

Inspection of Marlborough Primary Academy

Morice Square, Devonport, Plymouth, Devon PL1 4NJ

Inspection dates: 10–11 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is at the heart of its community and valued by parents and carers. Leaders provide a secure and caring environment for pupils to learn in. The atmosphere around school is purposeful. Teachers celebrate pupils' work in interesting displays. During the inspection, the school community came together for the Christmas performance. Families were right to be proud of how well their children performed.

Most pupils behave well in school. The few who do struggle are managed and supported well. Pupils feel safe and are confident that should bullying occur, it would be sorted out swiftly. Some pupils miss more school than they need to. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, for example, is too low. This hampers them from reaching their full potential.

The school is now part of ReachSouth multi-academy trust (the trust). The trust and school leaders know that the school is not yet good. They are working hard to make sure pupils know what they should. However, too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Leaders' plans show that they have correctly identified what needs to be done. Leaders and teachers are united in continuing to improve the quality of education.

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

Leaders know the curriculum needs to be strengthened to help pupils know more and remember more. Pupils remember some things in science, history and music, but not enough to help them learn as much as they could. This is because these subjects have not been taught in depth enough. More recent work is helping pupils to catch up in some subjects, but not in all.

In history, pupils are able to order significant historical events. Pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class can explain the causes of the Second World War and the impact of the war. However, in other classes, pupils are not able to articulate or recall what they are learning in history. Pupils are now having more opportunity to find out things for themselves in science. However, the improvements to the curriculum are too new to have had any significant impact. The curriculum for music is not planned so that pupils build their knowledge of music securely over their time in the school.

Most leaders and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can learn. Teachers read daily to pupils from well-chosen books. In nearly all subjects, teachers insist that pupils use carefully selected vocabulary. This is helping to improve pupils' knowledge of language. However, this is not consistent across the curriculum.

Pupils get off to a strong start in their phonics. Younger pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are able to use their phonics skills effectively when reading. Nevertheless, older pupils' knowledge is not as strong. They have fallen behind in their reading. They cannot clearly explain the

meaning of what they read. Their vocabulary is not wide enough to help them understand more challenging books. They are finding the new comprehension lessons too difficult. When teachers move on too quickly, some pupils struggle and lose concentration.

The curriculum for mathematics has been strengthened so that pupils know more and remember more. However, not all teachers identify when pupils are ready to progress in lessons. This is because the mathematics curriculum is not ambitious enough. As a result, some pupils do not reach their full potential.

A large proportion of pupils do not have the confidence to tackle more challenging learning. A lack of resilience is holding back some pupils. This is because leaders' approach to supporting pupils' development as learners is in its early days.

The school widens pupils' views of the world through special events. Pupils meet members of their community who practise different faiths. Remembrance Day helped pupils to reflect about peace. The school seeks to excite pupils' imagination with regular visits to the theatre. Pupils regularly help in the community, particularly as supporters of their city park.

The school has a high number of pupils with SEND. They are well cared for and parents appreciate this. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator is effective in ensuring that pupils get the appropriate support and guidance. Skilled teaching assistants support pupils in a range of specialist programmes. These programmes are having a positive impact upon pupils.

When children join the early years, many still need help with their speech. Teachers quickly interest children in books so that children develop a love of reading and learn new words. However, teachers are not always clear about children's next steps in all aspects of learning. Children's learning in writing is not building well enough. Children are well cared for in the early years and behave well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the community well. Parents and the school work in unison to support pupils' safety. Staff are vigilant for pupils' well-being. They promptly refer any concerns if they suspect that a pupil is at risk of harm. The school has extensive systems to manage the high number of referrals. Records show that leaders work effectively with external agencies. However, the school's responses to concerns are not as sharp as they could be. Too many systems are in use to provide a clear picture of who took what action.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils have not gained the knowledge and skills they should in all subjects. Until very recently, what pupils know and remember has been too superficial. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently challenging and is implemented effectively so that pupils know more and remember more.
- Pupils in key stage 2 lack the vocabulary and reading skills needed to explain what they have understood. Leaders need to embed the new approaches to teaching reading. They should ensure that teachers have the appropriate subject knowledge to develop pupils' reading skills.
- In lessons, teachers do not check pupils' understanding well enough to know when to progress. This limits the achievement of some pupils. Leaders need to secure effective approaches to assessment.
- In the early years, the use of assessment is not effective. Teachers do not hold a clear picture of what children know and can do. This limits teachers in being able to plan precisely to help children learn well. Leaders need to improve assessment, so children catch up from their low starting points, particularly in writing.
- Too many disadvantaged pupils are persistently absent. Poor attendance hinders their learning. Leaders should ensure that efforts to overcome persistent absence are successful and that levels of attendance improve.
- The recording of actions taken in response to safeguarding concerns needs to be more precise. Leaders need to ensure that there is a clear chronology of what steps have been taken to help and protect pupils.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143891
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10111566
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marcus Agius
Headteacher	Rachel Summers
Website	www.marlborough.plymouth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- In January 2017, Marlborough Primary School joined ReachSouth multi-academy trust. When the predecessor school was inspected in February 2015, it was judged to be good.
- In July 2019, the school's Nursery class closed. Governors are in consultation with the local authority to find a new provider for the Nursery provision.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with senior and subject leaders. We also met with a group of teachers. During these discussions, we reviewed curriculum documentation and considered the school's monitoring and self-evaluation records. We also took account of recent external monitoring of the school's effectiveness.
- We met with the director of education from the trust and two members of the trust's advisory team. The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the education sub-committee. The lead inspector also met with a group of governors who are part of the local governing body.

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