

# Marlborough School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101487
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	355008
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Denise Morris

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	78
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	24
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Matthews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandra Bird
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Marlborough Park Avenue Sidcup Kent DA15 9DP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. During the inspection, 10 lessons were observed and 10 different teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, senior leaders, students and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including planning documents, students' work, assessment and tracking data, and safeguarding policies. Twenty parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of assessment data and how well leaders use it to inform them about students' achievement.
- The sufficiency and quality of accreditation for students aged 14 to 19.

## Information about the school

All students at Marlborough have a statement of special educational needs relating to severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple difficulties, autistic spectrum and other complex needs, or sensory impairments and communication difficulties. There are also a significant number of students who have medical needs, physical disabilities and challenging behaviours. The sixth form provision is off-site and the school works in partnership with several other local schools and colleges. An acting headteacher and acting leadership team has been in place for the past two terms. The school has several awards including Healthy School status.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It provides a sound education for the students. Parents and carers are right when they say that their children are safe and secure at school. This is because of the good care, guidance and support provided by the school, which results in students' effective personal development and well-being. Their good behaviour is reflected in the calm atmosphere, students' respectful attitudes and the way that those from many different cultural backgrounds work together in harmony. Students' knowledge of healthy eating and keeping fit is good and they have a clear awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say that they enjoy school, and their parents and carers agree. As one explained, 'My child loves going to school. School staff really care about the children and make every effort to ensure that they are well cared for.'

Students' achievement, including in the sixth form, is satisfactory. They make steady progress from their individual starting points so that, by the time they leave the school in Years 12 or 13, many attain appropriate accreditation such as ASDAN awards and AQA accreditation. Those with additional special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers because of effective individual programmes that are well monitored. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils benefit from satisfactory, and sometimes good, teaching with positive relationships, good use of technology, and careful and sensitive support. In a minority of lessons, however, learning targets are unclear and students' achievements are not assessed rigorously enough to give a clear view about how well each individual student is doing. The school has not established a system to track and monitor the progress of individual students and, as a result, target setting is not challenging enough and teachers find it difficult to set the next steps in learning.

Students across the school benefit from a rich curriculum providing a very wide range of activities that they fully enjoy. For example, the high-quality on-site pool enables students to benefit from regular hydrotherapy and to have lots of fun. Provision for art is a strength enabling students to achieve well. Effective vocational experiences provide students aged 14 to 19 with realistic opportunities to learn about life after school. A very small minority of students do not have access to the off-site sixth form provision, based at a local secondary school, because of their disabilities, and a very few cannot access the information and communication technology suite on the sixth form site.

The acting leadership team have led the school successfully through a difficult period. They have established effective partnerships with the local community, and with support services and other local schools, which are having a positive impact on students' increased opportunities for therapies, sport and work experience. There are effective partnerships with parents and carers. Overall, the good links with others are having a very positive impact on pupils' personal development.

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Recent and accurate self-evaluation shows that leaders and managers are aware of what needs doing to bring about improvements. Effective attention to improving attendance is beginning to work. There is a supportive staff team, which is helping new initiatives to succeed. The lack of a whole-school assessment and tracking system is being addressed but remains an important area for improvement. The governing body is supportive, although several members are new to their roles and are yet to be fully involved in holding the school to account for its decisions. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection. The school has a satisfactory capacity to continue improving.

Up to 40% of the 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 assessment by:
  - developing a whole-school assessment system that is understood by staff and students
  - tracking students' achievements regularly
  - using the data gathered to plan the next small steps of learning for each student
  - ensuring that target setting is as challenging as possible for the needs and abilities of the students.
- Improve student access to all the activities and facilities on offer in the sixth form.
- Develop the work of the governing body so that they have a greater impact on the direction and work of the school.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Most students' attainment on entry to the school is extremely low as a result of their special educational needs and/or disabilities. For this reason, attainment is unlikely ever to rise above low, compared to pupils nationally, and attainment is not graded in the report. Nevertheless, students make satisfactory progress and sometimes this is good, particularly in communication and language. For example, during a sensory story in Year 9, an exciting range of resources were used to replicate 'a walk in the jungle'. Students really enjoyed this activity and followed the story well. Because they were excited by the content, they made good gains in communicating their ideas about the story and behaved very well. Where resources are used well, students become fully engaged, as for example in a Year 8 mathematics lesson, where a group of students with severe learning difficulties enjoyed using the interactive whiteboard to find missing numbers up to 10. They had fun while they learned their numbers because they liked moving the numbers around on the board.

Older pupils regularly acquire accreditation, which helps them to prepare for their futures. For example, some artwork as part of their AQA portfolios by students in Years 10 and 11 showed clear understanding of the styles used by the artists Matisse and Picasso. A group of students with autistic spectrum disorders, for example, made particularly good progress in art as they benefited from skilled teaching that challenged them to gain new experiences. They had to select a mystery object from a bag and try to work out its

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function. Several of the students were able to recognise it as a spinning top and tried to make it work. They were fascinated by the wonder of the top as it spun and hummed, and watched the top carefully, enjoying the session. Learning dips in lessons where specific individual targets are not used to help students achieve the next small step in their learning.

Students achieve well in sport because of some specialised provision. Students regularly keep fit and healthy by attending lunchtime sports clubs and joining in with sports activities with other local schools. They say that they enjoy school and, despite a high level of medical absences, attendance is broadly as expected. The productive school council eagerly talk about their contribution to improving the school. They have drawn up a creative manifesto to plan their improvements.

