

Inspection of a good school: Marden High School

Hartington Road, Cullercoats, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE30 3RZ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

Marden High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is a strong sense of community at Marden High School. Pupils thrive. Behaviour in many lessons is exemplary. Pupils support one another in their learning. They listen attentively to staff and respond with enthusiasm when challenging questions are asked. Pupils' conduct around school demonstrates respect for staff and for each other.

Pupils feel safe at school. They know that if they raise a concern, staff will take it seriously. Bullying is rare. The school is an inclusive place where those from different backgrounds are welcomed. Diversity is celebrated through the curriculum.

All staff have high expectations for pupils. This is exemplified by an ambitious curriculum and a wide variety of enrichment activities available to pupils. Opportunities for student leadership are varied and meaningful for all those involved. Pupils are proud of what they do. They know their opinions make a difference within the school. The student council, prefects and pupil cabinets are an important part of school life.

The school's core values of 'hope, agency and leadership' are a strong foundation for life at the school. Pupils are positive about their futures and celebrate success daily. Staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning. They help them to become more resilient. Pupils eagerly meet new challenges and help others around them.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is carefully designed. Leaders have considered the knowledge and skills they want pupils to acquire at each stage of their learning. Leaders plan meaningful opportunities for pupils to learn how different topics connect to one another. Pupils benefit from participation in a variety of academic, technical and creative subjects. The broad curriculum contributes to pupils developing a range of valuable skills.

In some subjects, including English, pupils demonstrate a thirst for knowledge. Teachers ask questions that encourage pupils to think deeply. However, in some lessons, teachers'

explanations and/or activity choices for pupils are less effective. Occasionally, these choices do not enable pupils to fully understand more complex topics.

Assessment has been adapted specifically for each subject. Teachers use information from assessments to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. In mathematics, for example, additional lesson time is given to re-visiting topics pupils have not fully understood. Pupils value assessment and use it to reflect on what they know and where they need to improve.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) follow the same curriculum as their peers. Teachers carefully consider their needs when planning and teaching lessons. Staff supporting pupils with SEND are skilled and knowledgeable. They work with classroom teachers to ensure pupils with SEND do not fall behind in lessons.

Supporting pupils to become fluent readers is a priority for leaders. They have a clear understanding of why some pupils struggle to read well. Some pupils receive additional support from staff to help improve their reading. Across the school, pupils engage in many opportunities to develop their literacy. For example, in form time, pupils lead discussions on a wide range of quality texts.

Expectations for pupils' behaviour and attendance are high. Since the last inspection, leaders have addressed attendance issues amongst disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they now attend more regularly. There is little difference in attendance rates between different groups of pupils.

Pupils' personal development is a strong feature of the school. Leaders recognise the importance of a broad curriculum that goes beyond academic subjects. Pupils value the opportunity to discuss a wide range of age-appropriate topics. Plans are in place to develop the curriculum further by inviting speakers from local community groups, businesses and charities to work with pupils.

Extra-curricular opportunities are varied. These include a Korean language club, chess, gardening and a range of sports. Leaders regularly review what is offered and who attends each activity. They have taken steps to encourage some groups of pupils to participate more fully. These changes are at an early stage of development.

Pupils receive independent careers guidance. They undertake work experience in Year 10. However, some pupils do not have a secure understanding of further education or career choices. Leaders are in the process of including careers information in the wider curriculum to better support pupils in making informed choices.

Staff are very positive about how leaders consider workload and support their well-being. Staff welcome the many opportunities for professional development. These training opportunities are matched securely to the identified school improvement priorities. Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They understand the current strengths and weaknesses. They bring a wide range of skills and experience to support leaders and hold them to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding are experienced and knowledgeable about a range of factors that may put pupils at risk. They share this knowledge with all staff. As a result, pupils who are in need of support or at risk of harm are quickly identified.

The school provides highly effective support for vulnerable pupils. This is strengthened by leaders' work with external agencies and charities. Pupils know how to access additional support if they need to. Leaders closely monitor the impact of their work on the well-being of pupils. They keep detailed records and identify those who may be vulnerable inside and outside of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While teachers' subject knowledge is strong, in some subjects they do not select explanations or activities that are best suited to the topic. As a result, pupils do not consistently master more complex skills and knowledge. Leaders should ensure they enact current plans so that staff receive appropriate training to develop their explanations and activity choices, and that best practice is shared amongst staff.
- Information about how different subjects contribute to a variety of careers is not embedded across the curriculum. This means that pupils do not have a clear understanding of how the subjects they study could contribute to a future career. Leaders should ensure they enact current plans to strengthen the focus on careers throughout the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	108627
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10240445
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	917
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Father Adrian Hughes
Headteacher	Matt Snape
Website	www.mardenhigh.net
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school currently uses one alternative provider, Moorbridge Student Support Centre. The provider is registered with the Department for Education. The provision was not visited during this inspection.
- Through its careers programme, the school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education, qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors spoke to teaching and non-teaching staff, in addition to representatives of the school's governing body.
- To evaluate the quality of education, deep dives were carried out in English, mathematics and geography. Inspectors spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons,

looked at books and spoke to both pupils and staff. Aspects of other subjects, including science and art, were also reviewed.

- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including checks made on all adults who come on to the school site. Inspectors spoke with pupils and staff to ensure their understanding of safeguarding procedures. An inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to check on their work to keep pupils safe in school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff surveys, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

John Linkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jill Bowe

Ofsted Inspector

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