

Marland School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	131552
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	381362
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Mike Kell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	10–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Faith Butler
Headteacher	Keith Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2008
School address	Peters Marland Torrington EX38 8QQ
Telephone number	01805 601324
Fax number	01805 601298
Email address	admin@marland.devon.sch.uk

Boarding/Residential provision	Marland School
Social care unique reference number	SC022231
Social care inspector	Paula Lahey



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Mike Kell	Additional inspector
Jo Curd	Additional inspector
Paula Lahey	Social care inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. In excess of five hours was spent observing 13 lessons across both sites. These included whole-class sessions and one-to-one work, covering the whole age range and involving 11 different teachers. The residential provision was visited before school began and in the evenings. Meetings were held with students, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders for both education and care, and other managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documents. These included assessment data, log books for physical restraints, serious incidents and bullying and a range of policies and procedures. The 14 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by staff and students.

Information about the school

Marland is a smaller than average special school. It has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection. At that time, it was a single site in Peters Marland for boys only, all of whom were residential and in the age range 11 to 16 years. The minimum age limit was lowered to 10 years in September 2011. While retaining these premises, the school opened a second site in January 2012, approximately 16 miles away in Barnstaple. This purpose-built accommodation is day provision for boys and girls in the age range 10 to 16 years in North Devon. At the time of the inspection, there were 13 students, all boys, on the Barnstaple site and 34 boys at Peters Marland, all of whom are resident on a termly basis. All students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, although many have additional difficulties too, such as autism. Around a third of students are known to be eligible for free school meals, and a fifth are looked-after children. The overwhelming majority of students have a White British heritage.

The school has a number of national awards, including Healthy Schools, Education Business Excellence, Sports Mark and the Football Association Charter Standard.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Marland is a satisfactory school, although the day site is more effective than the residential site. The vast majority of parents and carers believe that the school meets their children’s needs.
- The residential provision is satisfactory. It provides good quality care and produces good outcomes for students. Arrangements for students’ safety are satisfactory, but the national minimum standard for safeguarding arrangements is not met fully.
- While students’ behaviour is generally satisfactory, low-level disturbances sometimes occur around school and in class on the residential site. Behaviour is good on the day site. A small minority of parents and carers and staff, and a minority of students, have some reservations about behaviour.
- Teaching is satisfactory. It is consistently better on the day site because staff manage students’ behaviour more effectively and so learning is not disrupted to the extent that it is on the residential site. Students on individual reading programmes are taught well. However, some features of lesson planning lack detail.
- Recent staffing difficulties adversely influenced the rate at which students made progress. Currently, achievement is satisfactory. Students on the day site learn at a consistently good rate and achieve well. The pace of learning on the residential site is patchy. Students’ progress well in some lessons but more slowly in others. The curriculum is tailored to meet individuals’ needs and involves a great deal of off-site work, but students’ overall learning experience is not evaluated.
- Leadership and management of the school and residential provision are satisfactory. Recent appointments are beginning to make a difference and are improving provision and outcomes for student. Leaders’ work, however, is not yet wholly effective. The data that they collect through routine monitoring is not always used to best effect to improve outcomes for students, and a protocol for whole-school behaviour management is not yet fully embedded.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that lesson planning:
 - always states clearly what teachers expect individual students to learn so that their progress can be evaluated more precisely
 - identifies more specifically the opportunities for developing and reinforcing literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on students' achievement and personal development by:
 - refining the analysis of assessment data in order to better determine each student's progress compared with those with similar levels of attainment and starting points elsewhere
 - examining the curriculum of all students who follow a personalised-learning programme in order to ensure that the rate at which they acquire key literacy and numeracy skills is not adversely affected by the time spent off-site
 - ensuring that the whole-school behaviour management strategy is applied consistently
 - using the data that is collected about individuals' behaviour to produce more effective individual behaviour plans.
- The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools which have not been met.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents' and carers' unanimous view that their children make good progress was not confirmed during the inspection. There is a mixed picture of learning and achievement. Students make good progress in booster-reading sessions and in areas for which the school has received awards, such as physical education and work-related learning. Achievement is satisfactory overall, with no differences in the performance of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked-after compared with the progress made by others. There are, however, variations in the progress made by students irrespective of their personal circumstances. Those on the day site make good progress and achieve well. Those on the residential site also achieve well in some lessons, but in others their learning is pedestrian. Other factors are at play here too. The achievement of a small number of students on the residential site is reduced by their inability to join the class or remain there. Many other students miss lessons regularly, including English and mathematics, because their personalised-learning programmes take them off site. Despite this, over the past two years, all leavers have transferred successfully into education, employment or training.

