

# Marple Hall School A

## Specialist Language College

Hill Top Drive, Marple, Stockport, Cheshire, SK6 6LB

**Inspection dates** 26–27 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Students' GCSE attainment has been consistently above the national average for the last three years. Results in 2013 show this trend has continued and that students' progress is good, given their starting points, across a range of subjects, in particular mathematics.
- The proportion of good and outstanding teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers have high expectations and provide good opportunities for students' individual, paired and small group working.
- Behaviour is improving rapidly and students are mostly courteous, polite and helpful.
- Students and their parents report that students feel happy and safe at the school. Attendance is above average and improving.
- School leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the school's strengths. They have improved achievement, teaching and behaviour since the previous inspection and have the capacity to develop the school still further.
- The school offers many opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, many students enjoy participating in the diverse range of performing and expressive arts offered by the school, including popular school productions.

#### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students are not yet making outstanding progress over time because there is not yet sufficient outstanding teaching and a small number of lessons still require improvement.
- Although homework is regularly set in many subjects, the quality of the tasks insufficiently develops students' desire to learn independently or enquire more deeply.
- New policies to encourage a more positive learning climate and stronger sense of school community are not yet fully embedded and are inconsistently applied by a few teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 part-lessons, during which they judged students’ learning and the effectiveness of teachers and teaching assistants. Three lessons were jointly observed by inspectors and members of the school’s senior leadership group.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, including one group representing those who are educated part-time at Stockport College.
- Separate discussions were held with three members of the governing body, a representative from Stockport local authority, and senior and middle leaders.
- During the inspection, inspectors scrutinised students’ work in lessons, monitored the behaviour of students during and between lessons, and listened to students read.
- School leaders distributed the optional staff survey provided by Ofsted and inspectors considered the views of 83 school employees who responded.
- Inspectors considered 128 responses to Parent View available online. They also considered the views of a very few parents who contacted the inspection team directly during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation and policies including the school’s own data on achievement and student tracking, action plans, governing body minutes, logs of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the school’s procedures for safeguarding students.

## Inspection team

Nigel Pressnell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector
James Kidd	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Marple Hall School is a much larger than average size secondary school, accommodated on a large campus site.
- The school is designated a specialist language college.
- Most of the students attending the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of students from ethnic minorities and those for whom English is not their first language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported at school action broadly matches the national average. Those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special education needs are a smaller proportion than found nationally.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and students who are looked after by the local authority) is lower than the national average.
- The school's new headteacher has been in post since September 2013. He was previously deputy headteacher at the school.
- A very small number of students, mostly in Key Stage 4, are educated part-time at Stockport College for one day per week.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching and thereby secure students' outstanding progress over time by:
  - encouraging students' independent learning in lessons and beyond, with tasks that are personalised, purposeful and challenging
  - ensuring all teachers check students' knowledge and understanding regularly in order to adapt teaching so that students make rapid progress in every lesson
  - using homework more effectively to consolidate learning between lessons, prepare in advance for future lessons, or deepen learning.
- Further encourage a positive learning environment and stronger sense of community by:
  - engaging the whole-school community in maintaining consistently high expectations
  - consistently applying school policies that fully reward the effort and achievement of all students.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because all groups of students make good progress from their starting points to reach standards that are consistently higher than the national average by the end of Year 11. The good achievement observed in most lessons during the inspection confirms this.
- Students arrive at Marple Hall School with attainment that is above the national average. They mostly make expected or better than expected progress and achieve well, including in English and mathematics. Achievement improved particularly rapidly in mathematics in 2013 at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- In 2013, 75% of students achieved five or more GCSE grades A\*–C including English and mathematics. Students attain highly in a broad range of subjects, including those subjects contributing to the English Baccalaureate.
- The most-able students, including those identified as gifted and talented, make good progress across a broad range of subjects including English and mathematics. Forty per cent of students gained three or more A\*–A GCSE grades in 2013 and more than one third of students who took art, drama, geography, history, Italian, media, biology, chemistry and physics achieved an A\* to A grade.
- Achievement over time in English and mathematics has been good and inspectors observed good teaching overall in these subjects during the inspection. As a result, students were found to be making good progress with reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of students receiving additional funding through the pupil premium is good. In 2013, this group of students formed approximately 15% of Year 11. The gap between these students and others in the school is shown to be closing in current school data in English and particularly mathematics, where the proportion making expected progress was much higher than found nationally for this group. This means that the one GCSE grade gap in English, and one and a half GCSE gaps in mathematics, seen in 2012 between students known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates, have reduced.
- The school's policy of early entry for GCSE examinations is regularly reviewed by governors and senior leaders. In modern foreign languages, early entry in Year 9 results in good outcomes for students of all abilities and demonstrates both the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and the positive impact of its specialist designation. Early entry for English and mathematics has contributed positively to the proportion of students attaining higher grades by the end of Year 11.
- The school uses pupil premium funding to provide additional classroom support, counselling, and parental liaison. The school has enhanced attendance tracking and academic monitoring for pupil premium students. As a result, the gap between these students and others in the school is shown to be narrowing in current school data, both in English and especially in mathematics.
- The outcomes for disabled students and those with special educational needs are good. The achievement of those supported at school action has continually improved over the last three years, with these students attaining 45% A\*–C within English and mathematics in 2013. The attainment of those supported at school action plus has also notably improved this year.
- The achievement of the small number of students attending off-site provision is tracked effectively by senior and middle leaders to ensure it complements their studies in school. The school constantly reviews their performance to maximise their success in achieving a range of Level 2 qualifications.
- Only a very small number of students do not enter employment and/or remain in education or training at the conclusion of their education. Inspectors observed Year 11 students receiving good careers guidance and advice on post-16 education during their form tutor time.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is good over time and a proportion of that seen during the inspection was outstanding. Inspectors found no lesson to be inadequate, although teaching still requires improvement in a few cases.
- In the typically good lessons observed, teachers planned opportunities for effective individual, paired and small-group work. They encouraged students to develop and discuss their ideas, find solutions or explain their reasoning. Teachers were seen to make use of good questioning to challenge students and probe their understanding. For example, in one lesson the teacher reviewed students' knowledge as the lesson progressed and it was clear that key learning points had been secured before the lesson moved on.
- Where inspectors observed outstanding teaching, this was characterised by excellent behaviour and high levels of student participation, a strong focus on teaching matching the lesson objective, teachers' excellent subject knowledge, and clear development of literacy skills, including reading. This meant that students of all abilities quickly acquired new knowledge.
- In the small number of lessons where teaching was less effective, the pace of learning was too slow, students were insufficiently challenged, or the tasks set did not allow students to make good progress given their starting points. In some instances, students were not given enough chance to contribute to lessons by speaking for themselves and they were not encouraged to take initiative in their own learning.
- Regular and frequent marking, including the opportunity for students to respond to teachers' feedback, was evident in many books but is not yet embedded in the practice of every teacher. Inspectors observed good use of oral feedback providing students with a more immediate indication of where they were working well and how they could improve.
- Students make good use of their planners and homework is widely set. However, the regularity and quality of the tasks provided by some teachers are variable; consequently, the opportunity to extend students' learning and/or encourage their enquiry is not always sufficiently developed.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning and progress of the individual students or small groups to whom they are attached. In the best lessons, teaching assistants were working in close collaboration with teachers in subjects to which they are attached. This means that the outcomes expected for individual students are well managed and based on an extensive analysis of their needs.

