

Marshfields School

Eastern Close, Dogsthorpe, Peterborough, PE1 4PP

Inspection dates 13–14 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress. Leaders track progress accurately and have raised expectations for all students in the school.
- The quality of teaching is good. Good monitoring of teaching and the effective professional development of staff have increased the levels of consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well in school- and college-based courses.
- Students enjoy lessons and are proud of their school. They feel safe and valued in its secure, structured and cohesive community.
- Students' outstanding behaviour and good attendance contribute significantly to their achievement.
- Leadership and management, including governance, are good. Senior leaders consider carefully how aspects of the school can be further improved and are ambitious for the school to be even better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The pace of learning slows in lessons when teachers spend too much time talking to the whole class instead of allowing students to get on with tasks.
- Students do not have regular opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Not all teachers use the information they have on students' prior learning to inform their planning.
- Work is not always planned appropriately to meet the needs of the students with more complex needs.
- Courses followed by students in the sixth form do not always build sufficiently on their previous achievements in Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 19 lessons, most of which were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors made short visits to lessons and listened to students read.
- Meetings were held with students from Years 7 to 11 and a group of sixth formers to gain their views about the school, their progress, their likes and dislikes.
- Meetings were also held with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, an external consultant, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Many documents were reviewed, including those relating to students' behaviour and progress, school self-evaluation and improvement, curriculum and lesson planning, governance, and keeping students safe. Work in students' books was also seen.
- The views of parents and carers were gained through the school's own survey. There were insufficient responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents) to be reported. Inspectors also reviewed the 25 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Lynda Walker, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Karin Heap

Additional Inspector

Alan Radford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Marshfields is a large community special school designated by the local authority for students aged 11 to 19 years with moderate and complex learning difficulties. Marshfields draws from the entire City of Peterborough and beyond to include learners from neighbouring counties of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs. There is a wide mix of learning needs, including moderate and severe learning difficulties, autism, and behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage and very few are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding allocated by the government for certain groups of students, in this case those who are eligible for free school meals and who are looked after by the local authority) is well above the national average.
- The school works with City College in Peterborough to extend the range of learning opportunities for post-16 students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching in all year groups by ensuring that:
 - teachers do not spend too much time talking to the whole class and that the students are allowed to get on with the tasks set for them
 - all teachers take account of students' current levels and targets, not only in their subjects but in literacy and numeracy, when planning their work
 - all teachers are prepared and able to meet the needs of the students with more complex needs.
- Link courses studied in the sixth form more closely with the information on students' attainment that is passed on at the end of Year 11.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Student's attainment on entry to the school varies. Because of their special educational needs, student's attainment overall is below the expectation for their age. Student progress data since the last inspection indicates that they make good progress over time. Rates of progress over the past academic year have improved as a result of more focused planning to meet the needs of individual students.
- All students leave the school with some form of nationally recognised accreditation. Students who would previously have gained entry-level qualifications now achieve lower GCSE grades in English, mathematics, science, food technology, and product design. An impressive number of students gain C or D in GCSE art. To give students the best possible chance of succeeding, the school does not enter them early for examinations.
- Post-16 students achieve accredited awards in vocational subjects which help to prepare them for the next stage of their lives. Older students enjoy attending the local college, where they make good progress in a wide range of work-related activities. Students in Year 11 have recently completed a level 1 diploma course in horticulture and were justifiably proud of their completed work folders.
- The development of students' personal independence is outstanding. Students are taught by the school's travel trainer how to use local transport to attend school and college. As a result, many students are highly independent and confident in using public transport.
- Students achieve well no matter what their background or circumstances. There is no difference between the overall progress of any groups of students, such as girls and boys, any ethnic minority groups, students with specific special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Students who are eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in English and mathematics and reach similar levels of attainment in these subjects as other students.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching on students' achievement over time is good and is improving further as there is a clear drive and passion for improvement at all levels.
- The main strength in teaching is the way in which all teachers and adults work together to enable students to make the best possible progress in relation to their individual learning targets. The school's skilled teaching assistants know individuals very well and make a significant contribution to the typically good learning in lessons.
- Teachers are becoming proficient in using the new assessment system to identify students in their class who are not making the progress they should and, with school leaders, identify strategies for promoting individual students' improvement.
- Teachers all ensure that work is appropriate to the age of the students and thereby promote maturity and self-esteem.
- In the best lessons seen, literacy and numeracy were promoted very well. This was particularly

evident in an athletics lesson where students were measuring the length, height and distance of their throws and jumps. Such practice is not consistent across subjects or year groups.

