

Marden High School - A Specialist Maths, Science and Media Arts College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108627
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	377788
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	910
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Carlile
Headteacher	Jonathan Morris
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 38 teachers and 38 lessons, and held meetings with the members of the governing body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and analysed 291 questionnaires from parents and carers, 154 from students and 45 from staff. The team also looked at documents and policies, including those relating to the safeguarding of students, information the school had collected about the students' progress and the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.

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

- Students' current attainment and progress, particularly that of higher-attaining students and also that in subjects which are less strong.
- In lessons, the extent to which work is matched appropriately to the ability of all students and how well students are successfully directed to learn independently, including assessing for themselves how well they are doing.
- The effectiveness of all leaders' monitoring and evaluation, especially those of subject leaders, in accelerating improvement in areas that are less strong.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than average. Most students are White British and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average, although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school is a specialist Mathematics, Science and Media Arts College. It has specialist provision for students who are hearing impaired. The school has many awards, including Healthy Schools status for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The headteacher has been in post since September 2011.

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

Marden is providing a satisfactory standard of education. All aspects of students' personal development are at least good and their attendance is high. Academic achievement is satisfactory, however, and this results in outcomes for students being satisfactory. Parents and carers, staff and students are very positive about the school and the school is very well regarded in the local community. Students describe their school as one that they are 'proud to go to' and one that is 'enjoyable in every way'.

Following a period when attainment declined, there has been an improvement over the past fifteen months resulting in gains in students' achievement. This improvement has been more apparent in some subjects than in others. Overall, learning and progress are satisfactory. The progress made by different groups of students is now more even, with that of boys and the highest-attaining students having improved most. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those students who are hearing impaired, make good progress. This is due to the particularly good personalised care, guidance and support they receive.

The quality of teaching has also recently improved, but remains variable and is satisfactory overall. There is some outstanding practice within the school but this is not shared effectively enough at present. Students' good behaviour plays a strong part in their learning. However, in some lessons students are not given enough responsibility for their learning or enough opportunities to be involved in independent tasks. They do not always have clear enough success criteria to be able to say how well they are learning. Senior leaders carry out many lesson observations and this has helped to raise the quality of teaching. However, these observations do not always focus closely enough on the learning that is taking place. In addition, the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching is not sufficiently developed. As a result, attainment is not as high as it might be, nor the acceleration of learning and progress as fast.

Students are very welcoming and polite. They value opportunities to take on responsibility through roles such as members of the school council and mentors. Many enjoy being Young Sports Leaders helping to organise sports in nearby primary schools and this impacts well on their good understanding of a healthy lifestyle, recognised in the school's Healthy Schools status. The school's specialisms impact

well throughout the school, especially in providing opportunities to work with local businesses. Specialist targets are generally met, particularly so in mathematics.

Although the headteacher has been in post for a short time, he is already being instrumental in starting to accelerate improvements. Staff are very positive and it is clear that they want the best for the students. They are firmly behind the drive to raise attainment and improve the quality of learning and teaching. Members of the governing body support the school well, but are not sufficiently challenging the school with regard to the quality of teaching and learning. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the correct areas to develop are prioritised well. Because the school is able to demonstrate that improvements are occurring, the capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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?

- Further raise attainment and accelerate learning and progress in all subjects through ensuring that all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - sharing more effectively the best practice in teaching that already exists in school
 - giving students more responsibility for their own learning through an increased number of independent tasks in their lessons
 - always providing clear success criteria in all lessons so that students can assess for themselves more easily how well they are learning.
- Improve aspects of leadership and management to bring about improvements more rapidly by:
 - developing the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching
 - focusing more closely on the learning that is taking place when observing lessons
 - increasing the involvement of members of the governing body in challenging the school, particularly in relation to the quality of learning and teaching.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Inspection evidence confirms that learning and progress are satisfactory, although some is good or better. Students enter in Year 7 with attainment that is above average and leave in Year 11 with attainment that is also above average in most subjects. Students behave well; they work well independently and in groups when given the opportunity to do so. This was demonstrated well in a Year 7 history lesson

on the Roman Republic, citizenship and rights where they were seen making good progress. Students respond well to enthusiastic teaching and enjoy a challenge. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson they made outstanding progress, thoroughly enjoying 'beat the teacher' where they had to explain clearly whether they believed various statements about chemical reactions were true or false. However, in some lessons students are not given enough responsibility for their own learning and they are unable to say if they are learning well as they are not clear what is expected of them. In those lessons progress slows. Students with hearing impairment make good and sometimes outstanding progress because of well-targeted support in lessons and in small groups. This was exemplified well in a Year 10 religious education lesson on religious experiences, where interesting visual material enhanced learning well.

Students leave school well equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter post-16 education, employment or training opportunities with high attendance and above average attainment in mathematics and English. Their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good and they have many opportunities to be involved in enterprise activities. Students are involved in many events in the wider community, such as Mouth of the Tyne Festival and with Northumberland Park carrying out land surveys and archaeology. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their understanding of cultural development is improving, helped by the school's good promotion of community cohesion, although currently their understanding of minority ethnic religions and cultures, reflecting those found in the United Kingdom as a whole, is less well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school is rightly proud of its good care, guidance and support and its reputation as an inclusive school. Students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit in particular from a personalised and proactive approach to care, guidance and support. There are examples of significant successes in the way in which the school helps pupils overcome difficulties to achieve well. The 'Bungalow',

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

the student support centre, provides specialised provision for students who feel they are in need of counselling. Transition arrangements are good, both for Year 7 students entering the school and for Year 11 students moving on to the next stage in their education. The success of the school’s robust approach to tackling any absence is seen in students’ high attendance.

