

St John's Marlborough

Granham Hill, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 4AX

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | NOT PREVIOUSLY INSPECTED | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding because students in all year groups make rapid and sustained progress and standards achieved in GCSE examinations are significantly above national averages.
- Teaching is outstanding because teachers know their students well, have high expectations and use their expert subject knowledge to plan lessons which challenge and motivate students to achieve their best. In a few classes teachers do not always enable students to respond to their helpful marking.
- Students for whom the government provides additional funding make excellent progress and as a result their attainment is rapidly catching up with other students at the school.
- The school regularly reviews the programmes it offers, ensuring that they are appropriate to meet the needs of all students, enabling them to achieve exceptionally well.
- Students' behaviour is outstanding. They are exceptionally proud of their school and they are universally polite and courteous towards each other, staff and visitors. They are proud of their new buildings and look after them exceptionally well.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported extremely well through the St John's curriculum and the strong international dimension of the school.
- The visionary Principal is very well supported by his senior team and outstanding governing body. Together they have created an environment in which all may thrive and achieve to the highest standard.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Excellent teaching, outstanding personal support and appropriate study programmes enable students to achieve highly, preparing them well for higher education and employment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 49 lessons, including 10 that were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors also observed the routines for registration and attended an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and listened to some students read.
- Inspectors met with groups of students across the age and ability range to discuss their views on progress, teaching, behaviour and safety in the school.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body and school staff, including the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and teaching staff.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the school's Improvement Advisor.
- Inspectors took account of the 215 online responses to the Parent View questionnaire and three letters received from parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 135 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation documentation, the school's information on students' current progress, monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of governors' meetings and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Terry Fish, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Stephanie Matthews | Additional Inspector |
| Sylvie Trevana | Additional Inspector |
| Cherie White | Additional Inspector |
| Carol Worthington | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- St John's Marlborough is a larger-than-average secondary school.
- St John's Marlborough converted to become an academy school in September 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.
- The school has Leading Edge status with specialisms in technology, languages and the arts. It is also an International Baccalaureate World School.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are very low compared to national averages.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) is less than half the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is less than half the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students attend alternative provision at The Springfields Academy, Calne.
- The movement of students in and out of school at times other than the start of Year 7 is similar to that seen nationally and retention rates for the sixth form are higher than national.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that every student responds to the helpful marking provided by most teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding because all groups of students make excellent progress across a range of subjects. In 2013 the proportions making and exceeding expected progress in English were much higher than that found nationally and in mathematics were very high compared with that found nationally.
- For current students, the proportions making and exceeding expected progress in both English and mathematics are exceptionally high.
- Over the past three years the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been significantly higher than the national average. The school's data and inspection evidence indicate further improvements this year.
- In 2013 the attainment of students supported through the pupil premium, both in English and mathematics, was two grades behind those students not supported through such funding at GCSE. The school has provided significant support for eligible students and analysis of students' progress in Year 11 shows that the gap is now less than one GCSE grade. In addition, for students in Years 7 to 9, inspectors observed no difference between the achievement of those students who receive this additional support and the other students.
- Year 7 students eligible for additional catch-up funding (additional government funding for those students who joined the school in Year 7 with below average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics) make excellent progress. For example, in English, this additional support has enabled these students to make considerably greater progress than other students. In mathematics, eligible students make the same outstanding progress as other students.
- The learning and progress of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs are outstanding because their individual needs are well known and they receive high quality individual and personalised support.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- More-able students achieve exceptionally well and achieve the highest grades. The high quality expertise of the teachers, their high expectations and their careful planning enable the most able students to be appropriately challenged and stretched.
- The achievement of the very few students attending alternative provision at The Springfields Academy is excellent due to the highly personalised support the students receive.
- Results at A level, AS level and the International Baccalaureate are high. From broadly average starting points students go on to achieve grades considerably higher than the national average and many are successful at gaining places at Russell Group universities. Retention rates from Years 12 to 13 are also particularly high due to the outstanding teaching and personal support which students receive.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The vast majority of teaching is at least good and much is outstanding. Teachers have very high expectations of students so that they feel encouraged and supported to achieve the highest levels or grades.
- Teaching over time is typically outstanding and is characterised by the high level of expertise of teachers and their enthusiasm for their subject which is shared and reciprocated by the students.
- Teachers take great care to build on students' previous knowledge and this greatly aids their learning. An example was a Year 7 German lesson where the teacher skilfully built the students' learning as the lesson progressed enabling them to make outstanding progress while building their confidence with the language.
- Much is expected of students by their teachers, both in terms of work rate and in terms of

intellectual demand. Students eagerly rise to this challenge and maintain interest and remain focused through lessons. An example was a lower ability Year 8 mathematics class where students were being introduced to probability. The teacher maintained a brisk pace of learning ensuring that all were beginning to see, for themselves, the probability of particular numbers coming up.

