

Marshfields School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110943
Local Authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	356836
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Lucie Calow

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Guthrie
Headteacher	Janet James
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2007
School address	Eastern Close Peterborough PE1 4PP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed and one 'learning walk' was conducted during which 10 teachers and three teaching assistants who were leading lessons were seen. Meetings were held with students, members of the school leadership team and with representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation form; progress tracking data; and external reviews and audits including those carried out by the local authority. They analysed 98 parental questionnaires and 141 student questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well do students do across the school in both their academic and social development and to what extent is their progress supported by the curriculum and teaching?
- How well does the school evaluate the impact of its work and secure improvements to the benefit of its students?

Information about the school

Marshfields is a secondary school for students who have moderate learning difficulties. All students have a statement of special educational needs and enter the school with levels of attainment well below the national average. Some have additional needs such as a more severe learning disability, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, autism, or a physical or sensory disability. There are more male than female students, with approximately two thirds being male. A high proportion of students (approximately one third) are known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is smaller than average; most students are White British and six other ethnic groups are represented in the school. A few students have English as an additional language. Some students join or leave the school at times other than at the usual start or end of a key stage. Marshfields has held specialist status for technology since 2002. It holds several awards including Investors in People, an Inclusion Charter mark and has national Healthy School status. The school has fostered many international links.

A number of students on roll at a local college attend Marshfields sixth form on a part-time basis. They have not formed part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school in which students have fun with staff who are deeply committed to their well-being. The way the school cares for students and extends their broader life experiences is at the heart of its work. Measures taken to ensure students are safeguarded are particularly strong. There is a wide range of activity on offer catering for students' personal interests. Students enjoy being at school, respect their environment and engage enthusiastically with what it has to offer. Outstanding partnership arrangements enable students to make an exceptional contribution within and beyond the school gates.

The quality of teaching is variable, with some good and better teaching observed. It is satisfactory overall because there is little variation in lessons to allow students to take the next most relevant step in their personal learning. Marking does not consistently provide enough support for students to know what to do next to improve. Verbal feedback and communication is of good quality. Many teachers go to considerable lengths to ensure that resources are engaging and relevant to the interests of their students and teachers have sound subject knowledge. They are skilful in developing appropriate personal relationships with their students during lessons, which encourages them to engage and contribute.

In line with the overall quality of teaching, students' progress is satisfactory, including in their core skills. Some make good or better progress in some aspects of their learning and development. Others make limited progress and this is true of higher-achieving students. The current accreditations on offer do not adequately inspire teaching to aim for the maximum amount of progress that these students could make. The school has trialled several assessment systems, but has not yet embedded use of the most appropriate in order that progress over time can be comprehensively tracked. This means that students' current levels of attainment are not matched routinely against what they have achieved previously. On the occasions where the school has done this, for example before and after its literacy intervention programme, the result has been a marked, rapid improvement in students' progress.

Capacity to sustain improvement is satisfactory because the school has a realistic view of its own strengths and areas in which it needs to improve. These views have been informed and confirmed by external audits including those conducted by the local authority.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so that all lessons are consistently good at meeting the diverse range of learning needs and abilities present in the class by:
 - ensuring lessons are planned to offer appropriate challenge and are matched to the next steps in learning for all students
 - ensuring marking provides guidance to students on how best to improve their work.
- Increase the amount of progress made by students, including those in the sixth form, across all subjects, but especially in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by:
 - raising the level of challenge for higher-achieving students
 - tracking closely the progress that students make, both individually and as groups
 - reviewing the range and levels of accreditation on offer at the end of Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels so that:
 - best practice is identified through monitoring systems and informs improvements
 - assessment procedures are stabilised and used consistently
 - high expectations are shared across the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Progress is satisfactory overall because lessons are engaging and provide satisfactorily for students' individual academic progress. Outcomes which reflect the school's focus on developing students' personal qualities are far stronger. Inspectors observed some lessons which were very effective in fostering increased independence. Excellent opportunities are available for students to make a contribution to the school and wider community, including through a comprehensive system for undertaking work experience. Students support each other by becoming 'prefects' and helping at break-times or by becoming reading buddies. They have links with charitable organisations such as Help the Aged and undertake fundraising activities. Projects such as the new community cafe and stained glass window project are examples of learning having a direct impact on the school community.

It is because learning is often placed within the context of the world of work and because independence is effectively fostered that students are well equipped with workplace skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being. Attendance is high and they are punctual to lessons. Work experience is personalised, evaluated and accredited.

School data are at an early stage of compilation and analysis. Trialling of a variety of systems has resulted in incomplete data sets as systems have been discontinued and others brought on line. Not all subjects or course elements are tracked currently to monitor pupils' progress or clearly identify their prior attainment. Emerging data show that some students make good progress in some areas. This is notably true in literacy skills for those students who have accessed the school's intervention programme having been identified with an additional need. Some students make limited progress, such as those who are more able. This is because lessons do not always challenge them sufficiently and

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because courses on offer do not demand good progress for their successful completion. The school has identified this as an issue, is raising awareness within the school and has appropriate plans in place so that the gap between the progress made by these students and others is beginning to close. There are no discernable differences in the rates of progress made between other groups of students.

Attendance is high, which reflects the school's focus on providing good-quality care, guidance and support, fostering good behaviour and lively student engagement. Students get on well together. Their moral and social development is strong. Awareness of cultural diversity is encouraged through visits and international links.

There is a successful focus in the school on helping students to adopt healthy lifestyles. Physical education is complemented by a range of sporting and physical activities. There is a high take-up of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Although the school has lost its own pool, it continues to use local pools to teach students in Year 7 to swim. Good-quality healthy food is available at lunch times and food technology is an important part of the curriculum.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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How effective is the provision?

