

# The Marlborough Church of England School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123267
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380633
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sanderson HMI

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1073
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	224
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Exham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Fenn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Shipton Road Woodstock Oxfordshire OX20 1LP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 41 lessons, observing 39 teachers, and observed two assemblies. An inspector also briefly visited a number of lessons with the school's special educational needs coordinator looking at support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, policy documents, students' books, 190 parental questionnaires, and staff and student questionnaires.

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

- Whether teaching is consistently good during Years 7 to 11, enabling students to make good progress in their learning.
- Whether all groups of students, but particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making similar progress.
- How effectively all leaders in the school are taking consistent action to raise students' attainment and reduce the variation in students' achievement between subjects.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school. Most students are of White British heritage and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is also below the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. However, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The most commonly identified needs relate to autistic spectrum disorder, physical disability and language and communication difficulties. The Ormerod base for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is on the school site. All students in this provision have a statement of special educational needs. As this provision is managed by the school's governing body, it was included as part of this inspection. Students from this provision integrate into some lessons and other additional activities. The school has joint specialist status in business and enterprise, and humanities. It also holds the International School award, Healthy Schools status and Sportsmark.

**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

The Marlborough School’s effectiveness is satisfactory. It has a number of good and outstanding features, especially in the high quality of support it provides for its most vulnerable students. The school is very inclusive and has a caring, welcoming ethos. As a result, students feel exceptionally safe and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Despite these strengths, the school’s effectiveness is satisfactory because the attainment of students at the end of Year 11 is broadly average and their achievement between Years 7 and 11 is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all students make good progress across all subjects.

Students demonstrate tolerance and empathy and their behaviour, in lessons and around the school, is good. Their contribution to the school and the wider community is excellent. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and one, reflecting the views of many, wrote, ‘The school provides a supportive and caring environment that fosters good behaviour and responsibility.’ The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Teaching in the sixth form is good and students make good progress on the courses they study during Years 12 and 13.

During Years 7 to 11, there is variation in students’ achievement between different subjects. For example, achievement is good in English and science but satisfactory in mathematics, art and design and modern foreign languages. There is also some variation in the progress made by different groups of students. Although the overall progress of those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory, those with a statement of special educational needs based in the Ormerod centre and in the main school make good progress. The quality of teaching, which varies across the school, is satisfactory overall. The majority of teaching is good and some is outstanding, especially where teachers engage their students by helping them to learn independently. However, there are too many lessons when teachers talk to the class for too long and do not match activities well enough to students’ capabilities or learning needs. While students know their targets well, teachers’ marking of their work does not always give clear advice on how to improve and move to the next level or grade.

The curriculum provides students with a broad range of both academic and vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 which meets their needs and aspirations well. The school’s specialism has enabled strong links to be developed with local business and industry and has a positive impact on preparing students well for the world of

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work or further study.

Targets set for students are challenging and tracking systems identify students who are making good progress or who are underachieving. Senior leaders use this data and other monitoring information, with increasing accuracy, to identify what the school does well and to plan for improvement. As a result, their self-evaluation identifies the right priorities for improvement. The school development plan is well written and provides a good blueprint for improvement. However, monitoring and tracking information is not being used sharply and robustly enough by senior and middle leaders to ensure consistently good teaching, marking and achievement across the school. Recent improvements in students' progress in English and a good plan for similar improvement in other subjects indicate the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring inspection by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching in order to accelerate students' progress in lessons and raise attainment in all subjects by ensuring that:
  - all teachers provide challenging activities which are well matched to the ability and learning needs of all students
  - all lessons proceed at a good pace and no time is lost
  - teachers' questioning is used effectively to check and develop students' understanding of new ideas and concepts
  - students are given consistently good written feedback so that they are clear about what they need to do to improve.
- Reduce the variation in students' achievement between subjects by ensuring that all senior and middle leaders use tracking and monitoring information effectively to improve learning opportunities and accelerate the progress of students.

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

**3**

Students' attainment on entry into Year 7 is broadly average. By the end of Year 11, attainment against most measures is broadly average. However, Year 11 attainment in English rose in 2011 to an above average level. Students' overall achievement is satisfactory but good in some subjects. The variation in students' achievement between different subjects seen in the 2010 and 2011 GCSE examination results was reflected in the variation in students' progress observed in lessons during this inspection.

