

# Marlborough School

Marlborough Park Avenue, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 9DP

**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- In relation to their skills and understanding when they start at the school, students make good progress by the time they leave at the end of Year 11 and achieve well, all continuing on to the sixth form. Students make particularly good progress in the key skills of literacy and numeracy.
- The sixth form is good and students make good progress, which prepares them well for further education and life beyond the school.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons well and through a wide range of activities make sure all students are learning and improving their communication skills.
- Students enjoy their learning and the variety of activities they have. Their behaviour is good as a result of the effective support from all staff throughout the day.
- Students at Marlborough, and those based in the school's further education centre at Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School, say they are happy and feel safe at the school. This is confirmed by their parents and the school's own records.
- As result of a continuous focus on improvement by senior leaders and governors, the quality of teaching and learning, and students' achievement, have improved considerably since the previous inspection and continue to improve.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders and governors know the school well and also know what is needed to secure further improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On occasion, the use of and effectiveness of other adults who support learning do not ensure all students make the best possible progress.
- The checks on students' progress in the use of new technologies are not sharp enough.
- The quality of leadership in all subjects across the school is inconsistent.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, seeing nine teachers, one instructor and one higher level teaching assistant. Five of the lessons were observed jointly with the senior leadership team and every class was visited.
- A meeting was held with small groups of Year 11 and sixth form students. Meetings were also held with the senior leadership team, others with posts of responsibility, the Chair and Vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with the governor with responsibility for safeguarding.
- The lead inspector took account of 13 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's own recent parental and staff questionnaires. In addition, the lead inspector took account of a letter received from one parent.
- The inspectors observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, data on pupils' progress, documents used by leaders to check the school's work, governing body documentation and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sonja Joseph

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Marlborough School educates students who have severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. In addition many have medical, physical, sensory or language and communication difficulties. A few have challenging behaviours. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of sixth form students are based in the school's further education centre at Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School. A few sixth form students with more complex needs are based at the main school.
- Currently, the large majority of students are boys. The large majority are of White British heritage. A few come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. A few are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children from service families is well above the national average.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2011 and a new Chair of the Governing Body was elected shortly afterwards.
- No students at the school attend any alternative provision.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - improving the consistency of the use of adults who support students' learning
  - sharpening the quality of checking students' progress in the use of new technologies.
- Ensure quality of leadership in all subjects across the school is consistent.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Progress is good throughout the school. All achieve well irrespective of their individual special educational needs or disabilities. On leaving, all are prepared well for the next stage of their education and life beyond the school.
- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of students doing well in English and mathematics has increased and the achievement of these students at the end of Year 11 is above that found in similar schools. In addition, some students now achieve nationally recognised qualifications, both at the end of Year 11 and the end of sixth form. All students make good progress in improving their communication skills, for example signing and gestures, using switches, visual communication cards and new interactive technologies.
- There are no significant differences in the rates of progress made by boys and girls, different ethnic groups or those supported by pupil premium funding. Students eligible for free school meals achieve as well as others. The few looked after by the local authority also achieve equally as well as others.
- Detailed school records are effective in supporting students' learning and progress. These confirm progress has improved over time and continues to do so. There are regular reviews of the clear and achievable targets set for individuals. Teachers assess the progress being made towards them and, when appropriate, additional support is given.
- Students make significant strides in improving their personal development, becoming more confident and, as they get older, working independently. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders learn how to take turns and make choices. Their sensory development improves markedly as a result of highly effective lessons in the school's 'sensory' room. Students' physical development is supported effectively by well-planned sessions in the hydro-therapy pool and structured physical movement sessions.
- In most lessons seen students made good progress. In an English lesson, younger students built up sentences from individual words. They then successfully wrote short sentences about dinosaurs. In a sixth form lesson, students, supported by an adult, used personal computers to access the Internet to research the role of people who help others in society. This they then fed back to the whole group at the end of the lesson.
- On occasion, not all students make the best progress possible because of the lack of effective and consistent use of other adults who support learning in lessons.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school promotes good learning for all students, whatever their ability, gender, ethnicity or particular special educational needs. There are good opportunities in all lessons for students to practise and improve their communication skills. This was clearly evident in lessons where students were learning about the practices involved when visiting a Gurdwara (Sikh temple). Adults used a range of visual communication symbols and signing in order to check students' understanding and the progress being made towards the intended learning outcomes. The more able were encouraged successfully to respond verbally.
- Opening activities in lessons are used well, motivating students effectively. Activities are planned well to ensure the learning needs of all students are met. In a sixth form mathematics lesson, the class was organised effectively into three different groups, the more able students working with one adult while the other two groups rotated to complete the required activity. Effective questioning ensured students understood exactly what they had to do. In another mathematics lesson, a short 'bingo' game was used to enable students to recap and recognise the different coins in use. This enlivened learning and enabled students to then improve their understanding of the concepts of same/different and bigger/smaller.