Pupils work well with the local community, with older pupils involved in local business enterprises. For example, students in Years 9, 10 and 11 regularly visit the local garden centre to help them develop their own horticulture projects. They have their own mini-enterprise in which they make craft items, grow their own strawberries, make jam and sell them at the open day. A few students work in local shops and nurseries on a regular basis and the school is currently developing a cafe on its own site to help students gain an appropriate awareness of life after school. Students understand the different cultures that make up their school population, get on well together, and have an appropriate awareness of other cultures and lifestyles.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

## How effective is the provision?

A rich and varied curriculum in all parts of the school is having a good impact on students' enjoyment. It is helping them to develop good self-esteem as they begin to be involved in preparations for the 2012 Special Olympics. For example, two students are currently involved as 2012 young ambassadors. Links with local football and cricket clubs help to improve their skills and ensure that students are fit and healthy, as evidenced by their Healthy School award. Enrichment through accreditation opportunities, visits, sports activities and visitors is good.

The appropriate range of strategies used in most lessons, particularly the use of visual resources, the use of signs and symbols, and the picture exchange communication system (PECS), is helping to give students a voice and ensures that most students make at least satisfactory progress. For example, students in Year 7 practised their communication skills by successfully using their pictures to make a choice. They showed good understanding of their tasks as they chose the correct picture to exchange for an object. Relationships in lessons are strong and teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting, guiding and enabling those with additional needs to succeed.

Not all teachers make the best use of assessment to plan the next steps of learning. The lack of a whole-school system means that teachers do not always have a clear view of

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students' ability and progress. As a result, it is not always possible to measure students' progress over time. An example of the impact of good assessment information was evident in a Year 9 literacy lesson where students were fully involved in assessing what they had learned by checking their achievements on the interactive board. They enjoyed this activity and it helped them to see what they needed to do next.

Parents and carers rightly believe that their children are well cared for and safe at school. All adults, including therapists, work together well to support students' needs, drawing on expertise from a wide range of other professionals and setting up parent and carer support groups to involve and engage families. Transition is well planned so that older students transfer smoothly to the sixth form and on to college. Strategies to support pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and those with additional needs such as sensory impairments are good, resulting in inclusion and enjoyment by these groups.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which has resulted in the calm and caring ethos that the school provides. The acting senior leadership team have all taken on new and more senior roles. Together they have developed effective partnerships with support services and with local schools that contribute well to pupils' personal development. Effective links with business partners are enabling the school to improve opportunities for students. The school promotes equality and is keen to ensure that discrimination is eliminated. For example, leaders are aware that a very few students cannot access the sixth form facilities because of their particular needs. The school is rightly working to improve access for these students.

Child-protection arrangements are robust and safeguarding procedures fully meet current government requirements. The site is extremely safe. Effective links with parents and carers have been forged through coffee mornings, parent and carer workshops, regular contact and home visits, all of which are valued. Leaders are aware of the improvements needed at the school and are working to introduce effective assessment data and tracking systems to ensure that the progress of all groups can be carefully measured.

The governing body provides satisfactory support. The governing body meets its responsibilities, though several governors are new to their roles and they are not yet as effective as they could be in holding the school to account for its decisions. Leaders have developed a satisfactory strategy for community cohesion, which has resulted in the good links locally that are having a positive impact on provision and on students' personal development. Links further afield are developing appropriately.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

Students enjoy their time in the sixth form. The appropriate range of ASDAN accreditation ensures that they develop awareness of work. They complete a range of different modules, including one in horticulture, which provides realistic work-related opportunities for enterprise ensuring at least satisfactory progress.

Students are positive and say that they enjoy college. This is evident in the harmonious way in which they work and socialise together. Students benefit from effective support and guidance, which helps them to find the right path for their futures. They eat healthily and the vast majority choose to participate in sport, including extended school activities. They learn about safety through their curriculum and show awareness of the importance of avoiding drugs and alcohol. They are provided with guidance on sex and relationships.

Students take their responsibilities seriously. They are diligent about their jobs and welcome the varied opportunities to engage in work experience in the sixth form, both in the school and in the community. Sound leadership and management ensure that students' achievements are informally assessed on a regular basis, although there are no formal records of progress available to help with target setting. The sixth form is an effective bridge to further education by preparing students appropriately for their future.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are supportive of the school and are pleased with their child's education. All of those who responded to the inspection questionnaires said that their child enjoyed school and that the school keeps them safe. 'Overall the teachers do their best to help you. My son has come on leaps and bounds,' commented a parent. Another wrote, 'My daughter's confidence continues to grow at Marlborough. All the staff put the children first and nothing is ever too much trouble.'

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marlborough School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	65	6	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	60	8	44	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	65	6	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	60	7	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	55	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	50	10	50	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	70	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	60	6	30	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	55	8	40	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	55	9	45	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	65	7	35	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**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.**



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Marlborough School, Sidcup, DA15 9DP**

Thank you for your help on our recent visit to your school. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out during our visit.

- Your school gives you a satisfactory education, which means you learn how to be ready for life in the wider world.
- You enjoy coming to school and try to come as often as you can.
- You make the progress that is expected of you.
- You told us all about your healthy lifestyles and we know you do lots of exercise. We were particularly pleased with the way you are learning about the world of work and enjoyed hearing about your work experience.
- All of you try hard to behave well and you work well together.
- Your leaders keep you safe and secure.
- We are impressed by the way that you make, grow and sell things as part of your enterprise work. Congratulations for this.

We are asking your school to do three things to help you to do even better.

- To improve the way your work and progress is checked.
- To make sure all of you can do all the activities at the school and college.
- To make sure that the governing body is more involved in checking how well the school is working.

All of you can help by joining in with checking your own work.

Thank you again for your welcome.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris Lead inspector

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