Students are keen to learn and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. They respond and learn well when given opportunities to learn independently or work in

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groups to develop their ideas. However, when students spend too long listening to the teacher or work is not well matched to their needs, their progress slows. Students who have a statement of special educational needs benefit from the high quality care and support provided for them in and outside of lessons and, as a consequence, make good progress. The quality of in-class support for other students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is more variable and their progress is satisfactory. All other groups of students make similar, satisfactory progress.

Students’ behaviour is positive and welcoming and their outstanding moral and social development can be seen in the very positive relationships that exist within the school. Students’ strong appreciation and understanding of each other’s needs ensure that students from the Ormerod centre are well integrated into lessons in the main school. Spiritual growth and understanding are also developed extremely well by the school’s curriculum. Students who completed questionnaires for the inspection and spoke to inspectors clearly enjoy coming to school. They feel exceptionally safe and report that incidents of bullying are very rare, but if they do occur, they are dealt with well by staff. Attendance is above average. As part of the exceptional contribution that students make to the school and wider community, they are involved in a wide range of leadership activities and they contribute to school decision making, for example in the development of the ‘Rights and Responsibility Charter’. Their extensive work in promoting community events, engaging with primary school children as sports leaders and supporting senior citizens, heightens their social awareness. Students have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and many participate in sporting activities and eat healthily. However, not all students make healthy food choices at break and lunchtime.

*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>	3
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>1</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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2

<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

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**The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

**1**

### **How effective is the provision?**

Lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and students. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear explanations and make effective use of resources, including modern technology, to aid learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers make effective use of data from assessment to pitch tasks at the range of ability of students in the class. Activities are engaging and effectively involve students in learning, either independently or in groups. However, in some lessons, tasks set for the whole class are either too difficult or not challenging enough for individual students. In the better lessons, during whole-class discussions, teachers carefully target their questions to involve different students, and ask students to explain their answers in some detail, thereby developing their understanding and supporting their speaking skills. In some lessons, such whole-class discussions go on for too long and the questions asked simply check students’ knowledge rather than develop their understanding. Students have a good knowledge of their targets and take pride in working to achieve them, but do not always have a precise grasp of how to improve their work to reach them. Some marking is of high quality and provides good advice to students about how to improve. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school and teachers’ written comments vary widely in the detail and advice they provide.

The curriculum is regularly reviewed and developed to better meet students’ needs. The Key Stage 4 curriculum offers students a broad range of both academic and vocational options which meet the learning needs of all students well. Links with a local college effectively extend this curriculum offer. The courses offered in the sixth form build well on those followed by students in these earlier years. The school specialism is evident in a range of planned activities within different subject areas and these are effectively developing students’ business and enterprise skills. Opportunities for students to practise and develop their information, communication and technology skills are in place across the curriculum, although opportunities to develop literacy skills in some subjects are not fully embedded. The ‘elective programme’ enriches the curriculum well and positively contributes to students’ personal development. A high percentage of students also participate in the broad range of after-school activities and clubs that are offered.

Pastoral support for students is strong. Staff know students well and they work effectively with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that potentially vulnerable students are well cared for and supported. The care and support students receive in the Ormerod base are exceptional. Inductions into school and transitions between key stages are very well managed. This is appreciated by parents and carers, with one parent, reflecting the view of many, stating, ‘Transition from primary school was fantastic.’ The information and guidance students receive in Years 10 and 11 are good, helping them to move successfully to further education, employment or training.

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*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’s ambition and passion to ensure that all students are well cared for and achieve well are shared by all staff. Senior leaders are ambitious, as shown in the challenging targets set for the school. Systems to monitor teaching and track students’ progress give senior and middle leaders a good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. A clear line-management structure is in place and regular meetings between senior and middle leaders are focused around improving teaching and raising the achievement of all students. Successful action was taken last year to improve attainment and progress in English and there is early evidence that actions are beginning to have a positive impact on raising attainment and closing achievement gaps in the current Year 11. Some middle leaders, with effective support and challenge from senior leaders, are using monitoring information well to take effective action to improve teaching and raise standards. However, this good practice is not consistently in place. As a result, too much variation remains in the quality of teaching, marking and students’ achievement across the school.