- Teachers set demanding tasks. In a small autistic spectrum disorder group art lesson, each student had to choose three different objects and use hand-held technology to take photographs of these. Despite the many visual distractions in the art room, all, with sensitive support from the adults, successfully took photographs of a toy car, a paint brush and a small plastic brick. In addition, extra challenge was added by asking each individual to take a picture of a friend. One chose to take a close-up picture of the senior leader observing the lesson alongside the inspector!
- Although teaching is much improved since the previous inspection, there are instances when other adults supporting in lessons do not give students sufficient time to make their responses. In addition, checks on students' progress in the use of new technologies is not sharp enough.
- Students say they enjoy lessons and the large majority of parents feel their child is taught well.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students arrive in the morning looking forward to the school day, as seen in their smiling faces and friendly greetings to the staff welcoming them. Students remain positive throughout the day because they enjoy the variety of extra activities they can join in with. At the end of the day there are still smiling faces as students say their goodbyes to the staff.
- Unauthorised absence is very low and there have been no recent permanent exclusions. Instances where students have not been allowed to go to school for a short period because of poor behaviour have decreased considerably since the previous inspection.
- Well-established and consistent routines throughout the day result in good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Because of the poor weather during the inspection, students stayed indoors during break times and lunchtimes. They took to this change of routine with ease, as they did with the changed arrangements on arriving in the morning. During lunch, students get along well with one another and communicate well with the adults supervising them.
- Students' attitudes to learning are very positive, especially where teachers make learning interesting as a result of providing a variety of well-chosen tasks and activities. In a food technology lesson, students responded very well to praise and were clearly delighted at having successfully made a pizza.
- In lessons, no poor behaviour was seen. Where the odd frustration arises, staff deal with this in a calm and sensitive way, thus ensuring the learning of others is not interrupted. In a lesson in the sensory room, all behaved sensibly and responded well to the activities provided. One student was clearly delighted at seeing his face projected on the wall, which then inspired him to stay on task throughout.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View and the school's latest survey agreed that their children were happy at the school and that the school keeps their children safe. Staff also confirm this view. Students too say they are safe and that adults will listen to any concerns they may have.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Strong and improved leadership since the previous inspection has ensured all staff are committed to wanting the best outcomes possible for all students. The new headteacher and her senior leaders, supported by governors, are effective in driving improvements. Rigorous checking of how well the school is doing is used to decide key areas for further improvement. Sixth form provision is well led and managed. The quality of leadership of subjects varies.
- Achievement and the quality of teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. Senior leaders check carefully the quality of teaching and learning. They then set teachers targets to improve the quality of their work and make recommendations as to whether they should be given more responsibilities or have more training opportunities.
- The school's commitment to equality ensures all students, including those whose circumstances

have made them vulnerable, make good progress in their learning and personal development. This is evident in students' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships throughout the school are good, with no evidence of any instances of discrimination. The curriculum, matching that found in mainstream schools, makes sure everyone has the chance to succeed.

- The school works closely with parents, which is evident from their responses to Parent View and the school's own recent survey.
- The school works highly effectively with other professionals to support the need of students and with the local grammar school to enrich the curriculum for Marlborough sixth formers.
- The local authority knows the school well, having worked closely with it since the previous inspection and appointment of the new headteacher.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has improved since the previous inspection and, as a result of training, is now effective and supportive. It holds the school to account for its performance and students' outcomes, having a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how well students are achieving. It checks the performance of the headteacher and how well senior leaders in turn check staff in relation to performance, professional development and pay. In addition to ensuring national requirements are met and safeguarding procedures are fully in place, the governing body has raised its profile among the parents. The finance committee oversees the allocation and use of pupil premium funding. In 2011–12 it was used for new technology hardware, which improved students' verbal and non-verbal achievements in literacy and numeracy. Current pupil premium funding has been used to provide further new technology, hardware and software, part-fund a family support worker, train staff further in behaviour management and provide more support for students' personal development.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101487
<b>Local authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	404762

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	25
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Lakey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Lee
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2–3 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8300 6896
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