

Marshalls Park School

Pettits Lane, Romford, Essex, RM1 4EH

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too few students make good progress in their studies.
- Some students, particularly boys, find it more challenging to make progress because of their weak skills in reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching varies too much, and too often teachers do not provide suitable work to keep students of all abilities, especially the more able, working at full stretch.
- Attendance has remained average for several years and is not rising rapidly enough.
- Some middle leaders and managers are less accurate than senior leaders in their evaluations of the impact of teaching on learning. That leads sometimes to a slightly more generous view of teaching than is helpful to the teachers.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' conduct around the school is good and the students feel extremely safe. They feel valued and cared for and show much respect for others.
- Achievement in some subjects, including mathematics and drama, is consistently good and better. English results have improved significantly this year.
- Senior leaders have established good systems for improving the quality of teaching and learning which are having an impact. As a result, students who completed their examinations this year made better progress than students who took GCSEs in previous years.
- Governors challenge senior leaders well, resulting in improvements to students' achievements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 34 lessons, of which almost one third were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to lessons and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, leaders and managers, and groups of staff.
- The team also held meetings with five groups of students, representing all age groups. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and reviewed a range of documents, including the school’s own evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement plan and statistical information about students’ achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- The team considered the 212 responses to the online Parent View survey and 11 responses to the staff questionnaires. Additional comments were received from parents, and consideration was given to the views expressed by parents in response to the school’s own survey.

Inspection team

Robert Ridout, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Hallett

Additional Inspector

Kevin Morris

Additional Inspector

Vic Caffey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Marshalls Park School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school, with fewer girls than boys.
- The school holds a specialism in the performing arts.
- The majority of the students are from White British, Irish or other White or Mixed White backgrounds and the vast majority speak English as their first language. Approximately one tenth of students are from other minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is in line with the national average. This is additional government funding to support those known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and service children.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A small number of students spend part of their time studying at Havering College or at Motorvations.
- The school meets 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?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching further to ensure that more students, especially the boys and the more able, make better progress in all subjects by:
 - making full use of data about students' progress to ensure that learning activities help the students to move on to the highest levels they can
 - providing activities that take account of the particular needs of different students in the class with regard to the progress they can make
 - ensuring that feedback to teachers focuses rigorously on ways to improve students' progress.
- Increase levels of attendance of students from those groups whose circumstances make them vulnerable, further raising the awareness of parents of the importance of good attendance'
- Build on the improving quality of leadership and management by ensuring that all middle leaders further improve on the quality of teaching by being equally rigorous in evaluating the impact of teaching on the students' learning in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2011 and 2012, the proportion of students, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, getting five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was broadly in line with the national average. Their achievement from starting points required improvement, particularly in English and science. In contrast, students made good progress in mathematics.
- Progress in lessons still varies too much because teaching is not consistently good. Too many lessons do not include activities that always interest and engage the boys or are demanding enough to challenge the most-able students. As a consequence, these students are not all reaching the standards they are capable of.
- The school makes good use of the information it collects about how well students are doing and identifies what extra help individuals might benefit from. This extra help has been effective in ensuring that disabled students and those who have special educational needs make better progress than other students. However, the variations made by boys especially mean that the school's promotion of equal opportunities requires improvement.
- In 2013, while there remained variations between some subjects, attainment and achievement have risen in most areas. Students joined Year 7 with levels of attainment that were below the national average and by the time they left had made good progress in many subjects including English and mathematics. Girls outperformed boys.
- Data provided by the school show that many younger students are making better progress in their early years at the school because of actions taken to support their learning. Additional teachers in science, mathematics and English have been employed to reduce class sizes and accelerate learning. Parents strongly agree that their children are now making better progress.
- The school has had a policy of early GCSE entry in subjects including English, mathematics and drama. This has helped some students to gain a qualification before the end of Year 11 and pursue other courses including their AS studies. More-able students made good progress in English in 2013. The proportion attaining higher grades A* and A in mathematics declined, but these students had done well in previous years.
- The progress of students known to be eligible for free school meals or supported by the pupil premium was slower than that of other Year 11 students in 2012. The gap in attainment between this group and other students, as indicated by their average GCSE point scores, has narrowed in both mathematics and English. The progress of these students has similarly accelerated in the last year such that they are now broadly in line with their peers.
- The school uses its catch-up funding well to support students new to the school. Mentors, additional classroom assistants and one-to-one work are examples of best practice. The school has introduced a whole-school approach to reading, but provision to improve writing is less well developed. Library borrowing levels are increased, students say they enjoy and value the experience, but it is too early to see the full impact of this scheme.
- The progress made by students who attend courses in local colleges is monitored by the school. Their attendance and the progress they are making are similar to that of other students involved.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to promote good progress. Too often teachers' planning does not offer the right amount of challenge and support to all groups of students. Teaching is sometimes pitched only at the level of the average-ability students, so it is not demanding enough for the more-able students to make the rapid, sustained progress they are capable of.
- Teaching is also not sufficiently engaging enough for boys to make the same progress as girls of a similar ability. Students say that they learn better when doing activities. Examples of best

practice enjoyed by students include practical work in science and group or paired work such as that often seen in drama.

