

Inspection of Marsden Junior School

Manchester Road, Marsden, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD7 6EP

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 January 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They describe things they like about it with enthusiasm. They explain how harvested food from the allotment is cooked in the kitchen. This includes eggs from the six hens that older pupils look after. They also look after the guinea pigs they have named – Harry and Ron. Pupils care about the environment as 'earth ambassadors'. They know about the damage caused by climate change, pollution and litter.

The school has systems in place to support pupils' good behaviour. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to staff. Pupils say bullying hardly ever happens. They know staff will deal with any misbehaviour quickly and fairly. Recognition boards record the names of pupils displaying good attitudes to learning. This is when pupils try hard, join in and put up their hand to answer questions.

Pupils know and explain the school values of respect, integrity, teamwork and aspiration (RITA). Teachers expect to see these values in action, and they do. Pupils' reward is to spend their RITA stars in the Star Mark Shop. Pupils have extensive knowledge about staying safe online. They are taught how to stay safe in and out of school. They know the risks of drugs and alcohol.

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

Leaders have worked hard to tackle weaknesses identified by the previous inspection. They are making sure that the curriculum is well designed. Some foundation subjects, such as physical education and modern foreign languages, are now well planned. Expected knowledge is sequenced well. This is not seen consistently in all subjects. In some subjects, pupils cannot build knowledge progressively, because they do not have the necessary foundations of previous learning. Well-written development plans show that leaders are addressing these issues.

Pupils love to read. Some pupils arrive in school struggling to read. A systematic approach to teaching phonics helps them catch up quickly. Pupils' spelling is improving because they use phonic rules in their writing. The books pupils take home to read match their reading ability. Most pupils in school read confidently, accurately and with expression. Regular checks are made to see if pupils are reading well and fluently. This allows teachers to give extra help to anyone who is falling behind or reading too slowly.

Teachers make similar checks in daily mathematics lessons. Misconceptions are identified and subsequent further explanations, support or revisits of previous learning embed knowledge. Teachers deliver daily 'Flashback Five' to revisit learning from the recent or distant past. This helps pupils to remember mathematical knowledge.

Pupils' attitudes to learning help them to learn more quickly. They try hard, listen and concentrate. They want to succeed for themselves rather than seek recognition or reward. Behaviour is very good. Incidents of low-level disruption are very much the exception, not the rule. Before the pandemic, levels of attendance were well above average. Pupils are happy at school and want to attend. This is also true for staff, because leaders care about their mental and emotional well-being. Leaders try hard to make sure staff have a good work-life balance.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not miss out on any part of school life. They receive good support with their learning. Support in tasks is given when necessary. The transition process for pupils with SEND arriving from the infant school is effective. Pupils settle quickly into their new school. Leaders have a similar process in place to ensure that pupils can make a smooth transition to secondary school.

Leaders promote the leadership skills of pupils through the school council and the 'Junior Leadership Team'. Each junior leader has a specific role in school to shadow a different area of school life. Pupils have a range of opportunities to nurture and develop their interests and talents. This helps with their all-round development. In a recent visit to a museum, pupils re-enacted a criminal court session. Pupils complete ten experiences each year before they 'graduate'. These include persuading a politician, learning to save a life or hosting a Yorkshire tea party.

Members of the local governing body regularly visit school. They hold leaders to account and know the school's strengths and areas to develop. Partnership work with directors of the trust is effective.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have made sure that all staff know how to spot signs that something might be amiss with a pupil. Staff know the procedures to raise and report a concern. Safeguarding training is up to date. Record-keeping is meticulous and helps leaders to keep a clear oversight of concerns and actions taken. This includes checks made on any newly appointed staff. Leaders work well with external agencies to support pupils and families. Regular audits of safeguarding systems are undertaken to see if there are aspects of the school's work that need improvement. Monthly newsletters explain current internet risks and how parents can make sure pupils are safe online. Pupils learn how to spot signs of danger and keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The quality of the curriculum varies between foundation subjects. Key ideas intended to thread through some subjects are unclear, which means that pupils cannot make connections in learning. Essential knowledge is not specified. It is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing these improvements about. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.

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.

If you are the school and you are 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	141687
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10200695
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jennifer Ryan
Principal	Sarah Mansell
Website	www.themjs.org
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Mirfield Academies Trust, which includes two other schools.
- The trust's organisational structure includes a board of directors with oversight across all schools in the multi-academy trust. There is a local governing body with specific responsibilities for Marsden Junior School.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the principal, vice-principal, teachers, the support service manager and teaching assistants. An inspector also met two members of the local governing body, including the chair. A meeting was held with the local authority senior learning partner in high schools, a member of the local governing body, the interim chief executive officer and the chair of directors of the trust.

- The trust's school improvement partner and the SEND coordinator from the local high school also participated in some meetings.
- Deep dives were carried out in reading, modern foreign languages (French), mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to the principal and vice-principal about some other subjects.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and at break and lunchtime. They spoke to pupils about their views on behaviour.
- Safeguarding records, including the single central record, were reviewed. The inspectors talked to pupils, governors and staff about what they knew about safeguarding.
- The views of 55 parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, were considered.
- The inspectors met with staff to discuss their well-being and workload. The inspectors considered the 22 responses from Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Douglas	Ofsted Inspector

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