

# Marland School

Peters Marland, Torrington, Devon EX38 8QQ

## Inspection dates

23–24 November 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	<b>Good</b>
Quality of care and support in the residential provision	<b>Good</b>
How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision	<b>Good</b>
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Under the clear and determined leadership of the principal, ably supported by a strong senior leadership team, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection.
- Staff focus on helping pupils work towards their employment choices for when they leave school. Teaching is planned to support pupils' aims in this respect.
- Teaching and care staff work together well. Both teams demonstrate a shared approach to understanding and responding to pupils' emotional and social needs.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- All groups of pupils make good academic and personal progress. Older pupils leave school with a wide range of qualifications.
- Governors effectively support senior leaders. They work well as a team, using their knowledge and experience to good effect.
- Pupils learn to improve their behaviour and to keep themselves safe. However, when they make a complaint they do not always get the chance to comment on the outcome.
- New teachers do not consistently apply the school's agreed behaviour management approach, or ensure that work is accurately matched to each pupil's level of ability.

### Compliance with national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements.

## Full report

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

- Support new teachers so that they:
  - know how to apply the school’s behaviour management policy
  - use assessment information to set work that closely matches each pupil’s ability.
- Leaders and managers need to gain an accurate understanding of nationally expected standards in English and mathematics so that:
  - teachers have a realistic view of how well pupils are performing relative to pupils in other schools
  - parents can be confident that academic assessment judgements are comparable to judgements made elsewhere.
- Ensure that pupils who make a complaint are given the opportunity to indicate their level of satisfaction with the outcome.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision</b>	<b>Good</b>

- Since the last inspection, the principal, with strong support of senior leaders from both education and care teams, has brought about a significant change in the way in which pupils' behaviour is managed. This has resulted in a reduction of incidents when pupils are physically restrained.
- Leaders act quickly and effectively when required. At the start of this term, the behaviour of a group of boys was having a very detrimental impact on the learning and safety of pupils at the Barnstaple site. Senior staff assessed the situation, including taking the views of all members of staff. An action plan was established, which resulted in rapid improvement, returning this part of the school to a safe learning environment.
- Staff speak very positively about the way the school is run, and the support they receive. They value the daily opportunities to share ideas with colleagues about how pupils are progressing, and how to modify their work to get better outcomes. Staff are encouraged to attend training events, and to visit local mainstream and special schools, in order to improve their work. Individual supervision sessions are used well, where members of staff and managers discuss how to better meet the needs of pupils.
- Leadership is well distributed. Each site has its own headteacher, and there is clear oversight of each curriculum area. The head of pastoral care effectively and efficiently manages the residential provision. He is keen to continuously improve the quality of care and experiences for pupils. Care staff are motivated to raise standards through their own professional development. Inspections are embraced as learning and improvement opportunities.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of pupils, and prepares them for life after school. As soon as they are ready, pupils are encouraged to identify the sort of job they would like to do when they are older. The school provides a very good balance of national curriculum subjects, vocational work and life skills to help them prepare for this. A personalised learning programme is created for each pupil, which maps out the different elements of the curriculum that will give them the skills, knowledge and experience required. In discussions with inspectors, older pupils explained the importance of obtaining as many qualifications as possible in order to achieve their future ambitions.
- To support pupils in thinking about their future job possibilities, a careers adviser attends all Year 9 and Year 11 transitional review meetings. She meets with pupils before the meeting to help prepare them for their reviews.
- The school employs an extended learning coordinator, who organises learning experiences outside of the school. Some of these are led by school staff, while others are run by external organisations. They include a variety of work experience

placements, outdoor adventurous activities, curriculum extension trips and vocational training. During the inspection, two pupils were in Belgium visiting war graves as part of their history studies.

