

# Marriotts School

Brittain Way, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG2 8UT

## Inspection dates

19–20 October 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The inspirational headteacher uses her expertise to lead the school with high expectations. She, along with senior leaders, is ambitious for every pupil to do well. Highly effective leadership has secured rapid improvements in pupils' progress and attendance, which are now good.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors' highly focused visits provide them with an accurate understanding of the school's performance. Governors use this information to skilfully support and challenge leaders to continuously improve.
- Leaders' innovative use of training has ensured that subject leaders and teachers develop their understanding and skills well. As a result, teaching, learning and the accuracy of assessment have improved rapidly across nearly all subjects.
- Teachers skilfully use their strong subject knowledge and rich variety of questioning techniques to check pupils' understanding and to challenge the most able.
- Almost all teachers use pupil assessment information to plan enjoyable learning. Different groups of pupils are challenged appropriately and make good progress in most lessons. Where teaching is less effective, for example in some science lessons, some pupils lose interest and their progress slows.
- Leaders have designed a life skills programme that makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils respect each other and know how to stay safe.
- In 2015, attendance was above national expectations. Leaders' swift actions have ensured that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved quickly and is now high.
- Leaders' incisive actions have improved the progress of disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than other pupils nationally.
- Sixth-form provision is good. Leaders have ensured that students follow appropriate courses that enable them to achieve well. As a result, more students than previously are proceeding to higher education.
- Leaders' new 'everybody reads, everybody writes' strategy is already a feature of all lessons. All teachers use subject-specific resources to develop reading. Pupils' writing across the curriculum is improving but not as fast as their reading skills.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be outstanding by:
  - improving teachers' planning in science so that pupils make more rapid progress
  - ensuring that new strategies for literacy across the curriculum are established firmly so that standards of writing rise, particularly for boys
  - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching across the school by sharing the best practice that already exists.
- Improve the quality of post-16 provision to be outstanding by:
  - improving teachers' planning in GCSE mathematics so that pupils make more rapid progress
  - improving the progress students make on level 3 academic qualifications by structuring learning to take account of their different starting points.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, the exceptional headteacher has demonstrated an unrelenting passion for creating a 'no excuses' culture where all pupils can achieve well. Significant improvements in standards of teaching, learning and assessment have led to a rapid increase in pupils' outcomes. Pupils' progress is now securely good across nearly all subjects and in all year groups.
- Leaders and teachers have quickly secured highly accurate self-evaluation. Leaders and governors actively seek advice and guidance from critical friends in the form of the local authority and a multi-academy trust. Leaders use this guidance to sharpen their own skills about how they evaluate their own effectiveness, and the provision in the school.
- Subject leaders are rapidly leading change in the school. They ensure that whole-school priorities for raising standards are implemented quickly and consistently by all in their departments. Leadership at all levels is highly effective because senior leaders set clear expectations of staff and pupils.
- Leaders and governors skilfully deploy the school's resources to provide appropriate training and development for staff at all stages of their career. Staff are proud to work at the school, and feel very well supported in improving their teaching skills. The senior team overcomes recruitment issues in a number of subjects, through valuable strategic work with local training partners, for example, by training its own teachers on school-based training schemes.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching is highly accurate and effective. Leaders and governors review a wide range of evidence on pupils' achievement. Leaders and governors reward successful teachers through pay progression, or support underperforming, new and developing teachers with coaching to improve their practice.
- Leaders have rapidly improved the attendance of some of the most vulnerable pupils. Pastoral leaders monitor pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour systematically. As a result of these actions, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved quickly.
- Leaders have raised the achievement of pupils through a programme of substantial monitoring and support. They identify pupils' underperformance in its early stages and provide successful mentoring or intervention classes to help pupils to catch up. This has helped pupils to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective. Thorough processes are used to identify pupils' needs when they first arrive at the school. Teachers use this information very well to plan appropriate learning strategies. Pupils' outcomes, including their attendance, have improved rapidly and are now high.