The governing body is rigorous in ensuring that students and staff are safe and they discharge their statutory duties effectively. The governing body is well aware of the school’s strengths and areas in need of improvement through close monitoring of performance information. Governors have a clear determination for students’ achievement to rise and they provide a good level of support and challenge to the school’s leadership team. Safeguarding arrangements are good and leaders and managers ensure that all staff are well informed about child protection policies and procedures. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of much of the school’s work and discrimination is tackled well. Students based in the Ormerod centre are extremely well supported and achieve well; the gaps in achievement between different groups of students are beginning to close. The school is a highly cohesive institution which engages very closely with its local community. International links are also well developed through the school’s International School status. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion although the impact of its work is not fully evaluated.



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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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form is highly inclusive, admitting students with a broad range of abilities and learning needs. The range of academic and vocational courses on offer has been sensibly extended in recent years so that it meets students’ needs well. As a result, the number of students choosing to join the sixth form has increased. Sixth form students show a sense of pride in their school and are positive about the education they receive. They particularly appreciate the good relationships they have with their teachers and the caring support they provide. As a result of good teaching, students’ achievement in the sixth form is good. However, there is some variation in students’ achievement between different subjects.

Students’ attendance is good and the proportion of students choosing to continue to study their courses in Year 13 is above the national average. Students also receive good advice about moving on to university, training or employment. Sixth form students play a full part in school life through leadership or mentoring roles. As part of their active citizenship programme, students also help in the local community and in primary schools, which has a positive impact on their personal development. The recently established new leadership arrangements for the sixth form are good. Systems for monitoring and tracking students’ progress are robust, and this is leading to improved outcomes for students.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2

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Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

A slightly higher than average proportion of parents and carers returned inspection questionnaires. Most questions had a very favourable response. A very large majority of parents and carers reported that the school kept their children safe, that their children enjoyed school and that they were happy with their children’s experience of school. Some parents and carers felt the school did not help their children have a healthy lifestyle. The inspection team judged that the school’s promotion of healthy lifestyles is good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Marlborough Church of England 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 190 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,073 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	42	106	56	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	95	50	90	47	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	79	42	103	54	7	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	81	43	95	50	11	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	35	122	64	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	53	28	117	62	14	7	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	21	128	67	18	9	1	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)	80	42	92	48	7	4	2	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	64	34	115	61	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	31	106	56	8	4	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	25	109	57	12	6	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	80	42	98	52	7	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	102	54	84	44	4	2	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	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 are 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](http://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"> <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.**

18 November 2011

Dear Students



**Inspection of The Marlborough Church of England School, Woodstock  
OX20 1LP**

We would like to thank you all for the warm welcome we received during our inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed our discussions with you. The school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. A number of aspects of the school are good, such as the sixth form, and a few are outstanding. The following points are the key strengths of the school.

- There is a welcoming, friendly ethos in the school. We were very impressed by the respect and kindness you show to each other and to people who are less fortunate than you.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Staff know you well and take good care of you. During discussions you told us that you feel exceptionally safe in school.
- Many of you take a full part in the life of the school and make an outstanding contribution to your local community.
- Those of you based in the Ormerod centre are exceptionally well cared for and make good progress in your learning.
- You are provided with a broad range of both academic and vocational courses in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form which meet your needs and interests well.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked the leadership team to make some improvements.

- The majority of your lessons proceed at a good pace and teachers provide you with tasks that are interesting and well matched to your ability and learning needs. We would like all staff to ensure that more of your lessons are like this.
- Teachers' written comments on your work vary in the detail they provide. We have asked all staff to ensure that written comments give you clear and helpful advice about how to improve.
- There is some variation in the progress you make in different subjects. We have asked all leaders in the school to ensure that you make similar, good progress in all your subjects.

You can all help to make these improvements by continuing to attend regularly and continuing to get actively involved in activities arranged for you by staff.

Yours sincerely  
Peter Sanderson  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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