- The school takes great care to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a central part of lessons. Currently, pupils are being supported to find ways to cooperate together. Pupils are encouraged to carefully choose their language when talking with peers to aid cooperation. Pupils are then helped to see how this is part of the British value of respect.
- The additional sources of school funding are used well. The primary physical education and sports fund is mainly used to buy equipment for the extended learning experiences. The pupil premium funding and the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding are used in a variety of ways, all of which help to improve pupils' skills and confidence in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders and the governing body carefully check the impact of this spending, and ensure it is of benefit to those pupils for which it is intended.
- In addition to mandatory training, care staff are trained and qualified in specialist areas such as life-saving and outdoor activities. This enables pupils to have new and exciting opportunities such as surfing and kayaking.
- The management of complaints from pupils is prompt and thorough, ensuring that they are listened to. However, the school does not check the satisfaction of pupils when they are provided with the outcome of any complaint.
- There are now improved arrangements in place for recording and monitoring incidents of poor behaviour and restrictive physical management of pupils. Detailed monitoring systems contribute to an accurate assessment of the strengths of the provision and areas for development.

## **Governance of the school**

- Members of the governing body have a good range of knowledge and experience that are very relevant to their roles and responsibilities. They use this to provide a good level of support to leaders. Between them they visit the school frequently, both to observe lessons and talk informally with pupils and staff, and to attend governors' meetings. They employ an independent visitor who applies rigour and challenge to regular monitoring visits of the residential provision. These visits are welcomed by leaders and contribute to improvements.
- Governors are kept informed about the performance of the school. Staff report regularly on the progress and behaviour of pupils. Governors use their meetings to ask questions, and when required challenge leaders about the information. This includes how well all funds are spent. Governors check that there is a clear link between the pay staff receive and the quality of their performance.
- The chair of governors has regular meetings with school staff to check that all safeguarding arrangements are in place and that pupils are protected.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has very good systems in place to monitor and record its work in this area. There are very good links with external agencies to ensure that any concerns about pupils are communicated and followed up. The school brings in staff from local organisations to provide additional help to pupils who have been identified as being at risk.
- All the necessary checks are completed on those working with pupils before they start work. Risk assessments are completed for activities and the school site. Staff recognise the importance of allowing pupils to take considered risks as part of learning to cope with real-life situations.
- All staff receive regular training about safeguarding. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they understand how to keep themselves safe when on the internet. Pupils are supported to realise when they might be at risk from local groups or individuals.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The teaching of experienced teachers is very effective. They have good knowledge of the subject they teach, and plan lessons that capture the interest of pupils, leading to a good level of engagement and learning. In a key stage 2 humanities lesson, for example, the teacher had planned an investigation where pupils had to solve a mystery from a range of historical sources. Pupils enjoyed the lesson and learned a lot.
- A strength of teaching is the breadth of the curriculum and how this supports individual pupils' career aspirations. Pupils' interests and passions that might lead to work after education are encouraged. Alongside studies at school, they are offered work placements that might provide them with the skills they need, for example in various aspects of building or design.
- Teaching of reading is good. The school has increased the focus on this recently. During the first 20 minutes of each day, everyone reads together. Pupils are happy to read alongside each other, despite the different levels of ability that each one has. Reading materials are accurately matched to each pupil's ability, ensuring that they are able to be successful and enjoy reading, but also learn new sounds and words.
- The school ensures that homework is effective. The policy ensures that homework is only given if it is likely to be beneficial to the pupil. Sufficient time is allocated within the school day to allow pupils to cover the work required and to catch up when needed. For residential pupils, learning continues beyond the school day through the enriched activity programme.
- Senior leaders have considered carefully the most appropriate system for assessing and recording pupils' academic progress, linked to the new national curriculum. The approach they have adopted is quite new to them. Teachers are still getting used to this, and are not yet confident in knowing exactly how pupils' achievements relate to nationally expected standards in English and mathematics. The school has developed good links with local schools to help moderate judgements.
- Pupils sometimes do not make as much progress when teachers who are new to the school teach them. In these lessons, pupils do not put much care or effort into their

