occasionally, activities with the older pupils are not well managed. For example in practical activities excitement overtakes learning and slows pupils' progress.
- Staff mark pupils' work conscientiously. There are examples of effective marking of work for the younger pupils which clearly indicates what they have done well and what else to improve. However, the marking of the work of the older pupils is less effective and often has little indication of what to do to improve. Errors are not identified consistently.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with skills that are generally typical for their age. They settle well and make good progress in all areas of their learning and development during their time in the Reception group.
- In the Year 1 national checks in 2014, pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) was a little below the average. The school recognised some time ago that the teaching of phonics was not successful enough and provided additional training for all staff. This has led to a significant increase of the proportion of pupils now attaining the expected standard.
- Staff recognise that boys have not done as well as girls in phonics checks in some year groups. Leaders monitor this carefully and provide extra support. This is of good quality and has led to almost all pupils then achieving the target in Year 2.
- In the 2014 assessments, pupils did best in writing. Girls again did better than the boys. Scrutiny of school records show that most of the pupils with additional needs in the cohort were boys. Observations show that there is currently little or no difference in the rate of progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Samples of pupils' recent work, school data and observations in lessons all show that pupils make good overall progress. Pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- Pupils generally read well. They make good use of their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to

work out unfamiliar words. A few of the lower attaining pupils struggle to blend sounds together to work out irregular words, but the school addresses this well through additional support. Reading records show that pupils read regularly to an adult both in school and at home.

- Pupils write well and for a range of purposes. Good progress is made by older pupils, who use pictures of traditional tales to describe a fantasy setting for a story. They develop their ideas well by deciding what other 'wow words' they can add to their sentences to make them more exciting.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Younger pupils look at parts of a picture of a shape and try to work out what it might be from what they already know about the properties of two-dimensional shapes. This leads to some more confident pupils being able to explain 'it will be a semi-circle if it's only half of a circle.'
- Despite good teaching, pupils' speaking skills are often less developed than other skills, which has an impact on their progress in other subjects. Some pupils do not use a wide variety of words to explain themselves, and answer questions quite briefly and sometimes ungrammatically. In classroom activities, several pupils of all abilities lack the confidence to offer their ideas in discussions.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was about half a term behind that of their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared to other pupils nationally, their attainment was about half a term behind in reading, half a term ahead in writing and very similar in mathematics. This group of pupils receives good support from experienced and well-trained support staff. School data indicate any attainment gaps compared to other pupils are closing and they are progressing at least as well as other pupils in the school.
- The more-able pupils make good overall progress but teachers do not always challenge some older pupils enough to make even better progress. The small number of pupils who are most able and working at the highest levels make good progress overall.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the school identifies their additional needs at an early stage and provides good quality support for them. This boosts progress in both lessons and additional group activities. This is effective, for example in the teaching of phonics, because the work matches the abilities of the pupils well.
- Pupils develop healthy lifestyles through a range of physical education activities including through participation in competitions as part of the local partnership of schools.

The early years provision is good

- Children's skills on entry are generally typical for their age though some lack confidence in speaking to others. The school provides a good range of well-planned activities with Reception Year children working on linked but different tasks to their older classmates. Children settle happily, want to do well and make good overall progress. This prepares them well for Year 1.
- Children have strong working relationships with staff and want to please the adults around them. They have positive attitudes to their work and try hard to improve what they are doing. They behave well and for their age have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They know, for example, when playing outside with construction equipment that they have to handle it carefully and when they are on a building site they need to wear high visibility jackets.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good. Teaching and support staff have good knowledge of how to teach letters and the sounds they make, with careful attention given to how to say the sounds correctly. Staff model this well and use the 'I say, you say' way of working to encourage children to repeat the sounds adults make. There is sometimes a quite large number of support staff and volunteers working with the children. Occasionally, this leads to inconsistent practices.
- Leadership and management of the early years are good. Staff work well in providing an interesting range

of activities, illustrated in children's 'learning journey' records. Parents are delighted with the quality of care and education provided for their children.

- Staff work hard to overcome the limitations of the accommodation. There is, however, no direct access to an outdoor learning area, which limits the development of free-flow activities. The school has developed a specific area for the children to use with adult supervision, but this is small and unstimulating and provides no safe surfaces for activities. Staff provide a good range of resources for use outdoors but improvements have not been extensive or rapid enough to create a stimulating environment.

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

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| Unique reference number | 112562 |
| Local authority | Derbyshire |
| Inspection number | 453848 |

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

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| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 54 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sarah Ackigoz |
| Headteacher | Louise Thorpe |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 March 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01773 717647 |
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