



# Marriotts School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 117534  
**LEA** HERTFORDSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 280109  
**Inspection dates** 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Ken Shooter LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Telford Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		SG2 0AN
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 351801
<b>Number on roll</b>	799	<b>Fax number</b>	01438 743548
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.R Henry
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Patrick Marshall

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 5 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280109
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Marriotts School is a smaller than average size comprehensive school which was awarded Sports college status in 2002. It is now working as an extended school by providing counselling for students and parents. It has a small sixth form. This is part of joint post-16 provision with a partnership of local schools. The percentage of students with identified special educational needs is above the national average. Attendance is lower than the national figure but improving gradually. Pupils' social and economic circumstances are near to the national average. About 14 per cent of students are from minority ethnic groups. The last Ofsted inspection reported that the school had serious weaknesses, and standards, quality of education and the climate for learning required improvement.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is providing an education that is satisfactory in all major respects and has some good features. Since the last Ofsted inspection in November 2003 when the school was identified as having serious weaknesses it has made the necessary improvements to remove it from the category of a school causing concern. The headteacher and his senior managers provide effective leadership and are maintaining a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising achievement, but the effectiveness of middle management is uneven. The general trend of improvement in core subjects at Key Stages 3 and 4 in 2005, although not yet good enough, shows some impact of the action taken and demonstrates the school's capacity to improve. The management of the school recognises that more needs to be done, particularly in science and information and communication technology (ICT). The school's sport specialism is playing a key role in whole school improvement. It has been effective in helping other subject areas to develop a wider range of teaching and learning, and much improved approaches to assessment. It provides a good level of support for other schools in Stevenage. The school gives a high priority to care and support for its students. Since the last inspection there has been a noticeable improvement in students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. They are now ready to take more responsibility for assessing their own performance and improving their own work. Attendance is improving but is still an issue which needs attention. Students enjoy their school life in a safe and secure environment. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were very pleased with the school's record of care. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is continuously being developed in response to the needs of students and new opportunities. Provision and support for students with special educational needs is good and they make good progress. There is also good guidance on the choice of subjects at Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth form. The headteacher and senior staff know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have put into place a range of effective measures to deal with improvements required in the last Ofsted inspection report. The governing body recognises that it needs to be more pro-active in the drive for higher standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money but many courses in the sixth form are not cost-effective.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

Provision for post-16 students is satisfactory. The school is part of a local consortium that offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses at level 3. The standards reached by students are unsatisfactory. Although overall pass rates on AS and A level courses improved in 2005, they are still significantly below national averages. Most students start advanced level qualifications with relatively low prior attainment at GCSE and the progress made is generally satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. Students receive appropriate guidance onto sixth form courses and are well supported. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Improvements have

been made in the quality of teaching and learning, but the analysis of student performance is insufficiently rigorous and many courses are not cost effective. The school has recognised the need to broaden the level 2 provision for 14-19 year olds.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

Increase the pace of improvement in standards in all subjects, particularly in science and ICT. Raise standards of attainment in the sixth form. Build on the increased confidence of students to help them to be more responsible for their own learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Although generally standards are lower than they should be, the level of achievement and progress made by students is satisfactory. Attainment on entry to the school is low. The majority of students make steady progress and a high proportion succeed in achieving five A\*-G grades at GCSE. The targets set for individual students are appropriate, taking account of their starting points and potential. The impact on students with special educational needs is already evident. They progress at a good pace. A smaller proportion of pupils achieve five grades in the higher A\*-C range compared with other similar schools. The school acknowledges that attainment overall is not yet high enough. The determination of staff to improve results is now shared by pupils. In 2005 this contributed to improvements at Key Stage 3 in mathematics, science and very significantly in English. At GCSE, English, mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science also improved. Although too few pupils achieved consistent success across a wide range of subjects and this has prevented the school from meeting its targets, there is now proven success upon which to build. There are sporting achievements and particular subjects that continue to get the best from the students. In design and technology, modern foreign languages and music, results that are higher than schools nationally show what is possible.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Students start at the school expecting to enjoy their education and are not disappointed. Improvements in attendance, punctuality and appreciation of opportunities to extend learning beyond the school day, support this view, although attendance needs further improvement. Being a specialist sports college has contributed to students' good awareness of personal health and safety. It has also helped students to develop a positive sense of community. Students show that they are prepared for future economic well-being through good careers awareness and sound literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and used well when opportunities to extend and apply these qualities are given. For example, students value assemblies and opportunities for personal reflection. The good behaviour of students in lessons and around the school is an outcome of the shared commitment

