

Inspection of a good school: Marshland High School

School Road, West Walton, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 7HA

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

Outcome

Marshland High School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Craig Jansen. This school is part of West Norfolk Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Andrew Johnson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Roger Livesey.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Marshland High School. They are encouraged and supported by staff. As a result, pupils trust adults to act in their best interests. Pupils are safe and describe any form of unkind language or behaviour as being infrequent. There is a strong sense of community.

The purposeful school environment further promotes pupils' engagement in school life. During social times pupils chat together happily. They interact with duty staff, and queue sensibly for the canteen. Behaviour in corridors during lesson changeover is equally calm. Pupils' work ethic is evident in lessons. This enables them, and their peers, to achieve well in many areas of school life, including public examinations.

Staff expectations of pupils are typically clear. This enables pupils to understand what is acceptable and what is not. Pupils respond well to these boundaries.

Pupils describe a range of opportunities that provide the chance to develop their character and skills. They speak highly of the school council and prefects, and feel they are listened to. Such leadership roles are built into the life of the school. Pupil well-being ambassadors, for example, can signpost pupils to adults and organisations that can help them if they are worried.

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

The school's curriculum has been carefully considered and implemented. Subject specialists deliver content effectively. They explain concepts carefully and provide

opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning through retrieval activities. Most of the time, pupils' knowledge is checked carefully. However, in a small number of subjects the consistency with which assessment and feedback is used to strengthen pupils' knowledge and address misconceptions is variable. As a result, some pupils repeat errors in their work.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is effective. Staff understand the needs of pupils and make appropriate adaptations in lessons to support them. This means pupils with SEND make progress in line with their peers. 'The Hub' base for pupils with SEND contributes significantly to pupils' progress. Pupils describe how they have grown in confidence because of this provision.

Those pupils who struggle with reading are provided with a targeted programme of intervention. This begins when they join the school and continues until they have developed into confident and fluent readers. Pupils make rapid and sustained progress in reading. The school also actively encourages wider reading through activities such as the Carnegie Book Award and form time reading. Visitors, such as journalists and authors, provide pupils with a different and ambitious perspective of reading and writing.

Attendance is a priority for the school. Most pupils attend school regularly, and good attendance is celebrated. Attendance is in line with schools nationally and improving. Where pupils are frequently absent, the school has effective systems for ensuring they are safe and well and supported to attend more regularly. Pupils treat each other with respect. The community is inclusive and supportive. Pupils do not worry about being different.

The school has a comprehensive programme of personal, social, health and economic education. Pupils explain confidently that they know how to stay safe online and how to take care of their mental and physical health. They also describe curriculum opportunities to learn about first aid, equality and healthy relationships. The careers education curriculum equips pupils with a very clear understanding of the opportunities available to them. Visiting universities and undertaking work experience enhances their knowledge of higher education and the world of work.

Leaders evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately. The priorities of the trust reflect the needs of the school precisely. The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend the school and express positive views about the school. There is a comprehensive programme of professional development opportunities available. As a result, staff are confident in teaching their subjects. They also speak highly of the school's action in terms of well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, assessment and feedback practices are not yet successfully and robustly established. As a result, pupils' errors and misconceptions are not always picked up effectively. This means that such errors persist throughout the work produced by some pupils. The school should ensure that existing assessment systems are implemented with sufficient rigour to enable pupils to achieve consistently well.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2018.

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' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142396
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10318634
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	827
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roger Livesey
Headteacher	Craig Jansen
Website	www.marshlandhigh.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of West Norfolk Academies Trust.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the school's senior leaders, governors, CEO, deputy CEO and trustees.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jonathan Rockey, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Garrett

Ofsted Inspector

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