

Marine Academy Plymouth

Trevithick Road, Plymouth, Devon PL5 2AF

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have failed to halt the decline in standards. In 2017, outcomes at key stage 4 were significantly below the national average.
- Pupils have been underachieving compared with pupils of similar ability for the past four years.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is significantly below that of other pupils nationally.
- Middle leaders have not monitored teaching well. As a result, the quality of teaching is too variable. Pupils' experiences and success rates are too inconsistent.
- The most able, including the most able disadvantaged, pupils, are not challenged sufficiently in their learning.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is not checked in Years 7, 8 and 9. Teaching is not planned to cater for these pupils' needs.
- The attendance of pupils is poor. Too many pupils are not coming to school on a regular basis.

The school has the following strengths

- Safeguarding is effective. There is a strong culture of making sure that the most vulnerable pupils are safe.
- The recent changes to the way the behaviour of pupils is managed have been successful. Learning is rarely disrupted now.
- Recent appointments to the leadership team have made a good impact in a very short time.
- Governors have put in measures to halt the decline in standards.
- Students studying vocational subjects in the sixth form successfully make progress.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and governors must ensure that:
 - teachers' expectations are raised, so that all pupils in the main school and the sixth form reach their potential
 - middle leaders are trained in holding their teams to account so that teaching and learning ensures that pupils make rapid progress
 - the quality of teaching is monitored and evaluated effectively
 - teaching challenges the most able and the most able disadvantaged to reach higher grades
 - teaching of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities caters for their needs so that their progress improves
 - funding for disadvantaged pupils focuses on diminishing the differences between their outcomes and those of others nationally
 - attendance improves and persistent absence reduces to be at least in line with the national averages overall and for pupil groups.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not held teachers to account well. As a result, teaching was poor in several subjects. Pupils were failing to achieve their potential. Too few of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils did work that challenged them.
- Leaders had not done enough to tackle disruptive behaviour successfully. This meant that teachers were focusing on containing behaviour and not promoting pupils' progress.
- Leaders have accepted inaccurate assessments of pupils' progress. Teachers' predictions have been overgenerous. The assessment of pupils' potential to succeed in examinations at key stage 4 was not based on valid information.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not checked effectively. In particular, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has not provided teachers with information about the specific needs of pupils in key stage 3.
- Leaders did not react quickly to poor attendance and its effect on pupils' learning. This year, they have appointed additional staff to improve attendance. There are signs of improvement in attendance but it is still lower than the national averages.
- The processes for managing the performance of teachers have been changed for the better. This year, more stringent targets are set that relate to pupils making good progress. Leaders, supported by the trustees, are holding teachers to account for these and there are signs of better pupils' progress already.
- Middle leaders are receiving training for their roles. They are more secure in assessing pupils' progress as a result. In addition, they are learning to support their teams and monitor their work. The impact of this is yet to be measured.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils experience the same trips and residential visits as their peers. This is providing disadvantaged pupils with more confidence which supports them well in their learning.
- The Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium has been used to secure modest improvements in pupils' reading and spelling because the leader for English is evaluating this work carefully.
- In 2016, governors recognised the need to halt the decline in standards of teaching, pupils' outcomes and behaviour. Leadership has been strengthened, for example to oversee improvements in pupils' behaviour. Clear procedures for behaviour are in place now and pupils understand what is expected of them. Teachers use the procedures consistently and there is a marked improvement in behaviour in classrooms.
- A leader to improve teaching and learning joined the school in September 2017. Since then, systems for improving the quality of teaching have strengthened. Training has been given to improve planning and teachers now have a greater awareness of pupils' individual needs. Senior leaders now check teachers' work more closely.
- Governors also appointed an executive consultant to support the work of the leadership team. Coaching and support for leaders are well received, although have not had time

to have substantial impact yet.

- The curriculum includes a range of subjects, vocational and academic. Pupils follow pathways that allow them to progress onto further education, employment or training. Maritime links in the city provide excellent extra-curricular experiences, including those connected with Plymouth University and the aquarium.
- Leaders ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They understand the rule of law and are clear about the importance of respecting equality and diversity. The curriculum for developing social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness has had a recent overhaul to ensure that it meets pupils' needs more effectively. Pupils learn about a variety of topics in well-delivered assemblies. Discussion of these topics in tutor time is relatively new but pupils enjoy this opportunity to express their opinions and listen to others.