- Leaders and governors use additional government funding very wisely and prudently to improve pupils' progress. Leaders target funding to support the pupils who most need it and their strategies show clear evidence of quickly improving standards of literacy. Additional tuition, trips and visits and basic school equipment have ensured that these pupils are well supported in their learning. Provisional 2016 results indicate that the progress of disadvantaged pupils and the most able has improved significantly and is above that of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders have created a curriculum that is now enabling boys and girls to achieve equally well. The range and quality of courses, including personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. The carefully organised off-site tuition, accessed by a small number of pupils, is highly relevant to their needs and ambitions for the future. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a project to build a school in Gambia.
- Leaders have created a harmonious school community that models their approach to teaching pupils about British values such as respect, tolerance and democracy. Pupils are given plentiful opportunities to explore their own ideas and identity in the context of the wider world. For example, teachers skilfully manage debates about religious tolerance and democracy in history. Pupils learn about equality of opportunity through the close links with the neighbouring school for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved across the whole school. In particular, outcomes in mathematics and modern languages have improved rapidly. Leaders and governors have rightly identified that science is still an area for development and have appointed a new deputy headteacher, who is a science specialist, to bring additional line management support to the faculty.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance is outstanding. The governing body provide a high level of challenge and support to school leaders. Governors' and leaders' vision and ambitions for the school are completely aligned and equally aspirational.
- Governance is rigorous because governors use their superb range of experience to check how well the school is doing on highly structured, full-day visits to the school that involve staff's and pupils' views. Governors regularly seek the views of parents. As a result of these activities, governors have a highly nuanced understanding of historical achievement and current issues.
- Governors ensure that they are all well trained and deploy themselves very effectively to strengthen the strategic direction of the school. For example, two governors are linked with science to monitor the school's improvement planning for that area.
- The governing body reviews all policies regularly and ensures that they are up to date, that they meet statutory requirements and are accessible to parents and carers via the informative website.
- Governors are managing the budget carefully from a position of deficit in a difficult financial climate. They have a precise plan to return the school to a balanced budget and the milestones achieved so far show that this plan is on track to be successful.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are highly effective; the school has an open culture in which safeguarding is a clearly expressed priority. This is both in relation to teaching pupils how to keep safe, and in engaging staff to understand and fulfil their responsibilities. Parents have access to the safeguarding policy on the website and school leaders' communication with parents is good, if concerns arise.
- Governors are appropriately trained to ensure that safeguarding procedures are carried out accurately. For example, several governors and leaders are trained in safe recruitment practices and one of them is always present on staff interview panels.
- A governor trained in safeguarding monitors the checks that the school makes on persons seeking employment at the school and on anyone wishing to volunteer their support.
- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are secure. All key documents are in place and staff are all appropriately trained at the right level for the safeguarding roles they are expected to carry out. For example, all staff have recently had anti-radicalisation and extremism training and can explain what to do if they have concerns.
- School leaders have ensured that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that a public right of way across the school grounds is safe. Leaders' risk assessments have led to new fences being erected and access to the building is only possible with electronic passes.
- The school's well-trained safeguarding team ensures that vulnerable pupils' attendance is carefully monitored. Child protection procedures are well designed and the designated leader for safeguarding monitors the processes carefully and ensures that educational plans are relevant. Regular updates to staff inform them of any high-priority pupils who need the closest support and this ensures that they are well looked after.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Rigorous leadership has ensured that teaching, learning and assessment have improved swiftly since the last inspection, and are now typically good.
- Teachers have been well trained in questioning techniques. Nearly all teachers use the school's strategy for focused questioning to check girls' and boys' understanding equally and to stretch the most able pupils. This has led to all groups of pupils making faster progress.
- Teachers use a range of assessment techniques to feed back to pupils how they can improve. In most lessons, teachers implement the school's feedback policy well. Pupils say that when they respond to teachers' comments, it helps them learn more. For example, in English lessons, when teachers set the pupils a follow-up question on their GCSE poetry analysis, it improved their understanding.
- Teachers set homework regularly in accordance with the school's policy. Parents and pupils are generally positive about the homework provided because they say it reinforces learning. Most-able pupils are challenged by being given extended reading projects for homework that require them to explain their understanding in more detail.

