

Inspection of Marland School

Peters Marland, Torrington, Devon EX38 8QQ

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive at Marland School after difficult experiences of education. Staff understand this and give pupils time and space to adjust. Staff focus on understanding pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use this knowledge well to develop positive, caring relationships with pupils. The quality of these relationships is a strength of the school. As a result, pupils start to feel settled and re-engage in education.

Across all three sites, leaders set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to the strategies that staff use to help them to manage their complex emotions. They learn to communicate their feelings in positive ways. Pupils say they feel safe at school. They trust staff to act quickly and effectively to resolve any signs of bullying.

Leaders have high expectations for what all pupils can achieve. They raise pupils' own aspirations. As a result, some pupils are experiencing success at school for the first time. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities on offer to them, such as sporting events, outdoor learning and trips to local places of interest. Pupils say these events help them to learn new skills and to become more confident.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff share a determination to help pupils overcome their barriers to learning and to prepare them well for adult life. They have put in place an ambitious curriculum in most subjects at each of the three school sites. Leaders have carefully considered what pupils need to know and when they need to know it. This provides a broad and balanced learning experience for pupils.

Leaders prioritise reading. They ensure that staff implement the school's reading programme effectively. Pupils read regularly. Teachers check if pupils are keeping up with the reading programme. If pupils fall behind, they receive the support they need to help them to catch up.

Leaders have put in place a well-planned mathematics curriculum. This links learning between key stages and helps pupils build their knowledge securely. However, leaders' work in some subjects is at an early stage. They have yet to make clear enough the precise knowledge and concepts they want pupils to learn and revisit. This slows pupils' ability to build their knowledge as well as they could.

Teachers use assessment information effectively. They identify pupils who need more support. Pupils' individual support plans are precise and regularly reviewed. Teachers adapt learning to ensure that pupils' individual needs are well met. Most pupils participate well in learning and take pride in their work.

The atmosphere around each school site is purposeful. Staff support pupils' needs through a range of therapies and interventions. This helps pupils to build their self-esteem and resilience. When incidents of poor behaviour do occur, staff support pupils to reflect on what happened. Staff help pupils to consider ways to avoid incidents from reoccurring.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development is central to the work in the school. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum is well planned. Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of relationships and sex education. They talk confidently about the importance of physical and mental health and fundamental British values such as democracy. Pupils understand the importance of showing respect to others, including why this is important in the world in which they live. Pupils develop their sense of character by taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. They say that this gives them confidence to take on challenges.

Leaders provide pupils with useful and well-considered careers advice. They introduce pupils to the world of work through well-designed activities. These include opportunities for work experience. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education or employment.

Governors know the school well. They offer effective support and challenge to ensure that pupils achieve well and are safe. Staff appreciate the support they receive from leaders. This includes consideration of their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Leaders and staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. Staff understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. They use their knowledge of the pupils well to identify any concerns and to report them immediately. Leaders work well with external agencies to help vulnerable pupils and their families get the support they need. Leaders carry out careful checks before staff start working with pupils.

Pupils learn how to stay safe in the real and online world. They speak confidently about the importance of not sharing personal information online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified precisely what pupils need to know in some subjects. As a result, learning across all key stages is not coherent. Pupils do not build their

knowledge as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the important knowledge pupils need to know is clearly identified in all subjects and that pupils remember this over time.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	131552
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10256586
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Faith Butler
Principal	Keith Bennett
Website	www.marland.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 and 10 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school operates from three sites. The Peters Marland site is a weekly residential school for boys. The Bideford site is a mixed, day provision for primary-aged pupils. The Barnstaple site is a mixed, day provision for secondary-aged pupils. At the time of the inspection, only boys were on roll at each site.
- A fourth site is due to open, in Bideford, in May 2023.
- The school is part of the SENTient Trust with other special schools in the local authority.
- The school uses one registered and three unregistered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with a wide range of staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the staff responsible for safeguarding and scrutinised the single central record. Inspectors considered leaders' safeguarding processes and procedures. They observed pupils during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors discussed safeguarding with pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent questionnaire, Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Hickling	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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