

The Marlborough Church of England School

Shipton Road, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, OX20 1LP

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All students make good progress from their starting points.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and their questioning is skilful. Lessons are well planned.
- The sixth form is good. Students are well supported to make informed choices about their next steps in education, training or employment.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations.
- Students' behaviour is of a high standard. Students are supported well and feel highly valued as part of the school community.
- Senior leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of the school. Their high expectations and aspirations for students have resulted in improvements in students' achievement and progress.
- Very varied and effective opportunities are given for students to develop their spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness. As a result, students work very well together, and relationships are harmonious and respectful.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Not all teachers make good use of assessment information to plan work at the right level of difficulty for their students.
- The quality of marking is variable and does not always provide students with guidance about what they need to do to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 46 lessons, looked at students’ books, and discussed work with students in each key stage and across a range of subjects. Nine lesson observations were undertaken jointly with the school’s senior leaders. Inspectors also visited an assembly and tutor time, and talked to students at break time.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents relating to governance, the quality of teaching, school improvement, and the monitoring of students’ attainment and progress.
- Safeguarding procedures were checked.
- Inspectors took account of 63 responses to the Ofsted Parent View online questionnaire and reviewed 49 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers who attended a Year 9 rewards assembly and to parents and carers of students who attend the specialist resource unit (The Ormerod Resource Base).
- An inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of Abingdon and Witney College, Trax Motor Project, Oxford Hospital School and Oxford Brookes University.

Inspection team

Lisa Moore, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Sarah Hubbard	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector
Peter Clifton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- In October 2012, the school became an academy. When the predecessor school, also called The Marlborough Church of England School, was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2011, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above the national average.
- The percentage of students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- Approximately 10 Key Stage 4 students currently attend courses at Abingdon and Witney College, Trax Motor Project, Oxford Hospital School, Southampton Football Academy and Oxford Brookes University.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs relating to a broad range of complex learning, behavioural and life-limiting disabilities. This is called the Ormerod Resource Base and currently has 22 students who are taught within the base and, where possible, in mainstream classes across the school. All of these students have a statement of special educational needs. The base is funded by the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - all teachers make good use of information on students' progress when planning lessons so that work is set at the right level of difficulty
 - teachers' marking clearly tells students what they need to do to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students start Year 7 with levels of attainment that are generally in line with those expected for their age. In 2013, the proportion of students who achieved five or more GCSEs at grade C or higher, including in English and mathematics, was significantly above the national average. This reflects the good progress students make in all year groups.
- The proportion of students making or exceeding expected progress in English is significantly above national figures. This is due to good teaching that has a strong focus on the continual assessment of students' progress and understanding.
- The proportion of students making or exceeding expected progress in mathematics is in line with national figures.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress. In 2013, there was no gap in the GCSE grades achieved by these students in English and mathematics compared to those achieved by their classmates. This reflects the school's careful attention to students' individual needs and the effective use of extra support.
- The most-able students learn well in school. The proportion of these students achieving the top GCSE grades was above the national average in 2013 in a number of subjects, including business studies, history, mathematics and chemistry. Assessment information indicates this trend is continuing.
- In many subjects, the development of students' reading, writing and communication skills is a key feature of lessons. In these subjects, effective marking addresses students' mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and the use of key words and terms helps students to expand their vocabulary. Numeracy skills are less well developed across the school.
- The school uses Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to provide additional support for lower-attaining students, for example through one-to-one help and extra support in lessons. School assessment information indicates that these students make similar progress to their classmates and that some make more rapid progress.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the school's effective support. Assessment information is used effectively to quickly identify and address students' needs. Well-trained teaching assistants provide targeted support for students in lessons.
- Students who attend the Ormerod Resource Base make good progress from a wide range of different starting points and achieve well. Learning activities are typically closely matched to their individual and very diverse needs, so that students are able to develop their understanding and skills well.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. By the end of the sixth form, results are in line with, and often above, national averages in most subjects.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Six students in Key Stage 4 attend courses supported by a range of alternative providers. The attendance, behaviour and progress of these students are closely monitored by the school. These students make similar progress to their peers.
- Six students from the Ormerod Resource Base attend the Clear Unit based at Oxford Brookes University, on a part-time basis. This provides these students with highly specialised clinical exercise and rehabilitation support. There is detailed, effective and frequent communication between staff of the resource base and staff at the university. Consequently, these students make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding, resulting in most students making good progress and achieving well over time.
- Typically, good and outstanding teaching is characterised by strong subject knowledge, activities which are planned to meet a range of students' needs, and skilful questioning. In these lessons, teachers frequently check students' understanding and adapt their teaching to ensure students continue to make progress. Target grades are continually reviewed and raised to challenge students further. Students in these lessons are clear about what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers use their detailed knowledge of examination requirements and clear explanations to ensure that students are well prepared for examinations.
- In a Year 11 mathematics revision lesson for more-able students, the teacher used his subject expertise to present a range of challenging tasks to students, which enabled them to apply previous learning to complex problems.
- Many teachers give useful feedback to students about what they need to do to improve. For example, in English, students benefit from very clear and specific guidance about how well they have met the success criteria for a piece of work and what they need to do to improve. This practice is not consistently applied across the school and some feedback does not explain to students what their next steps should be.
- There are good opportunities across different subjects for students to practise, apply and extend their literacy skills, and students are offered many opportunities to read aloud or in silence. The school's library is well used and offers a range of reading materials.
- Some teaching requires improvement. In these lessons, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan activities at the right level of difficulty for students, so that teachers' expectations of the progress students can make are not high enough and the pace of learning is slow.
- Students who attend the Ormerod Resource Base benefit from skilled and highly committed teaching from staff who have a comprehensive understanding of their needs. Consequently, activities provided are carefully planned and effectively meet students' different needs. In mainstream lessons, students have good access to the subjects they study and they are able to participate well, with the result that some students achieve good results at GCSE level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Behaviour around the school, in corridors and at break times is calm and orderly.
- The school site is well cared for and respected by students and there is no litter or graffiti.
- Students are friendly, polite and helpful. While establishing a higher expectation of achievement, the caring ethos of the school has been maintained by staff and students. Relationships are good. Students feel well supported and cared for by staff. As one student explained to an inspector, 'Teachers care; it's not just a job to them.'
- Attitudes to learning are positive and incidents of low-level disruption are rare. However, students do not frequently demonstrate a thirst for knowledge or push themselves to achieve as much as they could.
- The amount of poor behaviour recorded in and outside the classroom is low. There have been no permanent exclusions for six years. The number of fixed-term exclusions has decreased as a result of the school's approach to behaviour management and is well below national levels.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. The appointment of an attendance officer has reduced the level of persistent absence, particularly for students known to be eligible for free school meals, so that it is now currently below that found nationally.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Great care is taken to ensure that the school is safe and that safeguarding policies, procedures and practice are rigorous.
- Students say they feel safe at school. Students who spoke to inspectors reported that incidents