- Teachers consistently use information about the learning of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to plan activities that both challenge and support them to learn well. As a result, learning support assistants are confident in how best to work with pupils and this leads to faster progress.
- Most teachers use their thorough subject knowledge to plan learning that meets the needs of all groups of pupils and ensures that most lesson time is used productively. However, in some science lessons, planning does not always meet the needs of all groups of pupils. As a result, some lose interest and progress slows.
- Leaders ensure that literacy is given a priority across the curriculum. Teachers ensure that pupils read relevant materials to support and develop their learning. As a result, pupils read well and learn a wide range of relevant, subject-specific vocabulary. The focus on writing across the curriculum is a more recent strategy and is having an early impact in better preparing pupils to write for extended periods. Leaders are now adjusting this strategy to focus more closely on standards of writing for different purposes and boys' handwriting.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding
- Pupils feel extremely safe and very well looked after by the school's staff, a view shared overwhelmingly by parents. Pupils say that all forms of bullying are rare and the school's records reflect this. Pupils have total confidence that staff will help and support them, should they have any concerns.
- A culture of mutual respect is palpable across the school. The value of tolerance permeates all aspects of school life, creating a harmonious and inclusive community. Pupils who met inspectors were proud of how children from a local special school, who learn at Marriotts, are respected and treated as equal members in the community.
- Pupils receive high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance. This includes the opportunity for them to receive mentoring from a trained team. As a result, pupils make informed choices related to options, careers and employment and this leads to good progress in their lessons. The proportion of Year 11 pupils staying on at the school's sixth form is rising quickly towards the national average.
- All pupils are taught how to stay safe online as well as learning about the dangers of cyber-bullying and sexting. Leaders also ensure that pupils are educated about the full range of potential risks they might face. For example, lessons include the risks of radicalisation and extremism and what to do if pupils are worried about a friend being susceptible. Pupils eloquently explained to inspectors their understanding of how to stay safe in a variety of situations. The school makes highly effective use of internal and external resources to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable are well looked after. The attention given to pupils' individual needs on transfer to the school helps to overcome any early anxieties they might have. Year 7 pupils described how the regular visits to school while they were in Year 6 and the summer school helped them acclimatise to life at Marriotts.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Pupils conduct themselves well and show self-discipline. They move around the corridors calmly and promptly. The school's innovative use of music of different tempos, combined with the diligence of staff, leads to high levels of punctuality.
- Pupils respect the learning environment. Displays are learning focused, well maintained and attractive. Litter is rare and graffiti non-existent.
- Pupils value their education because they enjoy school, and overall attendance is above the national average. Leaders' actions have rapidly improved the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, and of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is now high. Leaders' work with the families of pupils whose attendance was a concern has been highly effective, and consequently persistent absence has reduced quickly to be below the national average.
- Pupils say that behaviour in lessons is good and that where poor behaviour occurs, it is dealt with swiftly. From inspection evidence, most lessons are calm and purposeful. However, in some lessons, for example in science, where the school's behaviour policy is not effectively applied, pupils become disengaged and progress slows.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' achievement has improved rapidly in a wide range of subjects, including mathematics and humanities, since 2015. Provisional examination results for 2016 show that pupils' attainment and progress across eight subjects at key stage 4 are above the national average. Pupils achieved especially well in English.
- Current pupils make good progress. Work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information demonstrate that leaders' actions to address girls' underperformance have resulted in rapid improvements. For example, in English lessons, girls have lessons separately from boys. This has led to more girls answering questions and has deepened their understanding.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, has improved rapidly across a range of subjects. Provisional 2016 examination results show that their progress was above that achieved by other pupils nationally. The school's own assessment records and pupils' work demonstrate that this continues for current pupils in all year groups. This is due to teachers' high expectations and plans for learning that are overcoming pupils' barriers to understanding.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved since the previous inspection so that it is now in line with that of other pupils with similar starting points.
- Pastoral leaders work closely with external colleagues to ensure that pupils who attend additional provision gain good qualifications in the courses they study, such as construction, hair and beauty, childcare and business and work skills. This is because pupils' attendance and attainment are monitored closely.

