Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: The Marston Thorold's Charity Church of England School

School Lane, Marston, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG32 2HQ

Inspection dates: 24 June 2025

Outcome

The Marston Thorold's Charity Church of England School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small school with a big heart. The school bell, rung proudly each day by pupil volunteers, signals the school's warm welcome for its families.

Pupils are happy and feel safe here. They benefit from the high expectations that the school has for their academic achievement and broader personal development. Pupils achieve well. They flourish in confidence and enjoy coming to school.

Expectations for pupils' behaviour are high. Pupils demonstrate the school's 'BEST' examples for behaviour and attitudes to learning. For instance, pupils know and act on 'BEST listening' and 'BEST walking principles'. They need few, if any, reminders to focus on their learning. Classrooms are purposeful and calm learning spaces.

Pupils' voices are valued at this school. They contribute views and ideas to improve the school and wider community. They value the opportunities they have to be responsible leaders. For instance, the school council is an active group of pupils who shape decisions to improve activity choices and sports at lunchtime. Pupils are rightly proud to have raised funds for charity, as well as funds to reinstate the school bell.

Parents and carers appreciate the support and care that the school provides for their families. Their relationships with the school are positive.

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

The school has reviewed and sequenced the curriculum effectively since the previous

inspection. Key knowledge is specified clearly. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to review and revisit important knowledge successfully. This helps them to remember important learning. For instance, pupils learn about animal lifecycles in key stage 1. This develops in complexity in key stage 2, where pupils learn scientific vocabulary such as 'producers' and 'consumers'. The school continues to refine the curriculum to make further improvements. In some subjects, the approach to ensuring pupils learn the intended knowledge securely before they move on is not fully developed.

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to teach the curriculum skilfully. They explain new knowledge in clear steps. Teachers model learning to help pupils understand. For instance, they set out calculations in mathematics clearly. Teachers help pupils focus their attention on new knowledge and vocabulary. Pupils explain their understanding of new knowledge to each other in pairs.

The school gives careful consideration to how the early years is organised in mixed-age classes so that children make a strong start to their education. The curriculum for children in the Reception Year ensures that they are well prepared for a seamless transition into Year 1. Children in the early years benefit from a range of appropriate learning activities such as growing their own plants, exploring water and building with large construction. Children are confident and curious learners.

Early reading is taught successfully. Staff teach new sounds in established routines consistently well. Pupils respond positively to these routines and enjoy learning to read. Pupils who need further support with reading receive appropriate, targeted and focused help to catch up. As a result, pupils achieve well and improve their reading fluency and understanding.

The school identifies and meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Pupils with SEND are supported with attentive care and a coherently sequenced curriculum. The order of learning is identified clearly so that pupils with SEND work effectively towards the same ambitious outcomes as their peers.

Pupils are respectful and caring. They play harmoniously together at social times of the day. Pupils enjoy organising games for each other such as cricket. They are clear that bullying does not happen here. Pupils say that all are welcome. They understand what it means to be a good friend. Attendance is a positive and improving picture. The school has effective systems in place, including to secure prompt time-keeping.

There is a high-quality offer to support pupils' personal development and well-being. A range of clubs provide opportunities for pupils to develop wider interests. For instance, rounders club, tennis and gardening club are popular. Pupils learn a breadth of knowledge about life in modern Britain. They speak with insight about fundamental British values and protected characteristics. They appreciate the significance of these principles for an orderly and fair society.

The school works effectively in partnership with other schools as a federation. Collaboration for school improvement provides high-quality professional development and

efficient school improvement activities. Staff are positive about this partnership work and how it supports their workload. Governors are effective in their roles. They know the school well and understand their legal duties.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, information gathered through assessment is not used effectively. There is a lack of consistency in the approaches used, which means that in some subjects, pupils do not learn the required knowledge securely before they move on. The school should ensure that in these subjects, strategies for assessment accurately check what pupils know and can do and that this information is used effectively to deepen pupils' understanding before they move on.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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	120605
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10379549
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gordon Cannon
Headteacher	Elaine Bedford (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.marstonthorolds.lincs.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Grantham Villages' Church of England Schools Federation, which includes one other school.
- The school is a Church of England school with a Christian ethos. Its most recent section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, took place in May 2022. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place within four years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first 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 met with senior leaders, subject leaders and representatives from the governing body.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors discussed pupils' attendance and behaviour with school leaders.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents who responded to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and with pupils.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of evidence, including some documents published on the school's website.
- 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

Donna Moulds, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lynn Corner-Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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