Governance of the school

- Governors have reacted swiftly to the poor outcomes over the last two years. They understand their strategic role and carry it out unstintingly. The performance management of leaders has become more stringent. Targets are sharp, demanding and have clear consequences if not met.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and have appointed new leaders. They knew that leadership needed extra capacity because of the enormity of the improvement tasks it faced.
- The oversight of additional funding has not been stringent until the current year. There is, now, more focus on improving learning for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Governors and leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are of a high quality and detailed. The school has policies to ensure that pupils are well protected. All staff, including governors, undertake training in child protection. The checks undertaken on staff, visitors and in recruitment are stringent. Staff know how to keep pupils safe from abuse, sexual exploitation and from the influence of radical or extreme views.
- The designated safeguarding leads work together closely. This is important because of the numbers of vulnerable pupils and those who have complex needs. Collectively, they make sure that pupils are safe and secure in school and in the alternative provision. The designated safeguarding leads work determinedly, yet sensitively, with pupils, parents and external agencies. They support the most vulnerable pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and part of the school's culture.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers' planning over time has not been based on an accurate evaluation of pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, teachers have not challenged the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils. Equally, they have not provided effective support for pupils with lower ability so that they can achieve well.
- Teaching is not successful in helping pupils catch up when behind in their work. Over time, poor assessment has not provided teachers with the information they need. Although leaders changed the assessment processes in September 2017, it is too early to tell if this has made a difference.
- Too many teachers do not follow the school's marking policy. Too many middle leaders have not checked this. Consequently, some pupils' work is scrappy and incomplete. The work is not a useful revision resource for future assessments.
- Lower-ability pupils do not know how to correct basic mistakes in their writing, such as in the placement of capital letters and full stops. This lack of understanding means that they do not have the skills and knowledge to develop more sophisticated punctuation and grammar correctly.
- The teaching of mathematics is weak. Pupils are not developing skills proficiently for future problem-solving.
- There are no whole-school policies for literacy and numeracy. Practice in these important areas is inconsistent in the wider curriculum and this means that pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Some pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils' learning. However, the focus has not been sharp enough. Too many disadvantaged pupils have not made adequate progress.
- The majority of pupils read fluently. Pupils read in tutor time as well as in English and other lessons. Pupils who arrive in Year 7 with low reading ages have extra reading opportunities. These pupils are improving slowly.
- Since September 2017, improvements to teaching are starting to be more evident. Greater consistency in teachers' planning is meeting the needs of more pupils during day-to-day activities. Leaders are aware that much more work is required to ensure that teaching exerts maximum influence on pupils' progress over time.
- Parents receive useful reports on their children's progress termly. Reports provide general information on how pupils are progressing in subjects. There are statements on areas to improve in each subject. The reports also highlight whether pupils' attitudes to learning are good or not.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are not yet successful learners because teaching is weak. Most pupils show a willingness to engage and learn. Teachers are not providing sufficient opportunities for

pupils to gain self-confidence in their learning.

- Pupils in the main school are not taught about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. There is not enough discussion on practices about the coming of age rituals in different cultures.
- Pupils express disappointment at the lack of information they receive on sexual and mental health issues. Although the school has changed the tutorial programme to address this, there is a legacy that has left some older pupils without a reasonable knowledge of these aspects of personal development.
- One effective change following the implementation of the behaviour policy is the reduction in physical bullying. Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They understand the value of restorative approaches. Nevertheless, instances of verbal bullying still need further attention.
- Pupils know about e-safety and how to stay safe online.
- Leaders care for the most vulnerable pupils well. They know the pupils' individual circumstances. Leaders adapt learning opportunities to suit their needs. Pupils who attend alternative provision feel positive about the progress they make.
- Links with external agencies are good. Leaders use these resources effectively to secure support for pupils with complex needs.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are polite when meet singly or in small groups. However, in larger groups, they have a tendency towards less polite behaviour, such as barging past staff and other pupils.
- Behaviour outside is sometimes unruly. The younger pupils do not feel that all outside areas of the school are safe or well monitored by staff.
- Attendance is in the lowest 5% nationally and has been for some time. Recently, leaders have focused their attention on disadvantaged pupils who are not attending regularly. So far, however, improvements are not as fast as they need to be.
- Behaviour in lessons is improving as a result of new systems to manage it. Now, learning takes place in a calm environment. Low-level disruption to learning is rare. As a result of heightened expectations of behaviour, fixed-term exclusions rose initially but are starting to fall now, as pupils' behaviour improves.
- Nevertheless, there are still too many pupils in the isolation room during the school day. These pupils are not provided with suitable work and have to catch up when they return to lessons. This is not an effective system and impedes pupils' achievement. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to introduce more effective measures for pupils who persist with poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- In the examinations at the end of key stage 4 in 2017, pupils achieved, on average, at least a grade lower than other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils were less successful than other pupils in the school in 2017. They achieved well below other pupils nationally with similar starting points. In English and mathematics, the results were close to one and a half grades below.
- The most able and most able disadvantaged pupils were less successful than pupils with middle and low ability. The most able and most able disadvantaged pupils achieved results that were one and three quarters of a grade below those of other pupils nationally. Middle-ability pupils achieved a grade below. Low-ability pupils achieved half a grade below.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not receive sufficient support in lessons to ensure that they make adequate progress. Expectations for their achievement are not high enough. Teachers are not supported well by the SENCo. They are not provided with strategies to adapt their teaching for the individual needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not checked in Years 7, 8 and 9. Therefore, interventions are not happening swiftly when these pupils fall behind in their work.
- Current pupils' progress varies, depending on teachers' ability to assess and monitor work effectively.
- The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is good when taught in alternative provision.
- As a result of the underachievement that has been taking place for the past four years, pupils are not prepared well for their next steps in education, training or employment.
- Pupils receive impartial careers advice and guidance and this is an improving aspect of the work of the school. Nonetheless, older pupils said that they have not had enough guidance about future prospects. Pupils in Year 9 have not had any formal guidance prior to their choices for GCSEs.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Leaders of the sixth form do not use assessment information to raise standards effectively. Although there are processes to intervene when students slip behind in their work, these systems are not checked consistently.
- Teaching is too variable in the sixth form. The same inconsistencies exist in the sixth form that are seen in the main school.
- Students choose from a wide range of courses in Year 11. This year, however, some courses did not start in Year 12. The subjects were no longer offered because not enough students had picked them. This meant that students made last-minute decisions about staying at the school sixth form or picked different subjects. The school is moving to a confederated sixth-form structure with other schools in the city that should stop this from happening next year.
- There are large numbers of students retaking level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics. This is indicative of the underachievement of pupils at the end of Year 11. In their resits, students are more successful in English than they are in