The good curriculum impacts well on students’ good personal development. There is a wide range of interesting and stimulating experiences, for example, media and arts activities and ICT days. Year 8 students were seen thoroughly enjoying a two-day ICT experience in the nearby City Learning Centre. They described it as ‘challenging but enjoyable’ because they got to work more independently. Cross-curricular provision is mainly good and basic literacy and numeracy skills are being embedded increasingly well into other lessons. Year 7 and 8 students enjoy the theme days, such as those on poverty. However, the school acknowledges that it needs to widen the curriculum for those younger students to include learning and study skills. The curriculum is adapted well at Key Stage 4 to include pathways for the more-able and less-able students. There are good and varied enrichment opportunities, such as the Duke of Edinburgh award. Many of the activities here impact well on the students’ good contribution to the local community.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory with examples of good and sometimes outstanding practice. Generally teaching is planned well with a range of interesting and varied activities and is increasingly meeting the needs of all students, including those who attain most highly. However, in some lessons teachers lead too many of the activities, not giving enough opportunities for independent learning to allow the students to take enough responsibility for their learning. This was seen in some lessons across a range of subjects, including geography and science. In some lessons, teachers explain carefully what it is that students should have learned by the end of the lesson, for example in a Year 11 mathematics lesson on transformation. However, in some lessons students are not provided with clear enough criteria for success to be able to say how well they are learning. Assessment to support learning is variable, both across subjects and within subjects. While much marking is good in helping students to improve their work, some does not do this as well as it might do.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a very clear view of how to take the school forward. He is working well with the governing body and senior leaders and has accurately identified where improvements need to be made. For example, the school acknowledges that at present the role of subject leader is not well enough developed. Target setting is now more rigorous and there is an increased clarity in what is expected in lesson planning and in the use of assessment to plan effective

lessons. Many of these initiatives are in their early stages, so it is too soon to see their full impact, although the very positive staff questionnaires indicate that there is strong support. Leaders are taking steps to improve the quality of teaching, but the rate of improvement has been slow. This is because the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is not closely focused on students' learning. This is preventing improvements in progress from being as rapid as they could be. Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body are involved in the work of the school, know the school's strengths and support what it needs to do to improve further. They challenge the school well in many areas, but not sufficiently about the quality of learning and teaching at present.

Parents and carers are very positive about most aspects of the school and their engagement with it is good. Their views are sought regularly and acted upon, for example in changes to the timing of the school day. The school helps them to support their children's learning through sessions where they offer advice on revising for examinations. Safeguarding procedures are good, with clear policies and secure risk-assessment systems. Child protection in particular is very thorough. Equality of opportunity is good, with gaps between groups of students closing rapidly. In addition, there have been very few racist incidents in school, helped by the school's strong focus on the importance of respect for others. The promotion of community cohesion within school, locally and internationally is particularly good, for example, through the 'Young Americans' who stay with the students and their families. However, links with other schools in the United Kingdom of a different ethnic makeup have not yet been fully established. There is a wide range of good partnership involvement, including close involvement with links with a local sixth form college. This helps to ensure a smooth transition into the next stage in the students' education. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Nearly 32% of parents and carers returned the questionnaire, which is a higher than average response. They were very positive about most aspects of the school's work, particularly that their children enjoy school and the extent to which the school keeps their children safe. The inspectors judged that the extent to which students feel safe

is good. A few parents and carers did not agree that the school seeks and acts on their views or helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. The inspectors followed up these concerns and, from evidence presented during the inspection, found that these are aspects that the school is doing increasingly well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marden High School - A Specialist Maths, Science and Media Arts College 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 291 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 910 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	93	32	171	59	19	7	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	99	34	179	62	7	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	19	203	70	21	7	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	82	28	173	59	16	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	25	189	65	10	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	21	182	63	26	9	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	10	201	69	43	15	3	1
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)	69	24	172	59	15	5	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	23	192	66	16	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	74	25	164	56	26	9	7	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	14	163	56	40	14	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	63	22	187	64	11	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	96	33	171	59	10	3	2	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



13 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Marden High School - A Specialist Maths, Science and Media Arts College, North Shields NE30 3RZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you in your lessons very much. We judged your school to be satisfactory.

All aspects of your personal development are good. Most of you engage well in your lessons. Your curriculum is good and you told us how much you welcome the opportunities the school has to offer, through projects such as the Young Americans. We were very pleased to see many of you taking on responsibilities, such as mentors and Young Leaders.

The examination results of most students at the end of Year 11 is higher than average in the majority of subjects. However, because your attainment is generally above average at the beginning of Year 7, your learning and progress are satisfactory. We were pleased to see, however, that learning and progress are improving and thus raising your achievement.

In order to improve your learning and progress even further, we have asked the school to share best practice in teaching more effectively, to give you more opportunities to learn independently and to always give you clear criteria for success so that **you** can tell if you are learning well. In addition, we have asked that, when school leaders observe your lessons, the focus is always on how well you are learning. You can all help by letting your teachers know if you are unsure how to tell if you are learning well in your lessons.

We would like to wish you all the best for your future and we hope you continue to enjoy all the activities that the school has to offer you.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Thomson
Lead Inspector

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