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

- A large proportion of parents and carers responding to the online Parent View survey indicate they believe their children to be happy, safe and well cared for at Marple Hall School. Students confirm this view and report that instances of bullying are rare and dealt with effectively by the school. Students have a good understanding of e-safety and how to maintain their well-being when using information and communication technology.
- Inspectors found most students to be courteous, polite and helpful. Movement around the school site was observed to be calm even at the busiest times, and students treat the school's pleasant environment with respect.
- Students' behaviour in lessons was observed to be overwhelmingly good although in some instances, students, while compliant, lacked self-motivation, drive or a thirst to acquire new knowledge.
- Attendance has improved for all groups of students, including those in more vulnerable circumstances. Attendance is higher than the national average for similar secondary schools. Punctuality to school and between lessons has improved because of the school's good systems for promoting attendance.
- The school has recently introduced a new behaviour management policy, which most teachers are enforcing rigorously. Many parents, students and staff believe that behaviour has improved rapidly at the school as a consequence and inspectors agree. The leadership team recognises the fine balance between maintaining consistently high expectations of behaviour and sensitively

establishing a positive climate for learning and sense of community.

- Rates of exclusion are low and instances of permanent exclusion very rare. The school's Flexible Learning Area very effectively supports and moderates the behaviour of a few students requiring specialist and affirming support.

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

- The new headteacher has a sound vision for the future of Marple Hall School and has already won the strong support of staff in pursuing high expectations of students in both their academic achievement and behaviour. The school is setting itself challenging targets.
- The school's leadership and management have a good understanding of the school's many strengths and have correctly identified areas for the school's continued improvement through their accurate self-evaluation and associated action planning. School leaders have responded to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report and, through their actions, positively addressed them.
- School leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching, for example, through focused professional development for newly qualified teachers, middle leaders and others. This has led to more effective dissemination of best practice between staff so that students now make good progress over time.
- Curriculum leaders, heads of year and others responsible for tracking students' performance have developed good systems for monitoring the performance of individual and groups of students. This means that teachers are regularly able to review students' progress and make use of the school's clear strategies to maximise the attendance and achievement of those students at risk of making less progress.
- Performance management systems are effective and teachers express their appreciation of the high quality professional training provided by the school. The school works closely with the local authority to develop leadership capacity, support school self-evaluation and in training school governors.
- The procedures for safeguarding meet requirements. The school has recently taken measures to improve the external security of the school site.
- The curriculum appropriately meets the needs of students and the broad range of extra-curricular opportunities, alongside the school's extensive personal, social, health and economic education programme (PSHEE), develops students' wider experience. For example, the school tackles discrimination and promotes equal opportunity through its students' participation in educational activities associated with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Month.
- The school effectively promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Large numbers of students participate in the wide range of cultural and sporting opportunities on offer. The school develops students' multicultural awareness and promotes anti-racism, for example, through assemblies and a partnership with a Manchester school serving a more ethnically diverse catchment area.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors provide both good challenge and support for the school and its leadership. They are knowledgeable about the progress and attainment of students and make good use of the training they have received in interpreting school data to evaluate the quality of teaching in the school. The Chair of the Governing Body is well informed and uses her experience of safeguarding and pupil premium spending to ensure the school's compliance with best practice. Governors listen to the views of parents and are keen to further develop initiatives to involve those parents who find working with the school more difficult. The governing body manages the school's finances and resources with prudence and has a good appreciation of its role in overseeing performance management and the link to any staff salary increases.

## 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>	106138
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	426181

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,410
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Shan Alexander
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joe Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4277966
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