

# Marathon Science School

Severn Hills Trust

1-9 Evelyn Street, Surrey Quays, London SE8 5RQ

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

Marathon Science School is an independent secondary boarding school with an Islamic ethos. It is registered for boys aged 10 to 19 years. The school is located near Surrey Quays and the boarding provision is in Hackney. Most of the pupils are of Turkish background and speak English as an additional language. Boarders also come from Belgium, Sweden, Holland and Germany. All of the 50 pupils are boarders.

The boarding provision was subject to a monitoring inspection on 2 April 2019. The boarding provision was found to have addressed all of the concerns found at the inspection which occurred on 10 and 11 July 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 14 to 15 October 2019

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>Good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	Good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good
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The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement

**Date of last inspection:** 10 and 11 July 2018

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Boarders value and are happy with the recent changes in the boarding provision. Boarders point to improvements to their living environment, for example new curtains in their bedrooms and a refurbished activity room. One boarder said, 'There is now much more to do here, it is fun being with your friends all of the time.'

Boarders enjoy an improved range of activities, including football, swimming and recent trips to Istanbul and Holland.

Outcomes for boarders are positive. At the end of the last academic year, each boarder leaving the school moved on to a planned programme of further education.

Boarders value the positive impact of structured routines on their school work. Boarding staff communicate regularly with day school colleagues and follow pupils' progress. Boarding staff support boarders with their homework and address any concerns passed on from the day school.

Behaviour management is effective. Boarders adhere to simple and consistently enforced expectations. Boarders recognise that the rules support their focus on academic studies, for example by limiting their use of mobile phones.

Parents comment on the improvement in academic performance and also on their child's demeanour and presentation. One parent commented, 'I have noticed how much more positive he is since he started in boarding.'

Boarders are involved in the running of their boarding house. Following a request from boarders, staff arranged a visit from a local academic to discuss a topic on the history syllabus.

The independent visitor is a consistent presence in the school. They visit the school regularly and are trusted by the boarders.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Boarders feel a sense of community within boarding and there are no reports of bullying. Boarding year groups are small, and this helps to promote close and positive relationships.

Boarders learn a range of new skills for independence. For many, this is their first experience of living away from home and staff work hard to offer a supportive induction. Staff encourage boarders to learn basic tasks such as managing their personal hygiene and their daily schedule.

Boarders come from a rich variety of cultures and backgrounds. This enables them to learn from each other and to develop new social skills such as the tolerance of difference.

Boarders learn to keep themselves safe. Local police recently visited the boarding

house to remind boarders of the importance of limiting mobile phone use in public and of remaining alert when out in the community.

Safeguarding in the boarding provision is good. Staff talk with passion and concern about the potential dangers to boarders when out in the community such as the risks posed by child criminal exploitation. Staff inform key agencies when concerns arise. Recently, staff liaised with a local authority for a boarder who had left school and was due to be home educated.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Management of the boarding provision is stable and consistent. The head of boarding has been in post since 2017 and has worked at the school in various positions for 11 years. He is undertaking his management qualification and aims to complete this by November 2019.

The head of boarding is proud of the progress made since the last inspection. The staff team is focused on supporting boarders to become 'rounded individuals', both in terms of their academic and social skills. Staff are ambitious and eager to improve the boarding experience, for example they are presently seeking a wrestling coach to instruct boarders.

Recording practice in boarding is variable. Managers do not regularly record sanctions, complaints, or staff supervision. This limits their evaluation of boarders' behaviour, staff performance and any concerns expressed about the boarding provision.

Staff morale is more positive, and retention levels have improved. There have been no staff departures since July 2017. The resulting stability has offered more consistency to boarders and allowed a strong team dynamic to develop.

Staff report strong levels of management support and performance appraisal. However, at present appraisals do not reflect the views of boarders or other staff members, thus limiting their effectiveness.

Admissions processes are effective. The head of boarding visits boarders at home prior to admission. This helps staff to understand boarders' individual home circumstances and how better to support them.

## **What does the boarding school need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that all supervision sessions with boarding staff are appropriately recorded.
- Performance appraisals should consider using feedback from boarders and other professionals to offer a more comprehensive assessment of performance.
- Ensure that a record is kept of all complaints, allowing the more efficient tracking of concerns.
- Ensure that a record is kept of all sanctions given to boarders, allowing the monitoring of behaviours.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Boarding school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC400622

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Uzeyir Onur

**Type of school:** Boarding School

**Telephone number:** 02072 313232

**Email address:** uzeyironur@marathonschool.com

## **Inspector**

Barnaby Dowell, social care inspector (lead)



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