

# Marden High School A Designated Specialist Media Arts College

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	108627
Local Authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	288143
Inspection dates	24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Mr Brian Dower

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

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Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	914
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Carlile
Headteacher	Mr David Stainthorpe
Date of previous school inspection	February 2002
School address	Hartington Road Cullercoats North Shields Tyne and Wear NE30 3RZ
Telephone number	0191 2006357
Fax number	0191 2006361

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Marden High School is an average sized comprehensive school. Most students are of White British heritage but a small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds with English as an additional language. None are at an early stage of learning the language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties is below average. Most boys and girls are from advantaged backgrounds although there are some socially deprived areas served by the school. It has a hearing impaired unit. Specialist media arts college status was awarded in 2003. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is slightly above average.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- standards and achievement in English, and boys' performance throughout the school
- the quality of teaching and learning and the impact of the school's media arts status on the way students learn
- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation processes and its capacity to improve further.

Evidence was gathered from:

- test and examination results, the school's own assessment of current standards in Years 9 and 11 and from looking at the quality of work done in lessons
- the school's own evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning and the impact of the specialist media arts status, together with inspection evidence from lesson observations
- a comparison of the school's evaluation of students' progress and the quality of teaching and learning with evidence gathered during the inspection process; an analysis of recent improvements to inform the judgement on the capacity to raise standards further.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average and achievement is good. In the 2006 Year 9 national tests, the proportion of students achieving the expected level was well above average in science and mathematics. Given their starting point, this represents good progress, with boys and girls achieving equally well. Standards have been consistently well above average over recent years in both of these subjects and in English. Although the 2006 test results in English showed that standards were above average, they were lower than in previous years and this represents satisfactory progress in this subject. The school's tracking and assessments show that the achievement of Year 9 pupils in English has improved and that the 2006 standards in mathematics and science are being maintained.

Attainment at the end of Year 11 has been well above average over the last two years in terms of the proportion of students gaining five or more higher grade GCSE passes. All groups of pupils, including those from different ethnic backgrounds, make good overall progress. Performance in 2005 and 2006 was a marked improvement on that of 2004. The trend over time has been for the girls to do better than the boys, but current evidence shows that boys' achievement is improving. The school met its Year 9 and Year 11 performance targets in 2006. Students with learning difficulties, especially those with hearing impairment make the same progress as others and their levels of achievement are good.

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating and many adopt active lifestyles through wide-ranging access to competitive sports and leisure activities. The school council take their responsibilities seriously and some are associate members of the governing body. Others act as a sounding board to many school initiatives linked to students' learning and progress. Students' attitude and behaviour are good and this has had a positive impact on their achievement. Exclusions are rare and pupils say that they feel safe and secure. Student attendance levels are above average; they enjoy their work and are complimentary about their teachers. The varied learning opportunities presented to them through the school's specialist status has taught them greater self-reliance. Students' good progress is further strengthened through the effective provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Citizenship lessons effectively cover aspects of community responsibility and students are well prepared to secure their future economic well-being. Students say that they enjoy the wide range of extra curricular activities and the up-take for these is high. Older students make good use of work placement projects and appreciate the guidance they get about future academic and employment opportunities.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Most lessons are interesting and clearly focused on learning outcomes; in such cases, students are helped to develop a high level of independence and autonomy. The media arts have contributed significantly to students' self-reliance in their learning. Challenge and expectations are high in these lessons, as was seen in a Year 10 media lesson where students successfully analysed advertisements by sharing ideas with a partner. In the majority of lessons, care is given to including the needs of all learners. In a minority of lessons seen, teachers spent too long introducing the topic and there was little time

at the end for students to reflect on and consolidate what they had learnt. Although students are aware of what they need to do to improve their work in most subject areas, there is currently too much inconsistency in the quality and frequency of feedback from teachers.

The quality of the curriculum is good with some outstanding features. It meets all statutory requirements and ensures that the needs of all learners are well catered for. The provision includes enterprise activities for the older students, booster groups for examination students and master classes at the university for the highest attaining boys and girls. The school provides outstanding support for the most vulnerable students, especially those at risk of becoming alienated or disaffected. This is because it very effectively tailors the Key Stage 4 curriculum to meet individual needs. Most successful are the modern apprenticeships and the accredited enterprise initiatives. The specialist school status has had a considerable impact on raising standards, particularly in computer technology, and now all students leave school with a qualification in digital applications or media studies. The school makes additional provision for the more able students through such courses as criminology in Year 9, and critical thinking lessons for the older students. The curriculum is further enriched by good links with the local college and a wide range of after school clubs, which are well attended.

Good quality provision for care and guidance ensure that all students receive appropriate support. Welfare and support systems for vulnerable students and those with low self-esteem are very strong. Effective child protection systems are in place and appropriate safety checks on new staff and visitors meet with the latest national requirements. Health and safety, medical and accident reporting and recording systems are of a high quality. The transitional arrangements for students moving from several local primary schools are well managed and include very good use of Year 7 students to act as link supporters and mentors to the transferring pupils. The provision for students' personal, social, health and citizenship education is of a very high quality and significantly helps to underpin their personal development. The level of academic guidance and support to students is good, and a recently introduced end of day tutorial is proving effective in raising students' awareness of the progress they are making.

Leadership and management are good. Excellent leadership and direction are given through the headteacher's understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve provision and standards. Self-evaluation is therefore strong and this, allied to the significant improvements since the previous inspection, places the school in a strong position to move forward. The headteacher is well supported by able senior colleagues and by committed teaching and support staff who work effectively as a team. Equality of opportunity and the desire to meet the needs of all students, including the most vulnerable, pervade their work. Governance is good. Governors are involved in what goes on and play their part in moving things forward. There is an appropriate range of good quality resources and they are used well. Accommodation is inadequate for physical education and sport and some classrooms are in a poor state of repair. Although this has not impacted on standards, it has limited the school's ability to provide a high quality learning environment.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency and quality of feedback across all subjects so that students are fully aware of how to improve their work.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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## Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

## Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2

## Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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





25 May 2007

Dear Students

### Inspection of Marden High School A Specialist Media Arts College

Thank you for the welcome you extended to us during our recent visit and the time many of you gave to talk to us about your school. You gave us a lot of information about the quality of the education you receive and so made a good contribution to the inspection. We wish we had time to see more of the interesting things going on in your school but we were told a lot about them by staff and governors.

We found that the standard of your work is well above average and that you make good progress and achieve well. You have the personal qualities and basic skills to make a success of your education and to prepare you for future employment. You get on well together and enjoy your work. You tell us that the rare instances of minor bullying or intimidation are dealt with quickly and effectively by your teachers. We were impressed by your courtesy and consideration for others.

Marden High is a good school and this view is shared by your parents. You appreciate the extensive range of activities provided outside of lessons and get enjoyment and inspiration from visiting speakers and performers. 'The Young Americans' made a big impression on you and taught you about the excitement of live performances. You are involved in community activities and do a lot to raise money for charity. Many of you excel in enterprising schemes and we hope the Year 11 student becomes the Youth Apprentice of the Year. We will keep an eye on the media for the result of that competition.

There is one thing which we think will enable you to progress with greater confidence. You all need good feedback on how to improve your work and to understand when you have mastered a topic and are ready to move on to more challenging work.

We wish you well with your studies and your plans for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dower  
Lead Inspector