of teachers and students to the principle that everyone should have an opportunity to learn without distraction. Together, the school community has built an ethos of mutual respect, co-operation and shared confidence in the continued success of the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching quality has improved substantially since the last inspection. The school has worked hard to raise teaching quality through training, close monitoring by senior managers and by utilising the skills of its best teachers to develop those of others. Consequently, very little is now less than satisfactory and much of the teaching is good. Students enjoy their learning. Lessons are well-planned around very clear objectives that help teachers and students focus their work. Most lessons are interesting and challenging, although more needs to be done to extend the most able students. A strong feature of the better lessons is the way in which those students who have grasped a key idea act as mentors to others. Students acquire sound skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, preparing them for their future working lives. Effective support is provided to those with special educational needs and disabilities. In some lessons, class teaching extends for too long and students are not involved sufficiently in discussion, decision making and problem solving. Much work has been done to develop assessment which involves students and procedures are generally used effectively. Most students know their targets and receive good guidance on their progress and on how to improve through regular reviews with their teachers. However, this is not as effective in the sixth form. Written feedback through marking at its best is very good, for example in English and modern foreign languages, but it is not consistent across the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. The range of courses currently provided meets the needs and aspirations of students. All statutory requirements are being met. There is a good range of enrichment opportunities which are popular and well attended. The school has broadened the curriculum it offers at Key Stage 4 and now offers a range of work-related learning options for 14 to 16 year olds. The use of ICT by faculties, previously identified as a weakness, is now being tackled. The curriculum is recognised as an area to develop and it continues to be reviewed in the light of the changing intake of students and of recent government guidance. Access to the curriculum by students with special education needs is good. The range of level 3 courses available in the sixth form is good. However, the school should improve the range of level 2 provision for 16-19 year olds. Overall, subjects across the curriculum contribute well to raising students' awareness and understanding of issues concerned with safety, and health, and how they can contribute to the community. The method of teaching

citizenship through a number of subjects is satisfactory but needs to be kept under review to ensure that all three strands of the statutory programme are met.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

This aspect of the school's work is good and students are looked after well. The guidance they receive when choosing options for Year10 is effective, ensuring that the choice is appropriate for the capabilities and aspirations of the students. Many appreciate academic tutoring days when they receive guidance about their work and how to improve. Systems for ensuring that students are safe are good, although, as the school is aware, some procedures for risk assessment need tightening. The provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. It is well founded upon good management systems and a willing, open approach to evaluation which includes staff, students, parents and external agencies. Links with these agencies are used effectively to support students in need. Children who are looked after by the local authority are cared for well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's strong leadership has provided clear and purposeful direction resulting in considerable improvements in the school's culture, students' attitudes and their academic achievements. Staff share a common sense of purpose focussed on raising standards and the senior leadership team are effective in driving forward the school's priorities. The headteacher and leadership team enjoy the full confidence of staff, governors, students and parents. The school is well regarded by its parents and the community. The headteacher and senior leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, founded on robust systems for monitoring and improving the school's performance. This includes the views of students and parents. The school's central database of assessments is used effectively to monitor and review individual students' progress. Remedial action is taken and parents notified where necessary and this has helped drive up standards. A more recent innovation is the regular review with faculty managers of progress towards their departments' targets and close monitoring of their work. Consequently, management of subject areas is improving. It is good in some areas such as English, mathematics and modern foreign languages, where students' standards are improving rapidly, but there are weaknesses in other subjects. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they are not involved sufficiently in monitoring its work and shaping its direction, a weakness the new chair of governors is determined to address. The school has clearly shown that it can tackle its weaknesses through its actions on those identified at the last inspection. However, the impact of these many improvements in the school's management has yet to be seen in raising standards on a consistent basis.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work, values, interests and hopes for the future. Here is a summary of what we think you might like to know about our view of the school. You will also be able to read the full inspection report when it arrives at the school. What we liked about your school: - that the school is improving and moving forwards; - that standards of work and examination results are gradually improving; - the pride you take in the school; - that there is shared sense of working together to achieve the improvements; - the quality of teaching you receive which allows you to make progress; - the relationships between students and staff, which are good, and that there is mutual respect; - the importance of the sports college status to the school; - the importance you attach to developing a healthy lifestyle and staying safe; - the fact that you enjoy learning; and - that your parents and carers think well of the school. What we have asked your school to do now: - increase the pace of improvements in standards in all subjects particularly in science and ICT; and - help students to take more responsibility for their own learning. We know that your headteacher is very committed to improving the school for you and he has the full support of all staff in doing so. Keep up your enthusiasm and help teachers by attending regularly and continuing to work hard. Best wishes on behalf of the inspection team