work, and their behavioural difficulties are not consistently challenged.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from the school's approach to assessing and addressing the emotional needs of each pupil. A greater focus has been placed on this since the last inspection. Care and education staff have all been trained in this approach, which has helped to develop a common way of understanding and responding to pupils. This has resulted in better progress for pupils.
- A strength of the school is the depth of relationships between the pupils and the staff. The staff are committed and passionate about their role in supporting pupils. They provide a warm, caring environment with the addition of humour and affection. Pupils respond extremely well and as a result are able to make progress in their behaviour and personal development.
- Pupils receive targeted, bespoke support that enables them to be successful and make progress. Care plans reflect the individual needs of each pupil and how they can be met. Targets are clear and achievable, with regular reviews to set new ones as staff encourage pupils to work towards their aspirations.
- Pupils benefit from the time they spend out of school on placement with other organisations. These contribute well to preparing pupils for their future life in work and help with their learning and personal development. Staff have daily face-to-face feedback on how well pupils are doing when they drop pupils off or pick them up. The school carefully checks placements to make sure pupils are safe.
- The school employs a counsellor and an intervention worker to support pupils' personal development. Pupils are able to choose if they would like to spend time with the counsellor. These sessions provide pupils with valuable opportunities to communicate anxieties and stresses, which help them become more emotionally resilient.
- Attendance has improved over the last few years, but is still lower than the national average. School records illustrate the extent to which staff try to improve attendance, including through regularly working with outside agencies.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in most lessons, during break sessions and in residential times. Pupils spoke to inspectors about their pride in the school, and in the progress they are making in their learning and behaviour. Work in most books demonstrates the care and attention that pupils put into their work.
- The behaviour of a small group of pupils at the day school was of concern at the start of this term. As a result of effective action taken by senior leaders, behaviour is now good.

- There has been a significant reduction in the use of restrictive physical interventions since the last inspection. Staff are careful to allow pupils time to use the strategies they have learned to manage their own behaviour, rather than rushing in and trying to stop pupils themselves. Staff recognise that they can use the relationships they have built with pupils to provide support to them when they are finding it hard to cope.
- The vast majority of parents are very positive about the way in which the school is supporting their child. During the inspection, a parent wrote to inspectors saying, 'My son has been at the school for just over a year and in that time we have seen a dramatic change in his attitude and behaviour.'
- In some lessons taught by newer teachers, behavioural difficulties are not managed effectively. In these lessons, staff do not follow the school's behaviour policy. This has a negative impact on the quality of work that pupils produce.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- There is a strong culture in the school for pupils to gain as many qualifications as possible in order to help them prepare for life after school. Exams are taken at whatever age the pupil is ready. Pupils are then encouraged to retake the same exam if they are predicted to get a better grade. All pupils who left the school last summer obtained a good range and quantity of qualifications. The vast majority of these pupils moved onto education, employment or training placements.
- In all year groups, pupils make good progress, including in English and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils who are entitled to free school meals make good progress from their starting points. Those in care do particularly well. The most able pupils are well supported to produce work of a high standard. A most able Year 10 pupil used implicit and explicit interpretation to compare a poet's work to a speech by Martin Luther King.
- Some of the most able pupils who only attended their previous schools spasmodically attend much more regularly and learn successfully so that they can gain GCSE qualifications. A Year 8 pupil told an inspector, 'I used to hate reading and English. I wouldn't even go into the classroom. Now I read for 10 minutes every day. I do that now and I am doing well.'
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects and activities. In art, a most able pupil's coursework showed a detailed process of planning and experimenting that resulted in the production of a high-quality painting. In science, humanities, design and technology, and food technology lessons, pupils gain subject knowledge, as well as life skills such as cooking skills, learning how to use tools, and learning about the risks associated with drug use. The good range of outdoor learning experiences contributes well to pupils' self-confidence and team work skills. Several pupils completed the Ten Tors challenge (an expedition over Dartmoor) this year, while 10 pupils are currently working towards their next Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- The school carefully tracks the progress of all pupils, academically, socially and emotionally. If pupils are not making expected progress, additional interventions are put into place. School information demonstrates the effectiveness of these in helping pupils to catch up.

## Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision

**Good**

- Pupils generally enjoy being resident at the school. They embrace the many and varied new experiences it has to offer, particularly with extra-curricular activities. In addition to having fun, pupils are able to gain qualifications and awards in sports and challenges such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Residential staff are very experienced and work well together. Team morale is very good and staff report that they benefit from the support from managers and each other.
- Staff recognise the need to support pupils in school and at home, with the longer-term goal of preparing them for life when they leave school. Year 11 pupils have the opportunity to shop and cook for themselves over a two-week period and manage their laundry. In addition, they develop skills in using public transport and are supported in motorcycle training. This provides a level of independence that is particularly beneficial in the rural area.

## Quality of care and support in the residential provision

**Good**

- The residential accommodation has been adapted over several years and poses some challenges due to the age of the building and the layout. Funding has been secured for a new residential building, and it is anticipated that this work will commence in January 2017. In the meantime, the current accommodation is clean, safe and well maintained to provide adequate facilities for pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to have their say, and they participate in the selection of new staff. The school council and residential group meetings provide a forum to gather their views and suggestions about school life, the food and activities. A recent survey confirms that pupils are very positive about this school, with comments such as, 'I am making new friends', 'they help us not to be angry', 'they understand you' and 'there is always something to do, you are never bored'. Pupils struggled to list things that could be better other than suggestions for bigger televisions, a better mini bus and to go home more often.
- An extensive choice at mealtimes supports students to eat healthily. Each week there is a challenge to try exotic and unusual fruit. A healthy lifestyle is also promoted through many sporting events for students and encouragement for them to be active and keep fit. Medication is safely stored and administered. Students are provided with appropriate information with regard to their personal development, such as sexual health and the risks of smoking. They enjoy opportunities to have their hair cut and attend a shaving clinic.

## School details

Unique reference number	131552
Social care unique reference number	SCO22231
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10008184

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	8 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Number of boarders on roll	36
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Faith Butler
Principal	Keith Bennett
Telephone number	01805 601324
Website	<a href="http://www.marland.devon.sch.uk">www.marland.devon.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:k.bennett@marland.devon.sch.uk">k.bennett@marland.devon.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Marland School is a dual site residential special school. The Marland site is for boys and is termly residential. The Springfield Court site in Barnstaple is a mixed day provision. At the time of the inspection only boys were attending.
- All pupils have either a statement of special education needs or an education, health and care plan for social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is above average. Only a small number of pupils receive Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding.
- The last residential inspection took place in March 2016.
- The school is part of a trust with other special schools in the local authority.
- The school uses the following organisations to provide pupils with additional learning opportunities: Horwood Combe Forest School, Hakeford Woods Forest School, Wings South West, Enterprise Business Partnership, Jigsaw Furniture Project and Community Action.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 15 lessons, mostly jointly with members of the leadership team. Pupils' workbooks from a range of subjects were looked at.
- An inspector met with individual pupils, listened to them read and observed them during breaktime.
- Meetings were held with teachers on both sites, members of the leadership team, members of the governing body and the extended learning coordinator. A telephone conversation was held with the school's improvement partner.
- The social care inspector visited the residential provision before school and in the evening. She observed pupils engaging in their evening activities. She met with a group of pupils, who showed her around the buildings. She also met with the counsellor, members of the care team and the person responsible for the administration of medication. She had a phone conversation with a parent and had correspondence with the local authority designated officer.
- A number of documents were scrutinised. These included care plans, information about pupils' progress and attendance and procedures for safeguarding.
- Inspectors took into account the views from 23 staff questionnaires, 14 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), seven responses from the Ofsted free parent text and seven pupil questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Andy Lole, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Penman	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Davies	Social Care Inspector

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