By the time students enter the school, their behavioural difficulties and prolonged periods of non-attendance have reduced the extent of their learning. Attainment on entry is low, although a few students are working at a level approaching national expectations. Attainment remains low at the end of Years 6 and 11, and, as students

are not making accelerated progress, this gap is not reducing. Leaders are at an early stage of comparing students' performance with those of similar age and starting points elsewhere, and so there is no indication of where students' performance sits within this national picture. They have begun to set annual and end-of-key stage targets based on national progress data.

Variations in achievement were apparent in the lessons observed. For example, day students made good progress in understanding their pulse rate because the activity was enjoyable and practical and their curiosity was ignited, resulting in a great feeling of success. Others on that site achieved equally well when investigating information from a local historical source, while Year 10 residential students made good progress in explaining the fractional distillation of petroleum. On the other hand, students' achievement in half of the lessons seen on the residential site was only satisfactory because they found it difficult to engage with the activities.

The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, particularly through the residential provision. However, some students find it very difficult to comprehend that their actions have consequences or to show awareness of the needs of others, although a few make great strides in this respect. Residential and education staff share key information, and daily handovers provide updates on students' progress and emotional status. This allows the residential provision to support students' personal development and class-based learning.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory, which is contrary to the views of parents and carers, who are firmly of the opinion that it is good. They are partially correct because teaching is consistently good on the day site but typically satisfactory on the residential site, although there are pockets of good practice. The most effective teachers show insight into students' learning styles and capabilities and so they plan a variety of activities that maintain students' interest. In addition, they expect students to remain on task and complete their work. In these circumstances, misbehaviour rarely becomes an issue but, when it does, staff have the skills to manage the situation. For instance, by providing different resources and activities, a teacher on the residential site encouraged independent learning, enabling students to make good progress in developing a range of literacy skills as they reviewed the features of effective communication. In a food technology lesson on the day site, the teacher's modelling of technique and expertise in guiding students, coupled with effective management of the teaching assistant, encouraged students' enthusiasm and learning. On these occasions, opportunities to develop aspects of students' personal development, such as collaborative working, are also planned. When teachers fail to provide activities that meet individuals' needs, behaviour often deteriorates and staff do not always have the tools to manage it effectively as there is no whole-school protocol and no effective individual student behaviour plans to which staff can refer.

Teachers generally have appropriate knowledge of the subjects that they teach and they have put into place relevant long- and medium-term curriculum plans. Short-term planning is much less detailed. Teachers do not consistently use information about students' prior learning and capabilities when planning lessons. Plans do not always identify exactly what individuals are expected to learn and how this is to be

achieved through activities that are tailored to meet their needs, or which specific aspects of literacy and numeracy are to be targeted through the subject. Consequently, staff are not always in a position to judge exactly the extent of learning that has taken place. Staff plan activities that are intended to promote aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, a Year 10 class that was given the moral dilemma of who they would save from drowning when not all could be saved. Often however, students are unable to maintain focus for any length of time when staff plan to enhance their social skills through paired or small-group working.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The negative views about students' behaviour expressed by a small minority of parents and carers and staff and a minority of students are partially valid, as behaviour is more inconsistent on the residential site. Records indicate that students on the day site behave well, and this was confirmed during the inspection. On the residential site, the school has successfully deployed strategies that have improved the way in which the most extreme situations are managed. For instance, the number of occasions when physical interventions have to be used to defuse potentially dangerous situations has reduced. The school has also had success in reducing other forms of unacceptable behaviour, such as the number of occasions when students leave class or are verbally aggressive, informed by good systems for tracking students' behaviours. However, despite these declining trends, instances of inappropriate behaviour on the residential site continue to disrupt learning.

Leaders of the residential provision have been much more effective in establishing a consistent approach to improving behaviour. Students respond well to a stable staff team's consistent approach to managing behaviour. As a result, they develop increasing tolerance of people and situations. Consequently, they become more mature and able to contribute to the development and review of boarding provision through regular lounge group meetings.

All staff and a large majority of parents and carers believe that students are safe in school and that instances of bullying are managed effectively. Students' responses are mixed. The returned questionnaires suggest that only a minority feel safe and believe that staff deal with bullying, but discussions with them confirmed that while bullying does occur on occasion, staff deal with it quickly. Attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders have a good understanding of effective teaching and learning but have not been successful in raising the quality of either on the residential site, despite the majority of staff agreeing that the school provides for their professional development. This is because leaders do not make the most effective use of the information collected through good monitoring procedures. Their lesson observations and externally moderated assessment of students' work provide a great deal of information about students' learning. However, leaders do not analyse and use this information fully to raise the expectations of both staff and students. The curriculum is satisfactory despite having the potential to raise students' achievement through

personalised programmes that also promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in real-life situations. However, leaders have not evaluated fully the impact of the off-site elements on students' overall learning.