- The curriculum offers a wide choice of courses, many of them accredited. This enables students to take responsibility for, and personalise, their learning. Art and other creative subjects are taught very well and many students achieve a good level of success in these subjects. The school has a well-planned, work-related programme that enables students to experience work that match their interests and abilities.
- Teachers have high expectations of students and usually set work that is well matched to their ability. In a few lessons, teachers do not take sufficient account of information about students' previous learning and progress when setting work.
- Learning usually moves at a good pace but, in a few lessons, teachers talk for too long and students do not spend as much time as they could on getting on with tasks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The warmth and positive regard with which all staff treat students enables them to offer advice and guidance that is listened to and acted upon. The high quality of students' behaviour is evident in the enormous respect they have for each other and the school environment.
- Students behave exceptionally well during lessons and around the school. They are enthusiastic learners and invariably do their best. They appreciate that their achievements are celebrated and value the rewards they get for working hard.
- Students in the sixth form like attending City College as it makes them feel 'grown up' and they can make new friends. The school staff have worked closely with the students to help them be more independent and to behave appropriately in the college environment.
- Members of the school council are proud of the way in which their voice is heard and they can influence the school. For example, they were consulted over the appointment of the deputy headteacher.
- Students have very clear views and opinions about what is right and wrong, and this was evidenced in a lesson where the students were discussing crime and different forms of bullying, including homophobic bullying and discrimination. Students told the inspectors that, if there was any bullying, it was dealt with quickly by staff.
- Students report that they enjoy lessons and, as a result, punctuality is good and attendance is above average.
- Parents and carers agree that there is a high standard of behaviour in the school.
- There is a positive and supportive atmosphere at all levels in the school. Students state that the school is a safe place to be, and those with different needs and abilities work cooperatively and harmoniously on a range of tasks.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and staff have successfully improved the school over the last two years. They have strengthened the curriculum so that it meets individual needs and abilities well, and have developed the current good-quality learning environment in which students thrive and feel valued.
- The leadership team has been restructured since the last inspection. This has resulted in increased capacity so that leaders have undertaken more rigorous observations of lessons, work sampling and tracking of students' progress. Consequently, there have been good improvements in the quality of teaching and in students' achievement.
- Robust performance management has ensured a high focus on mentoring and supporting staff training needs. All staff have targets to raise students' achievement, to improve their professional skills and to support the school's plans for improvement. These targets are linked to salary progression.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well promoted. Great emphasis is placed on students working together, valuing the opinions of others and making good choices. Students gain in self-confidence and self-esteem, and are well prepared to move on to the next stage in their education.
- School leaders make sure that every student has the best possible opportunity to succeed. The local authority has supported the school well in its drive for improvement, checking the accuracy of school judgements on teaching and behaviour, and giving advice and support to teachers.
- Partnerships with the City College are well developed and enable the older students to experience and achieve well in a wider range of learning activities.
- The school is effective in tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. The progress students make is analysed well and the information used to make sure that timely support is arranged for them to achieve their targets.
- Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and its provision. One parent commented: 'The school has nurtured, encouraged and educated my son who before had faced quite a bleak future. He has gained in maturity, he has learnt life skills and will now be able to take GCSEs.'
- The school fully meets the requirements for safeguarding of students. It carries out the necessary checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and all staff receive the appropriate training and guidance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable, well organised and has a wide range of skills. It asks challenging questions of the headteacher and senior staff.
 - Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, and fully support the leadership team's drive for improvement. Governors know about the targets set for teachers and what the school is doing to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance.
 - The governing body ensures that the school meets statutory safeguarding requirements and that the school finances are well managed.
 - The use of the pupil premium funding and the impact it is having on the achievement of students is regularly evaluated and kept under review. As a result, the governing body holds

the school to account for any differences in the progress of students.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110943
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	405311

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	171
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Guthrie
Headteacher	Janet James
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2011
Telephone number	01733 568058
Fax number	01733 553855
Email address	office@marshfields-sch.co.uk

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