- Marking is sometimes too brief, but there are examples of good practice. For example, in a French lesson a teacher provided both verbal and written feedback, encouraging students to think of how to improve work.
- The school has a clear strategy for developing many aspects of literacy. Reading is promoted through the accelerated readers scheme and this has led to a 20% increase in library lending since last year, reflecting its success. There are examples of good practice of developing oral skills. For example, in a drama lesson, students were encouraged to use appropriate phrases when reporting their findings to each other. This good practice is not evident in all classes to encourage students to develop speaking and listening skills in different subjects.
- There are strengths in teaching. Relationships are usually helpful to learning. Teachers nurture good relationships in their classrooms and there is genuine respect between adults and students. There is a positive atmosphere for learning in the majority of classrooms and students talk fondly of their teachers.
- Teachers are confident and share this with their classes. Many teachers are clear about what they want students to learn. In the best lessons, teachers question students to check their understanding and encourage them to reflect and modify the work they are doing as a result. This was observed in a mathematics lesson when students were actively questioning each other and adapting their work to improve it.
- The skills of teaching assistants are often used well to support those who may be struggling, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs. In a history lesson, adults helped students to think, reflect and modify their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students feel very safe at school and can determine the risk to themselves and others in different situations.
- Positive relationships exist between both staff and students and students with other students. Behaviour is very calm, orderly and respectful both within lessons and around the school.
- Students are polite, cooperative and want to learn. Parents, staff and students all speak positively about behaviour and few concerns are expressed by any of the groups. The school is very inclusive and supports all young people to settle well and quickly into the learning environment.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because where teaching does not fully engage or interest students some do lose concentration.
- The school has clear policies for dealing with any low-level disruption. For the majority no interventions are required. Exclusions are falling as internal interventions are being used more frequently. Once put into place for students, behaviour improves.
- Students have a good awareness of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and the risks of using social network sites such as Facebook. Any instances of bullying or discrimination in the school are extremely rare and are dealt with very effectively.
- Attendance has improved in the last year but remains only slightly above the national average. Systems for raising parental awareness of the importance of attendance have been adopted and support is applied rigorously.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and governors exhibit high ambitions and expectations for their learning community. This is monitored regularly and is adding to the rapid improvements seen this year. This demonstrates that the school can improve further.

- The headteacher has a very clear purpose and a good understanding of the needs of the school, which has led to the rise in results this year. Leaders have a more realistic view of how well the school is doing and senior staff recognise the importance of improving teaching and have an accurate view of its quality. The school improvement plan sets out clear expectations of staff, who report that they are being held accountable for students' progress more rigorously.
 - Data on students' progress are collected regularly and the progress of individuals checked carefully in the frequent meetings between senior and team leaders. Ambitious targets based upon exceeding national levels are set in order to accelerate progress. The impact of this work is seen in the significant improvements secured in English this year, but this is not reflected in all subjects and for all groups of students.
 - The performance management and professional development of staff are focused on improving teaching and learning to ensure that the results of all students reflect their full potential. The headteacher and governing body have rigorously pursued this agenda in the last year and have robustly and successfully challenged weaker teaching despite the short-term difficulties.
 - Since the previous inspection, there has been a good start made in improving teaching. The majority of staff have a better understanding of the importance of the impact of teaching on students' progress. Objectives for teachers to improve their teaching have been tailored to meet their specific needs. They do not always focus sharply enough on the most important aspects for individuals to work on to raise student achievement further.
 - Subject leadership is strengthening, particularly in English and mathematics. Both subject leaders have high aspirations for their students, a good understanding of high quality teaching and learning and have played their full part in bringing about improvements. A very small minority of team leaders do not share this level of understanding. They require some further training so they can effectively contribute fully to the school's improvement.
 - The curriculum is strong in the breadth and depth of GCSE subjects offered. There has been positive action to address students' literacy needs through the school's lifelong learning programme. This includes a whole-school approach to reading in dedicated teaching and tutor time, as well as specific support for weaker Years 7 and 8 students.
 - Pupil premium funding supports a good range of extra help for students, including support by classroom assistants, mentoring and additional help where appropriate. The positive impact has been significant this year.
 - Historically, the governing body has not acted quickly enough to ensure senior leaders bring about the improvements required in achievement and teaching. Over the last year, the governing body has been strengthened by a number of newly appointed governors, including a new Chair of the Governing Body. The governing body has received training to ensure that its members have the required skills to better hold school leaders to account for students' achievement, and results this year have significantly improved.
 - Local authority support for the school and governors is having an impact. The support provided has helped the school gain a more accurate picture of the quality of teaching. Governors are also better able to use data and have become more involved in managing the performance of teachers.
 - The promotion of all aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively within the school. It is at the heart of its work helping create the harmonious and cohesive learning environment in which the vast majority thrive. Teachers frequently contact parents to give praise for students' work and celebrate improving progress.
 - Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The current governing body is committed to the school and is passionate about its support. The governors are now able to ask the key questions of the school leadership to gain a precise picture of how well students are achieving, including the impact of how funds are spent. They know the strengths and weaknesses of subject areas in the school and have taken strategic steps through the use of performance management to consolidate and improve as necessary.
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Teachers' performance is linked to pay progression. The governing body has a full understanding of the pupil premium funding and its impact on achievement of eligible students.

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

Unique reference number	102345
Local authority	Havering
Inspection number	425565

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	860
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Burr
Headteacher	Pamela Mason
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 January 2012
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