- Questioning is skilfully used by teachers to enable students to challenge their knowledge and understanding. This was exemplified in a Year 10 English lesson where the teacher used probing questions to push the students' thinking and understanding of 'linguistic self'.
- Teachers' marking and feedback to students, although very effective in some classes, lack consistency across the school. They do not always show students what they need to do to improve their work or follow up whether students have acted on this advice.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs are supported well. Not only do teachers have high expectations of them but the highly effective support by teaching assistants enables these students to make excellent progress.
- In the sixth form the quality of teaching is consistently high. Students particularly value the high level of staff expertise and the personal support and feedback provided so they are clear about how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. School records and discussions with students show that they are immensely proud of their school and value the exceptionally high levels of care and support which the school provides. Behaviour is typically never less than good and is often outstanding.
- Students have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Their relationships with each other and with their teachers are particularly strong and have enabled a highly inclusive, supportive and high achieving culture to be established.
- Around the school students are polite and courteous to each other, members of staff and visitors. Students move around the site promptly, use the freely available social spaces at every opportunity and gather in easy social groups during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Excellent promotion of students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development has a highly positive impact on the way in which students interact with each other and their appreciation of people from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures.
- The strong international focus of the school has a highly positive impact on the students' attitudes towards each other, their community and the wider world.
- Students are immensely proud of their school and clearly appreciate the care and attention which staff give to them as individuals. In student interviews, when asked if they would recommend the school to others, Year 11 students commented, 'It's the best in Wiltshire'. When asked what students would like to be improved, students said, 'Nothing – the school has everything worked out.'
- Parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire were very positive about the school with the overwhelming majority feeling that their children were happy, well looked after and safe.
- Attendance is in line with national averages for secondary schools but is improving rapidly.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students' awareness of personal safety, including e-safety and cyber-bullying, is raised through assemblies, tutor time, visiting speakers and during lessons. They state bullying in all its forms is rare and, when it does occur, is dealt with swiftly and very effectively.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal provides outstanding leadership. Together with the outstanding governing body and highly effective senior and middle leaders, he has been uncompromising in driving up standards of achievement. They have created a school with an exceptionally strong ethos which is inclusive, outward looking and focused on high achievement.
- All leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, share an ambitious vision for the success of the school. One example is the way in which they have planned and created a completely new school, resulting in an outstanding environment in which all can thrive.
- The school's well-developed systems for checking students' progress enable timely, personalised and highly effective support for students. This, together with very robust systems for checking the performance of teachers and highly effective professional development, ensures that teaching is of the highest quality so that students make outstanding progress.
- The curriculum, at each key stage, including the sixth form, ensures that students of all aptitudes and abilities are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education or training.
- The school has very robust systems for checking standards across the school which involves leaders at all levels, including governors. Their judgements are accurate and plans for the future development of the school are focused well on securing even higher standards.
- The clarity and extent of the information provided to the governing body are excellent. The most recent focus on English and the achievement of students for whom the school receives additional funding has led to significant improvements.
- The school has engaged the services of an external advisor to provide challenge and support to the school and the governing body. The advice received is of a particularly high quality and has enabled the school to continue its drive for excellence.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet the current statutory requirements and equality of opportunity is promoted well through initiatives to promote diversity and by support for individual students.
- The leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. The school has exceptionally high expectations, teachers with excellent subject knowledge and outstanding teaching and personal support. A particularly strong feature is the way in which staff are always willing to help and support individuals. This is highly valued by the students, enabling them to excel.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school very well through an effective system of committees and monitoring procedures. It is supported well through the comprehensive and detailed information which it receives from the Principal and the Academy Improvement Advisor. The high quality reports received enable the governors to appreciate how the school is performing compared to others nationally. This has enabled them to challenge the school and set ambitious targets. Governors fully understand their responsibilities and have ensured that all safeguarding and child protection requirements are met. Skills within the governing body are used well to ensure that all expenditure is monitored carefully and that the school is financially stable. Governors are skilled at understanding data on the school's performance and rigorously hold the school to account. They are well aware of the impact of the pupil premium on improving outcomes for eligible students. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and the priorities for this to continue to improve. They are fully aware of how salary progression is linked to students' outcomes and ensure that performance management is appropriately monitored. Governors challenge leaders robustly to demonstrate how the school's results are improving and how teachers' performance is effectively managed.

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

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| Unique reference number | 138623 |
| Local authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 428854 |

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 | 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 | 1685 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 400 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jane Butler |
| Headteacher | Dr Patrick Hazlewood |
| Date of previous school inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Telephone number | 01672 516156 |
| Fax number | 01627 516664 |
| Email address | techcoll@stjohns.wilts.sch.uk |

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