School report

# Marden High School - A Specialist Maths, Science and Media Arts College

Hartington Road, Cullercoats, North Shields, Tyne and Wear

| **Inspection dates** | 4–5 December 2013 |
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| **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 | | Outstanding | 1 |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The inspiring leadership of the headteacher, supported by effective leaders and managers, have rapidly transformed the quality of learning. Highly effective governance makes a strong contribution to the school's performance.
- Senior leaders know exactly how to sustain the considerable gains made since the previous inspection.
- The standards that students attain have improved year on year. In 2013, standards in English and mathematics were high. Most-able students attain grades much higher than the national average.
- Good and often outstanding teaching ensures that students from all starting points make rapid progress and achieve well. They are frequently inspired to solve problems independently.
- Students with special educational needs, including those hearing impaired students, achieve exceptionally well, because intervention and support are so effective.
- Students' exemplary behaviour is characterised by high levels of engagement and commitment in lessons, across subjects. They are polite, courteous and considerate and are supported very effectively by their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- A rich curriculum provides a wide variety of opportunities for students to achieve highly.
- Students are exceptionally well cared for, supported and feel safe.
- The school enjoys the trust and confidence of almost all parents.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Rapid progress and high levels of achievement are not yet fully sustained in all subjects over time.
- In the few lessons that require improvement, tasks are not demanding enough, are insufficiently thought-provoking and questioning does not follow students' thinking closely enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 36 lessons including five paired observations and paired work scrutiny with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and short visits to classrooms around the school to in order to check the quality of what is provided for students.
- Inspectors held discussions with students, parents, four members of the governing body, school staff including those with responsibilities for subjects, and the local authority school development partner.
- Inspectors took account of the 166 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a range of documentation including the school's own records of students' current progress, parents' views, students' views and records from the observation of lessons, students' books and school improvement planning. They also considered documentation related to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

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|---|---|
| Clive Petts, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Anne Smedley | Additional Inspector |
| Patrick Hargreaves | Additional Inspector |
| Peter William Harrison | Additional Inspector |

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized secondary school which has specialist mathematics, science and media arts status.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The school has specialist provision for students who are hearing impaired.
- Currently, a well below average proportion of students are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families.
- Most students are from White British communities with a very small minority of students from minority ethnic groups.
- Twenty five Year 10 and 14 Year 11 students attend a vocational engineering course at Tyne Metropolitan College once a week and five students attend local authority pupil referral provision five days a week.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school enters some students early for GCSE examinations.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching that is at least good so that there is a consistent pattern of rapid progress and high achievement in all subjects by:
  - extending the inspiring and imaginative practice that exists in the school
  - ensuring that all teachers have consistently high expectations of what students of all ages and abilities can achieve, especially in science
  - making certain that high-quality questioning is consistently used to check students' knowledge and understanding throughout lessons.

# Inspection judgements

## The achievement of pupils is good

- Although standards achieved by students in 2013 GCSE examinations were high in both English and mathematics, more rapid and consistent progress was made in mathematics than in English. Current school information, confirmed by the scrutiny of students' work and lesson observation evidence, demonstrate that current Year 11 students are achieving as well in English as in mathematics.
- Overall, those most-able students achieve at least well. In GCSE English, mathematics, French, graphics and media the most able students achieve highly, with attainment at A* to A grade significantly above the national average.
- Students enter school with skills above those expected for their age. As students move through the school, progress rates have accelerated year on year over the past three years. Any variations in progress rates are being decisively tackled by senior leaders. Those students who are entered early for GCSE examinations gain success and achieve well, because careful consideration is given to exactly when each student should be entered. If needed, almost all students are motivated to go on and improve their grades.
- Those students who attend vocational courses off-site, attend regularly and achieve well in their practically based learning.
- The attainment gap between those students eligible for pupil premium funding and in receipt of free school meals and their classmates is narrowing swiftly. Current students' progress information predicts that all attainment gaps in English and mathematics will be eradicated by the end of the current Year 11. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. Effectively-targeted additional funding for Year 7 students with literacy and numeracy weaknesses, is adding to the momentum of progress eradicating any attainment gaps.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including those hearing impaired, make outstanding progress. They achieve highly, because teachers and classroom assistants use the detailed information they have on how to meet their needs highly successfully.
- Whole-school initiatives to improve reading skills and the effective use of new technology, are having a substantial impact. Excellent progress is made in nurturing an enjoyment of reading, such as in the welcoming library, and using new technology to support independent study. This underpins the school's successful efforts to promote students' resilience, patience and determination when managing their own learning.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall, with close to half the teaching observed by inspectors outstanding. Senior leaders have worked diligently to improve the quality and consistency of learning since the previous inspection. Any underperformance has been tackled purposefully and swiftly.
- Teachers have high expectations of what students of all backgrounds can achieve. They understand the needs of students well and tailor activities in lessons that are extremely well matched to individual students' needs, abilities and talents. Methods that motivate students to think analytically, justify their thinking, provide solutions and make decisions capture and hold interest very well. Teachers and classroom assistants are reflective and demonstrate a strong desire to continuously improve their effectiveness.
- When progress is most rapid and achievement high, teachers:
  - establish high expectations and demands for what students of all backgrounds can achieve
  - adopt imaginative, thought-provoking methods which require that students work things out for themselves or with a partner
  - use high-quality questioning that follows students' thinking and constantly probes and stretches their knowledge and understanding

- employ accurate marking and helpful feedback to ensure that students can make rapid gains.

