

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Marus Bridge Primary School

Kelvin Grove, Marus Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire WN3 6SP

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

Outcome

Marus Bridge Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Ross Aldridge. This school is part of the Rowan Learning trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Phil Rimmer, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andy Wilson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils relish attending this happy and welcoming school. They follow the school's motto to 'learn, enjoy and achieve' with enthusiasm. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), meet the school's high expectations for their academic and wider achievements.

The school is founded on positive relationships. Pupils blossom from the care and compassion which permeate all parts of the school. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils are polite and highly considerate of others. They are true advocates for their school. From the very beginning of the early years, children learn to play harmoniously together. Pupils make sure no one is left out and extend their friendship towards others. They take great pride in welcoming visitors to their school with kind words, an open door and a ready smile.

Pupils are proud of the leadership roles that they hold, such as school councillors, planet protectors and playground buddies. They help to develop the social skills of children in the early years, and they make sure that the environment is safe and tidy for all to enjoy. The school provides a range of exciting clubs, from judo and fencing to gardening and chess. These broaden and develop pupils' talents and interests in new and exciting ways.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that reflects its locality and the needs of its pupils well. Carefully selected visits and visitors enhance the learning for pupils across the school. The curriculum is well ordered and begins in the early years, where the school has thought about the essential foundations that children need for future learning. This is delivered with expertise to enable children to flourish. There is a seamless transition from the Reception Year into Year 1, which builds on children's knowledge and independence exceptionally well.

Across key stages 1 and 2, teachers continue to deliver a carefully designed curriculum to pupils in a logical order. Activities support pupils to revisit and recap their previous learning. This assists pupils to successfully develop their knowledge over time. In a couple of wider curriculum subjects, the school has made some changes to the content that is taught. It is different to what was taught previously. This has led to some gaps in pupils' knowledge which have not been identified or addressed effectively. This affects how well some pupils build up their knowledge securely in these recently revised subjects.

Staff appreciate the support and training that they receive to develop their own practice, including how to identify and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff use appropriate and well-chosen resources to deliver the curriculum in an interesting and engaging way. They adapt the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum effectively. As a result, most pupils achieve well.

Staff deliver the phonics programme well. Children develop a love of reading beyond the phonics sessions. Stories, poems and rhymes are used to deepen pupils' learning across the curriculum. In key stage 1, pupils practise reading using books that closely match the sounds that they already know. Highly trained staff provide pupils with extra support if they need it. This helps these pupils to keep up with the expectations of the programme. Older pupils talk with confidence about a wide range of books and authors, many of which focus on equality and diversity. They are proud of the books on offer to them in the outdoor shed and libraries around the school.

Relationships between pupils and adults are highly positive. Pupils follow the school's values and develop their own classroom codes of conduct. Determination, kindness and trust are at the heart of these. Pupils never want to miss a day in school. They are keen to be in school learning alongside their friends. Pupils' rates of attendance are high.

The school has ensured that pupils' personal development is at the heart of its work. It empowers pupils, through a wide range of opportunities, to take responsibility and to make a difference within their school and the wider community. Pupils learn important life lessons on topics such as healthy relationships and how to care for your own and others' mental health and well-being. They articulate their views about online safety and what individuals should and should not be shared with others. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for secondary school and beyond.

Parents and carers value the close-knit school community and the support that the school gives to them. Staff feel respected and are proud to work at this school. Members of the local governing body, trust staff and school leaders work in collaboration to ensure that the pupils of Marus Bridge have a memorable and successful time at school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a couple of wider curriculum subjects, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge which have not been identified or addressed as well as they might. This affects how well some pupils learn and remember the important subject content. The school should ensure that any gaps are identified and addressed so that pupils can build their knowledge securely in these newly revised subjects.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in September 2012.

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	143498
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10348353
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	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Andy Wilson
CEO of the trust	Phil Rimmer
Headteacher	Ross Aldridge
Website	www.marusbridge.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	17 and 18 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has appointed a new headteacher and deputy headteacher since the school's previous inspection.
- The school currently uses one unregistered 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to some pupils read from Year 1 and Year 2.

- The inspector spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.
- The inspector met with representatives of the local governing body, trustees and trust staff. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including records of governing body meetings, the school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement and documents related to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and observed their behaviour at lunchtime.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sue Dymond, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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