Marshfields' specialism in technology continues to play a key role in the school's provision. It contributes markedly to the excellent quality of partnerships the school has developed. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with many enrichment activities such as enterprise projects in which students make items in design and technology to sell. The curriculum provides particularly well for students with the most complex needs. It is enriched, for example, by a successful literacy intervention programme and additional elements such as sensory circuits and music therapy. It provides less well for the highest-achieving students and the accreditation routes currently available are insufficient to meet the full range of students' abilities.

Care, guidance and support are good overall and some aspects of this provision are excellent. There are striking examples of how strong team work has supported individual students. The school has well-organised arrangements for the care of students and works effectively with a range of agencies. It targets support effectively.

Teaching is satisfactory overall because it leads to satisfactory progress. Students' personal outcomes are stronger, because of teachers' attention to meeting personal needs. Inspectors observed effective behaviour management so that all students, including those who have behaviours which may challenge, engage and remain on task. Support staff are deployed effectively in lessons so that students with more severe learning difficulties are well supported. The school ensures that staff are suitably aware of specific needs, for example, through autism projects, sensory circuits and 'talking partners'. The school engages students successfully in activities which challenge stereotypes, for examples boys learning about food technology.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Marshfields has been through a period of change and turbulence since its previous inspection which has had an adverse effect on the pace of progress on previously identified areas for improvement. The current position is that senior leaders and managers and the governing body share a clear understanding of the school's present strengths and areas for development. Self-evaluation by leaders and managers is realistic and accurate. Appropriate plans for improvement are being developed. The governing body has been instrumental in seeking external evaluation by others, including the local authority, and they has worked together to form an accurate view. Capacity to improve is satisfactory

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because of this solid self-evaluation and because the school has maintained good-quality provision in many areas.

The school has elements of provision which are strong. For example, some teaching and learning was observed to be outstanding. Accreditation is also appropriate and challenging for some students and in some subjects. However, there is a lack of consistency. Leaders and managers do not monitor and share systematically information on strategies and interventions which have the most impact on students' progress or analyse information for all groups. This has resulted in too much variation in expectations about what students might achieve and too little opportunity to share best practice.

There is a determined focus on students' safety and well-being in the school. Safeguarding is of good quality with clear policies and procedures are in place. Equality of opportunity is good because the curriculum and care, guidance and support are personalised to meet individual students' needs. For example, there are good systems for supporting those with additional health needs. Data are analysed for impact on some numerically larger student groups, for example for possible differences in achievement between male and female students, but not all smaller groups are scrutinised in the same way. The school has identified ways in which it can improve data analysis and also how to improve outcomes for the group identified as making less progress than might be expected, that is those who are the most able. The school's excellent work in establishing partnerships and enabling students to contribute to the school and wider community underpins the way in which it promotes community cohesion. The school has fostered many international links and encourages diversity awareness. The school is a harmonious community and students get on noticeably well with each other.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Sixth form

The sixth form has a strong separate identity from the rest of the school, but shares many of the same strengths and areas for improvement. There is high-quality personal support for students, the development of independence skills has an appropriately high profile and students develop good personal skills. For example, independent travel training is successful. The department is well run on a daily basis and provides a range of activities through which students engage successfully in work experience and community projects. However, the progress students make in equipping themselves with key literacy and numeracy skills is too limited. Teaching engages students' interest, but higher-achieving students are not sufficiently challenged. The curriculum concentrates too much on accreditation matched to the needs of lower-attaining students and is focused insufficiently on creating opportunities for more-able students.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey said that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Inspectors found enjoyment and safety to be key aspects of education at Marshfields. The very large majority of parents and carers responded positively to all questions in the questionnaire. A few expressed concerns about behaviour management and the amount of academic progress their children are making. Inspectors observed good behaviour in the school and found that progress is satisfactory overall. Higher-achieving students are not always challenged sufficiently. Whilst most parents and carers were positive about how the school responds to their suggestions and concerns, a very small minority did not feel this was good enough.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Marshfields School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 163 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	52	44	45	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	66	31	32	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	57	36	37	5	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	52	38	39	5	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	62	63	32	33	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	53	39	40	2	2	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	51	44	45	3	3	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	51	52	40	41	1	1	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	57	35	36	3	3	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	60	34	35	3	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	50	44	45	4	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	57	58	34	35	3	3	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	64	31	32	1	1	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Marshfields School, Peterborough, PE1 4PP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited your school. Thank you for contributing to the inspection by sending in your questionnaires and especially to school council members for meeting with us. This letter is to let you know what we found.

You go to a satisfactory school where the staff know you very well. You benefit from good care, guidance and support and this is why most of you told us you feel safe. Teachers make sure you have a lot of different and interesting activities. You get involved in lots of exciting projects, many of which involve other organisations and people from outside the school. As you get older, you learn to be independent and how to keep yourselves healthy. The way you contribute to school life and outside projects is excellent. A small minority of you told us that you are concerned about behaviour in your school. We found that behaviour is good overall. We were impressed by how well you listen in lessons, care for your environment and get on with each other. Lessons include some interesting ideas and resources and you enjoy them. However, for some of you, the work is too easy. Lessons do not always have enough variety in them so that you are all making the most progress you can. There are not enough choices of accreditation to ensure that you all leave school with the best results possible. That is why we have asked the headteacher and your teachers to make some improvements. We have asked them to:

- make sure you all make the most progress you can in lessons and that your work is marked in a way which helps you to understand what to do next
- keep close records of the progress you make, especially in core subjects, and make sure that you have the right choices of qualifications
- make sure all leaders and managers know what is making the most difference to you so that all your lessons and subjects are as good as each other.

You can help, too, by working hard and behaving well every day.

Yours sincerely

Lucie Calow

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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