

Inspection of Marden Primary Academy

Marden, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 3EW

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The head of school is Kym Johnson. This school is part of Marden Primary Academy Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Steve Miles. There is also an executive headteacher, Elizabeth Orton, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Marden Primary really is a place, 'where individuals matter.' Pupils say they are happy at school and feel safe. They know that staff care about them and will help them with anything.

Even before they join the school, staff get to know the children and find out what interests and motivates them. This helps children to make a positive start in the Reception Year. Pupils build on this successfully as they move through the school, so they are well prepared for their next step in education.

Pupils understand the expectations to be a 'STAR'. This encourages them to be safe, truthful, ambitious and respectful. Pupils work hard to live up to these expectations and are proud of their achievements. On the playground they play very well together and have plenty of activities to keep them busy. In lessons, most pupils try their best and co-operate well with each other.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. They learn how to contribute positively to their school and local community from an early age. For example, some pupils act as reading buddies and support other pupils by hearing them read. Other pupils take pride in visiting local elderly residents delivering biscuits and brightening their day.

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have worked hard to provide all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) a quality education. There is a well-planned curriculum across almost all subjects and a rich curriculum to support pupils' personal development.

The school has made learning to read a high priority. Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme. They have trained all staff to deliver this. The programme helps children in Reception to make a swift start. They can read and write simple words containing the sounds they know. Staff follow a consistent structure so that pupils know what to do at each stage of the lesson. This new approach is helping most pupils to read fluently and confidently. For those who find this more challenging, staff provide extra support. This is helping pupils to keep up. Pupils are proud of how much they have improved.

In other curriculum areas, such as geography, there are new schemes of work. These schemes set out the specific knowledge pupils are expected to know and remember as they move from year to year. This means that teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Adults in Reception prepare children well to learn these subjects when they start in Year One. This is because adults teach them about some of the key concepts and vocabulary in those subjects. So, for example, children learn the vocabulary linked to position to prepare them for learning about location in later years.

In most subjects, pupils are achieving well. In geography, for instance, pupils can talk in detail about the layers of the rainforest and know why they are located near the equator. Pupils are enthusiastic about their science work. They learn how to carry out practical experiments and conduct fair tests. However, in a minority of subjects, the curriculum is not as well developed. The specific knowledge and skills pupils should learn are not as clear. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge and skills as successfully.

Teachers have sound subject knowledge across the curriculum. They give clear explanations to pupils and make frequent checks on how well they have understood the learning. However, sometimes the work that teachers select is not as well matched to pupils' needs as it could be. On occasion, pupils find the work too easy, and this slows their learning.

The school has effective systems for identifying the specific needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that staff know the needs of pupils well. Teachers successfully adapt lessons to enable pupils to access the same ambitious content. These adaptations include, extra resources, scaffolding the activities or through additional adult support.

Pupils throughout the school behave well and show enthusiasm for their learning. They understand the simple rules and values that the school promotes. Pupils apply these values to their own behaviour both in school and beyond.

The school provides a wide range of experiences to develop pupils beyond the academic curriculum. There are opportunities to have responsibilities such as being a librarian or a peer mediator. The playground leaders support the rest of the school to stay healthy through organising daily skipping sessions. Trips to places locally support pupils' cultural development. They also have regular assemblies that explore faiths and beliefs. All of this means, that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

The staff and parents feel part of a supportive school community. Staff say the school considers their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the work pupils do is not as accurately matched to their needs as it could be. As a result, some pupils occasionally find the work either too hard or

too easy. Leaders should ensure they continue to develop staff subject knowledge so that work is accurately matched to pupils' needs.

- Some subject areas are more developed than others. In a minority of subjects, the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and remember is not as clear. As a result, the quality of pupils' work across subjects varies. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum so that all subjects are of the same standard.

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	140526
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10240722
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	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Miles
Headteacher	Elizabeth Orton
Website	www.marden.hmfa.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 December 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school converted to an academy in January 2014. It is an associate school of the Hereford Marches Federation of Academies.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke to the executive headteacher, the head of school, and other leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke to the chair of governors and three other governors.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work in history, art and design, design technology and personal, social, health and economic education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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.

Inspection team

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gary Richards

Ofsted Inspector

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