

# The Magna Carta School

Thorpe Road, Staines, TW18 3HJ

**Inspection dates** 16–17 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Students make good progress and this increases rapidly as they mature through the school. As a result, they achieve well.
- Teaching in the majority of lessons is at least good, and improving.
- Students behave well around the school. Their conduct, manners and punctuality are good. They are courteous to adults, welcoming to visitors and respectful of one another.
- Students say they feel safe at school and have a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- The headteacher and the senior leadership team have a clear vision for the direction of the school. Their actions have brought about improvements to standards of teaching and students' achievement and they have the ambition to take them to the very highest levels.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not all well planned and so not all students' learning needs are met.
- Teachers do not consistently provide written feedback to students about the next steps in their learning.
- Some students, including the more vulnerable and those with special educational needs, do not always attend school regularly.
- Some subject and other leaders do not always specify weaknesses in marking and assessment when checking other teachers' work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 53 lessons or part lessons, involving more than half of the teachers. A small number were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, staff, including senior and other managers, members of the governing body, including the Chair, and the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, including the extensive provision it makes for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- They looked at a number of documents, including information about safeguarding, the school’s own data on students’ current progress and parents’ and carers’ views, its view of itself and records of monitoring in relation to teaching, students’ behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors observed students’ workbooks in lessons as well as an appropriate selection made at random in order to help evaluate the progress made by students over time. A substantial number of exercise books from a range of teaching sets were tracked against students’ individual progress data.
- Inspectors took account of the 109 responses to the online Parent View survey and considered the 77 responses made by staff in the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Haydn Evans, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Najoud Ensaff	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Jones	Additional Inspector
Michael Lafford	Additional Inspector
Karen Roche	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an above-average sized secondary school.
- The Magna Carta School converted to become an academy school in August 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- A very small proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest groups represented are of Asian heritage.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the Year 7 'catch up premium' is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school uses alternative provision at the Kingsway Centre for students at risk of exclusion, as well as the college at Brooklands for work-related courses.

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

- Improve achievement and the quality of teaching by making sure that all:
  - teaching is well planned so that all students' learning needs are met
  - teachers agree how they give written feedback to students so that all students are clear about what they should do to improve their work
  - students, especially those regarded as vulnerable and disabled students and those who have special educational needs, attend school regularly
  - subject and other leaders specify weaknesses in marking and assessment precisely when they are checking the effectiveness of the work of the teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of students is good

- Students join the school with average attainment. They make good progress so that by the end of Year 11, attainment is above average. Students are not entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Student achievement is not outstanding as not all students are making rapid and sustained progress. This is partly because a number of students are unclear about how to improve their learning. Teachers do not give sufficient guidance to students in their exercise books about how to improve their work.
- The school's examination results are on course to improve substantially. This is because of the raised expectations that senior leaders have of teaching and achievement. The school's more robust tracking of student progress also picks up any underachievement more rapidly.
- Students are encouraged to read as often as possible. Those in Year 7 eligible for the catch-up premium receive targeted literacy support from literacy coordinators which enables them to keep up with their peers.
- Students are generally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment and the proportion who leave the school in education, training or work is significantly above average.
- The rapid rates of progress in Years 10 and 11 are set to continue. These are based upon the tracking information on students' progress. The school's own data and written work show that students make good progress over time.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those of Asian heritage, achieve well. This is because they are supported by the school's ethos of independent and collaborative learning.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below that of similar students nationally. This is because until recently, student tracking has not been sufficiently robust. However, the gap is narrowing rapidly.
- Students who make use of alternative provision achieve well because of the specialist support they receive.
- A small group of students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium do not achieve well. In 2012, they achieved about a grade lower than the average for students nationally in English and mathematics. However, by means of more targeted support, the school is successfully narrowing the gap between these students and others.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is characterised by good pace and challenge. It is supported by the good subject knowledge of teachers and their positive relationships with students.
- Teachers make effective use of individual targets for students, especially throughout Key Stage 4, which helps to accelerate the pace of learning.
- Technology is used well to enrich teachers' explanations and to support students' learning. For example, in mathematics and science, it helps to engage students and sustain their interest throughout the lesson by animating teachers' explanations and providing illustration for a variety of topics.
- In the best lessons, teachers skilfully question and challenge students at pace in order to elicit explanations that improve their learning and understanding. Students are encouraged to be active and develop their understanding by collaborating with each other as well as working independently of the teacher.
- For example, in a Year 7 science lesson students were required to study forms of energy. They were asked to identify a range of energy forms from a DVD and they worked collaboratively on this. The teacher acted as facilitator, skilfully drawing together the findings from the students. As a result, they were quickly able to develop an understanding of a difficult concept almost independently of the teacher.