mathematics.

- Students studying some vocational courses have benefited from work experience. For instance, students studying hair and beauty attend off-site work experience weekly. However, other students have not been offered work experience within their two years of study. This has been rectified for this year to ensure that every student will be able to go on work experience.
- Students receive careers guidance from tutors and an independent careers officer. Leaders know the students well and understand their interests. Despite this, several Year 13 students have not chosen their future pathway. Planning for careers, and preparation for life beyond school, is lacking intensity and motivation for some students.
- Students on academic courses have been less successful than those taking vocational subjects in the past. However, A-level outcomes in the summer examinations in 2017 improved.
- Of those students taking A levels, 60% went on to higher education. The links with the sponsor, Plymouth University, provide students with meaningful opportunities to consider potential courses and careers. The majority of students and disadvantaged students progressed onto education, employment or training at the end of Year 13.
- Students have been successful in a range of vocational qualifications. Students can study subjects from levels 1 to 3. This offer provides a seamless transition for students from Years 11 to 12.
- There is good use of alternative provision within the vocational curriculum. The school uses six providers. Leaders track students' attendance and progress well in these establishments. Good systems are in place to ensure that the achievement and welfare of students are paramount.
- Retention is good between Years 12 and 13. Few students leave. Those who do have found employment, changed to a course offered in another college, or moved. There are a very small number who have not yet found a suitable placement. They are in touch with Careers South West.
- Leaders prioritise the care and well-being of students. There is a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education programme delivered to students. The programme trains students in employability skills such as punctuality, attendance and conduct. Equally, students learn about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, child sexual exploitation and similar topics.
- Students report feeling safe. They have regular sessions on mindfulness and their emotional and physical well-being. Students feel well supported and are comfortable about asking for advice.

School details

Unique reference number	136166
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10044126

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	803
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	147
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Vikki Matthews
Principal	Nick Ward
Telephone number	01752 213 939
Website	www.marineacademy.org.uk
Email address	contact@marineacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about a named person for parents and visitors to contact initially; destination data of pupils and students; data for key stage 5 on average grade achieved, technical level qualifications achieved, comparison of achievements with the national average; a pupil premium plan for 2017; and details on the spending of the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about its scheme of delegation.
- This is a smaller than average secondary school with a sixth form.
- It has a higher proportion of girls, more pupils eligible for the pupil premium and more

pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan than the national average.

- The school uses six alternative providers: Aspire to Live, Achievement Training, Construction Training Southwest, Discovery College, Norpro Training and Southwest Art Warehouse.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In 2016, the 16 to 18 minimum standards were not met for academic qualifications.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 37 lessons, of which the majority were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- A wide sample of pupils' work, from all year groups and a range of subjects, was scrutinised.
- Inspectors talked with pupils from Years 7 to 11 and students from the sixth form in formal meetings, as well as with pupils informally across the site.
- Meetings were held with the principal, a number of senior and middle leaders, the executive consultant and members of the governing body.
- Information and other documentary evidence were evaluated including that relating to safeguarding, assessment, school evaluation and external reviews.
- Inspectors took account of the 63 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the six comments, the 62 responses to the staff online survey and the 48 pupil responses to the online survey.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Lewis	Ofsted Inspector
Neville Coles	Ofsted Inspector
Justine Hocking	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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