

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



22 January 2018

Mrs Laurie Anderson
Headteacher
Marchwood Junior School
Main Road
Marchwood
Southampton
Hampshire
SO40 4ZH

Dear Mrs Anderson

Short inspection of Marchwood Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 9 January 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in July 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice in certain areas. This may indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

You and your able team of senior staff lead the school with a high degree of dedication and compassion, which is reflected in the caring and inclusive ethos throughout the school. Pupils speak proudly of being part of 'the Marchwood family', and they value participating in the numerous sporting and cultural activities that you provide. Staff appreciate your commitment to enabling them to constantly reflect on and sharpen their practice. Staff, governors, pupils and the vast majority of parents and carers are full of praise for your leadership. Typical comments made by parents include: 'The leadership is fantastic and they always keep us informed', and 'The headteacher is totally committed to her staff and children.'

Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has strengthened further. Leaders have achieved this by systematically monitoring and evaluating what teachers do to help pupils learn well. You have made sure that very effective support and training for all teachers and teaching assistants allow them to be sharply focused on each pupil's specific learning needs. Teachers' careful use of assessment allows them to plan really effective tasks, which engage and motivate

pupils. This has been particularly effective in ensuring that the teaching of writing is skilfully delivered and that pupils' writing outcomes are especially high.

Most pupils, including those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, achieve very well across the whole curriculum. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. The proportion of pupils who achieve standards above those expected for their age is particularly high. Pupils' rates of progress are strong, with progress in writing being particularly impressive, this year being in the top 12% of schools nationally. You are able to demonstrate clearly the rapid progress made by the vast majority of pupils in your school in mathematics and reading. Most disadvantaged pupils make great progress so that their attainment is close to or improving towards that of other pupils nationally. The most able disadvantaged pupils achieve especially well.

Pupils are exceptionally well behaved in lessons and around the school. They work diligently, editing and improving their work to ensure that it is of high quality. 'Pride books', which showcase pupils' best work, demonstrate the high standards of presentation of which they are capable. Pupils told me that the work they are set 'has just the right amount of challenge', and they are confident that teachers will help them if they get stuck. Pupils' attendance is high and improving still further, including for groups of pupils who have previously struggled to come to school regularly. Several parents were keen to tell me how well their children settle into school, particularly noting an increase in confidence among their children. Pupils too told me that your school is friendly and welcoming. They especially like the buddy system, whereby older pupils look out for pupils who are new to the school.

You, together with other leaders and governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and those areas that could be further finessed. For example, you quickly identified that pupils' progress in reading is not as strong as other areas of the curriculum. Leaders researched best practice in other schools and trialled and refined different approaches in lessons, coming up with a model for teaching reading which is working very well. Rightly, you have monitored and adapted your approach still further to ensure that current pupils are making rapid progress in reading. You are not, however, complacent. Leaders' regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work ensure that everyone is clear about how the school can improve still further.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that pupils' safety has the highest priority. Leaders and governors have made sure that recruitment procedures are robust and that thorough checks are made on all adults who work in or visit the school. Staff are well trained in child protection and safeguarding so that they can spot and deal with any problems quickly. Staff know that any concerns they raise are taken seriously and acted on promptly. You involve outside agencies where appropriate, and are not afraid to challenge decisions to ensure that pupils get the best possible care. Several parents

spoke warmly of the support you have provided, including in helping them deal with outside agencies, one saying your work has been 'life changing' for her family.

You have rightly prioritised raising awareness of e-safety among pupils and their parents. Your staff keep up to date with the latest dangers presented by social media and 'app' use, so that they can share these with parents. Pupils told me that they know what they should and should not do when using the internet, specifically knowing to tell an adult if anything they see or hear makes them feel uncomfortable.

Pupils feel safe and happy in school. They are supervised well at break and lunchtimes, and you make sure the school site is regularly checked so that any potential safety issues are resolved quickly. Pupils say that bullying 'just doesn't happen' and that pupils rarely fall out with each other. Your records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour are very rare. Pupils know that an adult will listen to them if they have any concerns, particularly praising the work of the emotional literacy support assistants for the way they help pupils who have any particular worries. The vast majority of parents agree. As one parent said: 'My daughter is thriving at this school.'

Inspection findings

- Additional funding is used skilfully to support pupils' learning and welfare needs. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities attend school more regularly and make strong and improving progress across the curriculum. Most-able disadvantaged pupils achieve highly. Where pupils need additional help this is carefully targeted. Teaching assistants work very effectively to help ensure that these pupils make strong progress.
- Services children achieve well too. Your work with services children was praised by pupils. Those who attend the 'MJS Troopers' club told me that they valued getting together as a group, as well as opportunities to share their unique experiences of living around the world with their peers. They say they feel welcomed and a key part of the 'Marchwood family'.
- Boys and girls make equally strong progress across the curriculum. You are quick to spot and act to minimise any differences in their achievement. For example, your work to improve girls' resilience when learning mathematics meant that girls achieved in line with boys at the end of key stage 2 last year. In reading and writing, you have adapted the texts you study to be equally appealing to boys and girls. The 'boys' editing group' encourages boys to become systematic in improving their work. As a result of your efforts, there are currently no noticeable differences between the progress of boys and girls in reading and writing.
- Middle leaders are very effective in their roles. This is because you ensure that they are well trained, utilising nationally recognised additional qualifications where appropriate and providing in-school opportunities for staff to develop their skills, such as through shadowing and coaching each other. Leaders monitor their peers' work very effectively, offering advice and support which helps further refine teachers' practice.

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is vibrant and interesting and is carefully mapped to cover all areas appropriately. The curriculum reflects the school's 'ARCTIC' values of 'achievement, respect, cooperation, trust, independence and care', which have been developed in conjunction with staff, pupils and parents. In addition, it promotes pupils' continued spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Pupils have a keen understanding of the value of democracy, as a result of having frequent opportunities to make choices, for example choosing the charities they wish to support and the peers who represent them in the junior leadership group. 'Love days', where pupils immerse themselves in activities surrounding a particular theme, were especially praised as bringing the community together. The 'love of Fiji' day, where pupils whose families serve in the armed forces shared examples of Fijian life and food with their friends, was a particular hit among pupils. Sport has a high priority in the school, and participation rates are high. Pupils cited numerous clubs such as girls' cricket and athletics as being popular. You are rightly proud of the successes pupils achieve when competing against local schools.
- In the past, pupils' progress in reading has not been as strong as in writing or mathematics. I saw clear evidence that current pupils are making rapid progress in reading as a result of changes you have made to how it is taught. In addition, you have highlighted the importance of reading regularly for pleasure, providing parents with support in how to read with their children and ideas about the types of books that are appropriate and enjoyable for each age group. A higher priority on spelling and vocabulary is also making a positive difference. However, you are well aware that there is more to do to ensure that all pupils achieve highly in reading, and your work to address this is, rightly, ongoing.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- leaders' work to refine the teaching of reading leads to pupils' progress in reading accelerating further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Old
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning with senior leaders, including observing your whole-school singing assembly. I met with you and your senior team throughout the inspection to discuss your self-evaluation of the school and to examine pupils' work. I scrutinised

school documentation, including governors' minutes, records of your monitoring of teaching and learning, performance information for current pupils, and behaviour and safeguarding information. I met with governors and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. I took account of the 16 responses to the online pupil survey, and spoke to pupils, both in class and formally in a meeting. I considered the 31 survey responses submitted by staff and the 64 parent responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online survey. I also spoke to several parents informally before school, and considered the 64 free-text responses submitted via Parent View and the seven letters sent in by parents.