

# Marling School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115752
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312054
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philippa Francis HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Grammar (selective)
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	631
6th form	247
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jennifer Varley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Roger Lock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Cainscross Road Stroud GL5 4HE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453760153
<b>Fax number</b>	01453 756011

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<b>Age group</b>	11-19
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to administration error

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Marling is a medium sized school. It gained specialist engineering college status in September 2007. The school is part of the Stroud post-16 consortium of three schools and a local further education college. The sixth form, Downfield, is shared through a collaborative arrangement with a neighbouring girls' school. The majority of students come from Stroud and surrounding villages, where the social and economic background is largely favourable. Very few students are eligible for free school meals and the percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is very small. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very few. Students' attainment on entry is well above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Marling is a satisfactory school with some good features. This judgement is in contrast to the school's evaluation of good. It is oversubscribed and has the support of the large majority of parents. Its profile in the community is improving, especially through the productive work with local businesses undertaken as part of its specialist engineering status. Students enjoy school and attendance is excellent, except in Year 13, where it is too low. Students join the school with well above average starting points and make satisfactory progress at all levels. Most gain exceptionally high standards in the main school; however, a few underachieve, especially in core subjects of mathematics, science and English. Standards attained in the sixth form vary between subjects but are good overall.

Students' personal development is good and they become confident and articulate. They work diligently, have good attitudes to work and behave well. They understand the importance of health and safety and apply this knowledge well in their school life. They contribute well to charity fund raising activities and community initiatives. However, they have too few opportunities to take responsibility within the school. Teaching is satisfactory with some good and a few outstanding features. It is improving through greater emphasis recently placed on ensuring learning takes place. However, good or better features are not widespread and sharing of good practice is too limited, so that much teaching lacks the variety and challenge to meet the needs of all students. The curriculum is broad and relevant. Students take a greater than average number of qualifications and opportunities to take examinations early benefit many. Teachers provide good care for students and guide them well through school life. The transition from primary school is smooth. Careers guidance is helpful for older students but not well integrated for younger ones. Academic support is improved by better use of data to identify underperformance, supported by improved links between academic and pastoral teams.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is the school's capacity to improve. Self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and areas in need of improvement but action planning for improvement is weak. Improvements to quality assurance arrangements and levels of accountability of middle managers are showing positive signs of impact. Management of the sixth form is now satisfactory, an improvement since the last inspection. Managers have maintained a good standard of care for students but examination results have been declining for the last two years. Governors monitor the school's work inadequately and fail to ensure it meets its statutory requirement in terms of equality and diversity legislation. A new building has improved the learning environment considerably. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

Progression into the sixth form and staying on rates are high. Students enter with above average GCSE results and attain above average standards in both GCE AS- and A-level examinations. The progress they make varies between subjects and is satisfactory overall. Over a three-year period, it is clear that some subjects consistently do significantly better than others. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory. Personal development and care, guidance and support are good. The sixth form provides a broad curriculum, which is enhanced because of options available through the post-16 consortium. Collaborative arrangements with other consortium members mean that boys are able to choose from a good range of AS- and A-level options, and there are

opportunities to follow vocational courses. Leadership and management have improved from a low base and are now satisfactory.

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

- Improve teaching and learning by sharing good practice to make sure that lessons meet the needs of all students.
- Clearly identify specific actions, with measurable timescales and success criteria, in the school improvement plan and monitor these rigorously.
- Increase the level of monitoring undertaken by governors and take appropriate actions to ensure full compliance with statutory requirements.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students in the main school attain exceptionally high standards, which reflect their high levels of prior attainment. Most students gain more than five GCSE passes at A\* to C, including English and mathematics. Nearly half attain five or more A or A\* grades. However, standards in English, mathematics and science have declined over the last three years. The school sets challenging targets for success in examinations but these were not met in 2006 and 2007. Students take a larger than average number of qualifications, giving them a broad span of knowledge.

Students make satisfactory progress overall during their time at the school. However, they make less progress in English, mathematics and science than is expected compared with similar students nationally. New systems for tracking and predicting students' progress have helped identify those that are likely to underachieve. The English department, in particular, has been swift to respond to this information and there are signs of a positive impact on students' progress in Years 10 and 11. The very few students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make better than average progress.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students are confident, articulate and keen to participate in lessons. Attendance is excellent, except in Year 13 where it is too low. Students enjoy school and speak positively about their experiences of school life. Their attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons are good, and many show high levels of maturity. There are few short-term exclusions; when applied these are effective in improving behaviour. Students agree that the amount of bullying is small and teachers deal with any incidents rapidly and effectively. Students move around the school well and they are courteous and helpful to visitors. Students say that they feel safe, especially now that building work has ceased. Moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory, with opportunities missed to develop it further.

Students understand the importance of adopting a healthy and safe lifestyle because of good promotion throughout the curriculum. Healthy options in the canteen are readily available,

although the boys find these costly. Students are very well prepared to support their future achievement of economic well-being. They gain first-hand experience of business through projects developed with local firms. They willingly contribute to community life and their involvement in raising funds for charity is productive. However, the range of responsibilities taken on by students is too limited. The school council meets irregularly and students' view of its significance varies. The majority are passive about its role.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good and occasionally outstanding features. The best lessons include a brisk pace, challenging targets and a clear focus on individual learning. These lessons extend and inspire students who then make good or better progress. However, these features are not widespread. Too often, progress in learning is only satisfactory because lessons contain insufficient variety and challenge and rely too much on students' good will and interest. Teachers are only just beginning to recognise the value of tailoring their teaching to meet individual learning needs. They pay due attention to health and safety in lessons.