School leaders and the governing body have developed satisfactory procedures for promoting equality, tackling discrimination and embedding safeguarding procedures. Despite the residential provision being satisfactory, leaders responded well to the recommendations raised at the last social care inspection, and they have developed new practices, such as clinical supervision to support staff with managing students' psychological needs. The school has not yet been fully effective in responding to key development points in the previous education inspection report, as leaders have had to spend significant time developing provision for students with increasingly challenging behaviour, and dealing with significant staffing difficulties over a long period. Despite this, monitoring systems have been introduced and there have been noticeable developments in other areas. For instance, the new day provision has been established and the newly designed curriculum model has greatly enhanced the school's links with partners. Furthermore, new appointments that have been made in key positions are beginning to make a growing contribution to improving the school. Consequently, school leaders demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement supported by a governing body which, while short of numbers, has a new chair who shows a good awareness of what needs to be developed.

Residential provision

Outcomes for students are good because they enjoy constructive relationships with staff in an environment that offers stability, boundaries and effective support. Students take the opportunities to develop life skills that are built into the everyday residential programmes. They make good progress in aspects of their personal development, such as accepting responsibility and developing independence. They make equally good progress in acquiring greater confidence, self-esteem and physical health through their engagement in a wide range of activities in the local community.

There is a good quality of care. The accommodation is clean, well maintained and safe. Students benefit from a highly personalised approach to care from an experienced team that is sensitive to individuals' needs. Students have good relationships with staff and identify several with whom they can share feelings. This nurturing approach helps students to build up trust. Staff are trained in first aid and medication, and effective systems ensure its safe storage and administration. Detailed records provide information about students' health needs and of any treatment administered. Good catering arrangements provide a balanced diet, give choice and provide for cultural needs.

Effective policies, procedures and training underpin a rigorous approach to health and safety. Safety and maintenance matters are addressed promptly and routine checks are undertaken. Equipment such as fire-fighting apparatus is serviced regularly. Regular fire drills include night-time evacuations. Risk assessments contribute to students' safety and protection. Safeguarding arrangements relating to behaviour management, bullying, missing students, and recruitment are strong.

Comprehensive child protection procedures are in place and staff receive regular training. Physical intervention is sometimes used when students demonstrate unsafe behaviours, although its use is steadily reducing. Staff receive regular training in an approved method and methodically record all such incidents. These are monitored by senior staff.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Comprehensive policies and procedures provide staff with clear guidance. There are sufficient well-trained staff on duty, all of whom hold appropriate qualifications. Student records are well organised, detailed and regularly updated. Senior staff monitor these, as does an independent person through regular monitoring visits. Leaders have a good track record of sharing concerns with external agencies such as the Local Area Designated Officer, but failed to do so recently when they investigated internally concerns raised by a very small number of students about physical intervention. This contravened the school’s safeguarding procedures and current child protection guidance. As a result, the school does not meet fully the national minimum standard relating to safeguarding arrangements.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (NMS 11).

These are the grades for the residential provision

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	3
Outcomes for residential pupils	2
Quality of residential provision and care	2
Residential pupils’ safety	3
Leadership and management of the residential provision	3

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Marland School, Torrington EX38 8QQ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school and for being so friendly to us. Marland is a satisfactory school and the residential houses are satisfactory too, although staff take good care of you. You make satisfactory progress in your work. You could do better than this but too many of you on the Peters Marland site misbehave and do not follow instructions or you remove yourself from lessons. Those of you on the Barnstaple site work hard and do well. Some lessons are good but they are satisfactory overall.

The people who run your school do a satisfactory job. They have many ideas about how they can make the school better. We have asked them to do some things as well.

- Make sure that teachers know exactly what you have learned in every lesson and that senior staff check very carefully how much progress you have made at the end of every year.
- Look at your individual timetables to make sure that you are not missing too many lessons if you go out of school lots of the time each week.
- Help many of you to improve your attitudes and behaviour around the Peters Marland site and in classes.
- Make sure that the residential provision has in place all of the procedures that it should have.

You can help them to make these improvements by always going to lessons on time, staying there and doing what is expected of you without arguing. An inspector may visit you soon to see how you are getting on.

Finally, thank you once again for welcoming us into your school and I wish each of you every success in the future, especially if you are leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**