- In the few lessons that require improvement:
  - the expectations and demands made of students are too variable and not always well matched to their needs and abilities
  - methods adopted lack that essential vitality to create interest and discussion
  - teachers' questions do not challenge or stretch students' thinking enough
  - opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage students to think critically and deepen their understanding.
- When progress is rapid and achievement highest, students become totally absorbed, often independently completing the lesson task. For example, in an English lesson inspired teaching ensured that students successfully used photographs to write in imaginative and creative ways to express their feelings and views. Yet, this highly successful practice is not fully shared in all subject areas.
- Students' work is frequently and positively marked. They are informed how well they have done and provided with constructive guidance as to how they can improve, although occasionally this can be variable in its quality.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour in lessons and at social times is exemplary. They are considerate, sensible and friendly. This is because the school makes certain that they are extremely well prepared to become responsible citizens. Movement around the building is calm and highly ordered. Classrooms are happy places in which to work. Students are acutely aware of the boundaries for their conduct.
- Students report that bullying occurs infrequently. Their confidence and trust in staff is evident when they describe how promptly any concerns, worries and any inappropriate behaviour are addressed by staff. Students appreciate the meaningful rewards that are provided for them and feel that sanctions are applied fairly. Almost all parents agree that their children are safe and happy.
- Students, whose needs are complex or whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable, are managed skilfully, thoughtfully and sensitively by staff. This includes those placed in local authority specialist provision.
- Students are very well informed about the risks of new technology and use both their own personal equipment and that belonging to the school, safety and responsibly. For example, when using a thesaurus application on their mobile phone in lessons. They are well aware of how to manage and avoid risk and danger. Students thrive on the responsibilities that they are given and take great pride in their contributions to school improvement, such as making decisions in the school cabinet.
- The school has effective systems in place to manage attendance and punctuality. Consequently, attendance has improved appreciably and is now above average.

## The leadership and management are outstanding

- The resolute headteacher has led the school with drive and energy in the highly successfully push to achieve excellence. Senior leaders have relentlessly added to the school's many strengths. Those with subject responsibility, such as in English and mathematics, are highly skilled securing consistent patterns of faster progress and high achievement. Staff share leaders' high ambitions for students and provide excellent role models. The determined approaches adopted by leaders and managers underpin the considerable improvement from the satisfactory judgement of the previous inspection. This demonstrates that the school is well placed to improve further.
- Rigorous and robust checking systems make certain that the school has a precise view of its own

performance. Areas that require improvement are quickly and accurately identified and tackled. Senior leaders, including governors, are well aware of what actions are required to strengthen the school's performance even more.

- The leadership and management of teaching are excellent. Lesson quality is frequently checked, including by members of the governing body, and all staff training is closely shaped to meet school and individual staff needs. Those newly qualified teachers are exceptionally well guided and supported. Performance management is effective and closely matched to rewards and incentives.
- School leaders are passionate ensuring that each student has an equal chance to achieve success. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Checks which reveal any declines in the performance of different groups of students are quickly identified and remedied.
- The rich curriculum is very well matched to the needs of students. This includes providing appropriate vocational opportunities off-site. The wide range of enrichment activities, including visits and visitors, ensures an effective match to students' interests. The school's specialisms contribute effectively, for example, the impact of media in its various forms can be seen in the high quality of display throughout the school.
- The provision for students' personal development is excellent, reinforced by their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's performance and provides effective challenge and constructive support in equal measure.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, including when students attend off-site provision. There is much good practice supporting the high quality of care provided for students.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The highly effective governing body display an accurate view of the school's performance and the changing needs of the local community. The governors reveal high ambitions and have a clear plan for the development of high quality provision for students. The governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They ensure all staff are held to account through successful performance management. The governing body manages finances effectively and is well informed of the impact of pupil premium funding on students' achievement. Governors are assiduous sharing their expertise and taking full advantage of professional and personal training opportunities.

# What inspection judgements mean

| School Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| 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 | 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.<br><br>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. |

## School details

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| **Unique reference number** | 108627 |
| **Local authority** | North Tyneside |
| **Inspection number** | 430900 |

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 of pupils on the school roll** | 780 |
| **Appropriate authority** | The governing body |
| **Chair** | Robert Laycock |
| **Headteacher** | Jonathan Morris |
| **Date of previous school inspection** | 11 October 2011 |
| **Telephone number** | 0191 2006357 |
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