of bullying are very rare. The school's records of incidents reflect this view. Students were clear that if bullying did occur it would be dealt with effectively and quickly by a member of staff.

- Students have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including racist, cyber and homophobic bullying, and the potential dangers presented by electronic forms of communication such as text messaging. This is due to effective teaching in personal, social and health education lessons across the school.
- The school has strong partnerships with external agencies to give extra support to students whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable.
- Safeguarding requirements are met very well. All adults are trained regularly in child protection, and procedures to keep students safe are robust.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is committed to ensuring that all students are given the opportunity to develop their individual talents and skills in order for them to do the best possible. She has effectively communicated this vision to build strong teams of middle and senior leaders. Over time, expectations of what students can achieve have been raised.
- The school's self-evaluation and development planning are reflective and well considered. Inspectors agreed with all the judgements made in the school's self-evaluation document. Strategies to raise levels of attainment and progress are thoughtfully planned, and carefully monitored and evaluated.
- Middle leaders show a high degree of responsibility for developing the skills of the teams they manage. They ensure meetings have a clear focus on improving students' progress.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. There has been an increasing focus on the use of information on students' progress to identify those who need more support. Students commented positively about the advice and guidance they receive to make decisions about their next steps in education, training or employment.
- The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a fundamental part of the school. The school's 'electives' programme offers a wide range of choices, which effectively support students' progress and development in a variety of ways, many of which result in recognised awards. Students involve themselves in a range of charitable events, and participate in visits to theatres and museums as well as trips abroad.
- The Ormerod Resource Base has a profoundly positive impact on the way in which students gain a sense of what it means to be inclusive. This benefits all students because it establishes diversity as the norm.
- The school benefits from strong relationships with other local schools through the West Oxfordshire Learning Partnership. Because of its work with a local secondary school, middle and senior leaders have been able to access high-quality training from the National College for Teaching and Leadership. This is building the capacity for improvement.
- The choice of subjects offered to students is broad and well matched to their needs. Adaptions are made to meet individual needs, including off-site provision. Effective careers advice and guidance are provided at key points for students to support them as they make their choices. Students who spoke to inspectors felt they were given comprehensive information about the choices open to them for their next steps in education, training or employment.
- The school has developed a rigorous system for tracking students' achievement and progress, ensuring that teachers are well informed about students' progress and, where teaching is best, this information is used carefully to match activities to a range of students' needs.
- The school uses and analyses a wide range of evidence to build an accurate picture of the quality of teaching, for example lesson observations and the work in students' books. Teachers receive detailed feedback about how they can improve their practice. Additionally, teachers benefit from a variety of targeted and bespoke training and support. Improvements in teaching have resulted from this support and development. There are clear links between teachers' performance, students' outcomes and teachers' appraisal. The headteacher and the governing

body take account of this when agreeing teachers' pay progression.

- Leadership of the Ormerod Resource Base is effective. It ensures that these more vulnerable students feel safe, valued and respected by all members of the school community. Leaders of the base make sure that students' individual programmes are closely matched to their needs. Leaders use their professional judgement and knowledge effectively to draw on extended support so that students' needs are well understood by staff. There is effective communication between leaders of the resource base and those of the main school.
- Parents and carers are engaged in a variety of ways, for example through regular parent questionnaires and invitations to attend 'rewards assemblies'. Responses to Parent View endorse parents' and carers' confidence in the school, and confirm that their children feel safe and make good progress. Several parents of children who attend the Ormerod Resource Base wrote to inspectors to express their praise and gratitude for the support their children receive.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are supportive, well informed and reflective. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development as a result of effective monitoring and frequent updates. Members of the governing body are asking increasingly challenging questions of senior leaders as their understanding of students' achievement strengthens. They understand how the pupil premium and the Year 7 catch-up premium are spent and the impact this is having on students' progress. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching across the school and ensure that the performance of all staff, including the headteacher, is linked to pay progression. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of issues relating to the safeguarding of students and make sure all national safeguarding requirements are met.

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	138817
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	426551

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,050
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Robins
Headteacher	Julie Fenn
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 November 2011
Telephone number	01993 811431
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