- Students are encouraged to find things out for themselves and to collaborate, for example in assessing the quality of their own and one another's work.
- Some teaching is not well planned because not all students' learning needs are accounted for.
- Teachers' expectations about students' progress are generally high, as illustrated by classroom discussions. Students are confident in holding a dialogue with their teachers. The effect is that in the vast majority of lessons observed, including key subjects like mathematics, modern languages and science, the discussion enabled students to learn independently.
- The teaching of students who use alternative provision is good. This is because it is directed at their specific learning needs.

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

- Students typically have good and, in some cases, exemplary attitudes to learning, as when they are working independently of their teacher. These make a significant contribution to their improving achievement.
- Students' behaviour in a range of teaching groups and settings is mostly good and often excellent. Their behaviour around the school is good. They are polite to adults, helpful to visitors and generally respectful of one another. There is a positive ethos in the school. Corridors and recreational areas are orderly, respectful and free from overt supervision by senior leaders.
- The majority of parents, carers, staff and students comment very positively about both the behaviour and safety at the school.
- The enrichment programme, together with students' personal, social and health education, helps to promote equal opportunities and develop a cohesive community with a tolerance toward others. The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Students have an excellent understanding of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Students say that any bullying or harassment is dealt with discreetly and effectively. There are very few incidents but the school's high profile on bullying is pre-emptive. For example, the school has appointed anti-bullying ambassadors. These are well known throughout the school as students who can be approached if individuals have a concern.
- Students have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. This is demonstrated by their very high standards of behaviour around the site and in lessons. However, there are occasions when students can become distracted in their learning. This tends to arise when teaching is not well planned and independent learning is not well managed by the teacher.
- Students are punctual to school and to their lessons. However, the rate of attendance is slightly below average and the proportion of students persistently absent is correspondingly above average. The attendance of groups of students considered vulnerable and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and has not improved this academic year because more focused support is necessary. The school has made this a priority for the new academic year.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is well supported by his colleagues. This is seen in the way the school manages the performance of teachers, based upon accountability and relevant training, which has improved the performance of individual staff.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team have high expectations of staff. Their approach to improving the achievement and personal development of all groups of students is determined. This is illustrated by the school's success in rapidly improving students' progress in English over the past year. Students are on course to make substantial increases in attainment.
- Some subject and other leaders do not identify deficiencies in marking and assessment frequently enough when they check teachers' work. Proposed changes to the school's monitoring and evaluation policy are relevant to resolving this issue.
- Senior leaders have been successful in raising standards of teaching by the systematic use of in-service training and teachers observing one another teach.
- The school's curriculum is effective and reviewed annually to meet the needs of all groups of students. Students with moderate learning difficulties and disabled students and those who have special educational needs are now made a priority. This is having a positive impact on the school's results.
- Curriculum enrichment, including a broad range of out-of-hours activities, visits and community-based projects, enhance students' achievement and contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's success in promoting equality of opportunity is seen in the increasing progress made by all groups of students and the narrowing of the attainment gap between those eligible for pupil premium funding, those who have special educational needs and the rest of the students.
- The school works well with parents and carers, as indicated by the positive response from Parent View, showing that, in a significant sample, almost all of the parents and carers would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this effective school.
- **The governance of the school is effective:**
  - Governors have a clear vision for their role in improving the school. They make effective use of progress data to check the impact of teaching on raising students' attainment and are able to hold the headteacher and senior leaders to account. They have received the relevant training to enable them to effectively fulfil their statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding. They make sure that financial resources are managed properly. Governors have a good understanding of how teachers' performance is managed and make sure that pay progression takes account of teachers' individual achievements in relation to their targets. They know the strengths and areas of weakness in teaching, partly through their conversations with the headteacher. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. They are strongly supportive of the school's strategy for narrowing the attainment gap between different groups of students. Governors are aware of how the school uses the pupil premium to improve eligible students' progress. They are able to challenge senior leaders through the committee meetings that take place each term and also the regular visits of link governors to the school. This generally has a positive effect on the performance of the school.

## 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>	137116
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	412828

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy convertor
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of students</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of students</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of students on the school roll</b>	1199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tim Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01784 454320
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