Teachers now monitor progress effectively, using a new system, enabling them to spot students who are not reaching their full potential and provide extra support and encouragement. However, embedding of this system is incomplete and its impact on raising standards is not evident. Some of the best examples of improved monitoring are in English, geography and music. In these subjects, careful tracking of ongoing assessment informs students of the next steps they need to take in order to improve or reach the next level.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum is broad and meets statutory requirements, although there is not enough provision of religious education in the sixth form. Engineering specialist status is starting to impact positively on the curriculum by forging links with local businesses, which provide many opportunities for developing work-related learning skills. There are opportunities for students to take some GCSE and GCE AS courses a year early, and the most able students appreciate the pace and challenge that this provides. A good range of extra-curricular enrichment activities enhances school life, and attendance at sports and music clubs is high. A wide range of educational trips are on offer and take up is good. Personal, social and health education lessons support the personal development of students well. Dedicated timetabled days cover citizenship well but this work is not sufficiently integrated into the curriculum.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students are well cared for and given good guidance and support. Restructuring has linked academic and pastoral teams more closely, strengthening the academic support available. A well-used database to record behavioural concerns allows very prompt identification of students

at risk of underperforming. Pastoral managers take swift and effective action to resolve concerns. However, form tutors have limited time to support students. Students in Years 10 and 11 receive individual reviews, but the same time and personal attention is not available on a regular basis for younger boys. There is extra support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this enables them to achieve well. The school cooperates closely with many agencies to help vulnerable students, often identified through close liaison with the feeder primary schools. Safeguarding arrangements are in place; however, not all staff have received training in child protection.

Transition arrangements into Year 7 work very well. Support for older students in making choices about continuing in education and future careers is good. During Years 7 to 9, guidance about future careers is limited, although a detailed plan is ready to implement to improve this position.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The headteacher has successfully led the school through a period of major restructuring which has strengthened the accountability of middle leaders for achievement and assuring the quality of provision. The structure is now complete and staff are settling into their roles with emerging positive signs of improvement. Wider use of good quality data is underway, resulting in clear identification of underperforming students and more prompt intervention, especially in the last two terms. However, identification and intervention have been less successful in the last two years, resulting in a decline in the high standards, and progress by students that is only satisfactory. The school has undershot the majority of its targets in recent years.

Self-evaluation is effective in identifying strengths and areas for improvement, although grading of aspects is overgenerous. Analysis of data is thorough. However, the link between the school's development plan and areas identified for improvement through self-evaluation is weak. Specific actions with measurable timescales, success criteria and clear monitoring responsibilities are not in place to tackle areas in need of improvement. Monitoring arrangements, including by governors, are too loose and improvements have been slow to have an impact.

Governors have not fulfilled their role adequately in terms of ensuring the school meets its statutory requirements for compliance with equality and diversity legislation. Their role in holding the school to account has improved since the last inspection but is too passive, too informal and rarely results in requiring any action from the school. Their overview of the quality of provision, especially teaching and learning, is very limited. Child protection arrangements are improved but staff have yet to receive appropriate training. Arrangements for risk assessment are incomplete.

The school has successfully acquired specialist college status in engineering and this has already had an impact on the curriculum and is positively influencing plans to improve teaching and learning. Arrangements to check on the quality of lessons have improved considerably in the last six months and the procedures in place are sound. However, arrangements for moderation of this process are at an early stage and there is too little analysis of the results to inform improvement planning. Where good practice is identified, it is not widely shared.

Leadership and management of the sixth form have improved and are now satisfactory. Many arrangements to improve the smooth running of the sixth form have been put in place in a relatively short timescale. The school has worked hard to improve communication both within and outside of the school. The website is informative and regularly updated. However, a significant proportion of parents and some students are unhappy with the effectiveness of communication.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	2
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	3
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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

22 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Marling School, Stroud, GL5 4HE

Thank you for your contribution to the recent inspection of your school. The inspection team valued your comments, which helpfully informed our judgements, and enjoyed meeting you.

Inspectors judged your school to be satisfactory. The results you gain are high and you work hard in lessons. However, a few of you do not achieve as well as you should considering your high starting points, especially in mathematics, science and English. You show good personal development and become confident, with good communication skills. Your attendance is excellent, except in Year 13 where it is too low. The lessons you receive are at least satisfactory and many have good features. However, there are too many lessons where the level of challenge is not great enough for all of you to make good or better progress. We have asked your teachers to share approaches used in the best lessons more widely to improve this position.

We judged the curriculum across the school to be good. The choice available, enhanced by specialist engineering status, is broad and meets your needs. You are well cared for in school and guided well as you move between key stages. Teachers track your progress well and are becoming increasingly effective in identifying those of you who need extra support. Management of your school is satisfactory. Senior managers know the school well; however, planning to bring about improvement is ineffective and needs strengthening. Governors are not doing enough to check on the work of the school.

Your role in fund raising and community initiatives is creditable. However, your contribution to school life is less well developed. Despite recent changes to the constitution, the role of the school council is not yet a forceful one and you must play your part in making this a meaningful and productive part of school life. You are well prepared for future economic well-being, including through the productive project work that you do with local businesses.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Francis Her Majesty's Inspector



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Yours sincerely

Philippa Francis  
Her Majesty's Inspector