- The most able pupils make good progress in lessons towards their aspirational targets. Provisional 2016 examinations results indicate that the most able pupils have made more progress, across a broad range of subjects, than similar pupils nationally. The most able pupils are a small but growing proportion of pupils in the school, and leaders are rightly paying careful attention to increasing the challenge for this group, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Pupils' reading is promoted very well throughout the school, with opportunities to read in form time and across a range of subjects. Pupils eligible for Year 7 catch-up funding progress quickly in developing their skills in English and mathematics. The school's records demonstrate good improvements in pupils' reading. Leaders have rightly identified that standards of writing are an area for further development.

### 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- The sixth form is well led. Self-evaluation is sharp and incisive. It highlights what is working well and what needs improving. Detailed plans are in place to develop the curriculum further to match the changing ability profile of pupils joining the sixth form.
- Leaders have high expectations of students, whose progress is monitored closely. Strategic interventions are used to support underachievement quickly. This is bringing about rapid improvements in the proportion of students staying on from Year 12 into Year 13, and an increasing number of students are progressing to higher education in 2016.
- Leaders have designed a sixth-form curriculum that is predominately made up of work-related courses, which matches the needs of the majority of students. As a result, achievement in almost all subjects is above average, particularly so in business studies, information technology, sport, art and design, tourism and health studies. A much smaller proportion of students study academic subjects, where progress is good in some subjects such as English literature, history and art. Progress in some subjects is slower because planning does not meet the needs of students from their different starting points, for example in GCE A levels in French, sociology and philosophy.
- Teachers use assessment information and examination requirements well to plan learning activities that students enjoy and engage in fully. Teachers have high expectations of how students present their work. Their use of feedback explains to students what their strengths are as well as how to improve their learning. This leads to strong progress because students reflect on the feedback and take quick actions to improve their work.
- Leaders monitor absence and follow up all students who are away from school to ensure that they are safe. As a result, attendance and punctuality are high in the sixth form.
- Leaders have planned the 'Marriotts Extra' curriculum, which includes enrichment activities, employability skills, work experience and community activities. As a result, students' personal development is strong and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education or career.

- Leaders have ensured that the 16 to 19 study programmes are met comprehensively. The small numbers of students who have not yet achieved at least a grade C in GCSE English or mathematics have an opportunity to re-take these qualifications. Students make good progress in English but not enough students make good progress in mathematics.

## School details

Unique reference number	117534
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10019604

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,103
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melany McQueen
Headteacher	Bethany Honnor
Telephone number	01438 726999
Website	<a href="http://marriotts.herts.sch.uk">http://marriotts.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@marriotts.herts.sch.uk">head@marriotts.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school has grown since the last inspection to become larger than the average-sized local authority maintained secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.

- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils.
- A small number of pupils currently attend off-site training at North Herts Education Support Centre, Education Support for Medical Absence (ESTMA), Stevenage Education Support Centre, The Valley School or Nova Training.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 10 short and 35 more extended observations of pupils' learning in lessons, including many joint visits with senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors met with governors, senior and middle leaders and a group of newly qualified teachers.
- Inspectors met with pupils from each key stage and observed them in form time, in class and at informal times such as during breaktimes.
- Inspectors considered 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 32 free-text responses from parents, 40 responses to the staff questionnaire and 98 pupil survey responses.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, information relating to the quality of teaching and information about pupils' progress. They also considered school policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Simon Webb, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Crow	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Sean Powell	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Lewis	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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