

# Marine Academy

Trevithick Road, Plymouth, PL5 2AF

## Inspection dates

25–26 September 2012

| Overall effectiveness          | Previous inspection: | <b>Not previously inspected</b> |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     |                                 |          |
|                                |                      | <b>Good</b>                     | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good                            | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good                            | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Good                            | 2        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good                            | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- All groups of students, including those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those receiving additional funding through the pupil premium, achieve well.
- The proportion of students gaining at least five A\* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has improved significantly and securely exceeds the minimum standards set by the government.
- All leaders and managers have a clear and determined vision for the academy, reflected in senior leaders' rigour in driving up academic standards and ensuring that the students are well prepared for future education or employment. They are supported by a highly effective board of governors who have an accurate understanding of the academy's strengths and of where improvements are needed.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning are exceptional. The systematic improvements made to teaching have ensured that it is good.
- The academy's distinctive approach to developing the students' personal and social skills, through sporting and marine activities and the performing arts, strongly promotes their good behaviour, attendance and enjoyment of school life. Students feel valued and safe and know where to go to seek advice and help.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Insufficient opportunities are provided for students to develop their mathematical skills across all areas of the curriculum.
- In a minority of lessons, students are not given sufficient scope to develop their independent learning skills.
- The sixth form is good overall. The quality of teaching and the students' progress are good. However, whilst improving at a fast rate, the range of courses and curriculum opportunities available to the students is not broad enough.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, involving 31 different teachers. A significant proportion of these lessons were observed alongside senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, and many other students spoke to inspectors during lessons and break times. Inspectors also met with members of the governing board, key personnel representing the academy's partnerships and a wide variety of staff, including both senior and middle managers. One parent attended a meeting with an inspector.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 85 responses to the staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised examples of students' past and present work and looked at a range of documentation. These included the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, evidence from the academy's performance management procedures, data on the students' progress over time and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

|                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lorna Brackstone, Lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Anne Looney                      | Additional inspector    |
| Terry Payne                      | Additional inspector    |
| Neil Gillespie                   | Additional inspector    |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Marine Academy is an average-sized secondary school, which opened in September 2010 following the closure of Tamarside Community College.
- It is sponsored by the University of Plymouth, Cornwall College and Plymouth City Council and has a marine specialism.
- The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students who are disabled and those with special educational needs who are supported through school action is twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is just above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Marine Academy started to provide full sixth form provision on site for its students in September 2011.
- The academy received a monitoring visit in September 2011 and was judged to be making good progress in raising standards.

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics by ensuring that students are always fully involved in all aspects of the lesson and are given maximum opportunities to practise and reinforce their skills in all subjects.
- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by sharing more widely the excellent practice that exists within the academy.
- Develop more courses and curriculum opportunities in the sixth form so that a greater proportion of students achieve higher levels of qualification.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- From starting points that are well below national norms, students' achievement is good and continues to accelerate at a fast rate. Since the academy opened, national examination results at the end of Year 11 have improved significantly and current standards indicate that this improving trend is being sustained well.
- The use of examination and other data to set targets and drive improvement is good. The school analyses the performance of groups very well. This analysis ensures that the gaps between different groups of students are narrowing, both in school and in comparison to those of all students nationally. In 2012, not only did those students who are entitled to free school meals exceed their targets but the gap between their attainment and that of their peers was eradicated.
- Those students who are disabled, those who have special educational needs, those supported through the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language make at least good progress.
- The proportion of students gaining A\* to C grades in English GCSE is average and attainment is improving year on year. Since the monitoring inspection in 2011, their ability and confidence in speaking have significantly improved. The continued use of a specialist programme to accelerate the development of reading skills is sustaining an upward trend in literacy standards. Standards in reading and writing are in line with national expectations.
- The legacy of poor achievement in mathematics is being rigorously addressed and there has been sustained improvement over time, although standards in Key Stage 4 remain below average.
- Students achieve particularly well in the performing arts and in sporting and marine activities.
- Sixth formers make good progress in the courses on offer. Many of these have been specifically designed for individual students and are much appreciated. As one sixth former reported, 'It is making a difference to our lives.' The targets set for students' achievement are helpful. However, the sixth form has been fully open for only a year and the curricular provision is still developing. The academy is fully aware that the range of available courses and qualifications and of wider curriculum opportunities is unduly narrow and this is being steadily rectified.
- All students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Those parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire believe their children are making good progress and this is supported by inspection evidence.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Most lessons are taught at least well, with examples that feature outstanding teaching and learning.
- Learning over time is fostered by marking and assessment procedures that effectively promote the development of the students' skills.
- In the very best lessons, the tasks interest and challenge the students and the pace of learning is good. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson, *The Tempest* was used exceptionally well to motivate the students and not only successfully developed their literacy skills but encouraged them to participate in a moral debate about the issues of right and wrong.
- Most lessons are well planned and create a positive climate for learning. Students thrive when they are required to work independently and collaborate with each other to solve problems. This was evident in a good Year 9 food technology lesson where students not only developed a deeper knowledge of cooking methods, but were also required to work together and then evaluate the food presentation of their peers.

- A strong feature of teaching in the sixth form is the well-targeted intervention and the specialist support given to individual students. Feedback is encouraging and the promotion of discussion further supports the students' communication skills and their ability to work collaboratively. This was particularly noticeable in an outstanding Year 13 performing arts session when the students demonstrated a mature ability to feed back to each other with sensitivity.
- In the few lessons where students' progress is less than good and teaching requires improvement, sessions have not been planned to meet the needs of all students, the pace is slow and there is too much input from the teachers. In a minority of mathematics lessons, the teaching does not fully engage students in all aspects of their learning. Opportunities to promote skills in numeracy across the range of subjects are sometimes missed.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of students around the school and in lessons is good. Students comment on the improvement of behaviour over time and this is endorsed by the detailed analysis maintained by senior staff and the academy's falling use of fixed-term and permanent exclusions. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally, in lessons where the work is not challenging, pupils have lapses in concentration and do not work as quickly as they should.
- Students have a clear understanding of sanctions and rewards and behaviour logs indicate that incidents are followed through rigorously. Students speak confidently about the way in which anti-social incidents and bullying are dealt with.
- Attitudes to learning are positive. The majority of staff commented that behaviour is good. Nearly all the parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire considered that behaviour in school was good. A small number of staff have some concerns which were not confirmed by inspection evidence.
- Students view the academy as safe and secure. This is reflected in the improvements in the attendance rates, which are average. The majority of students are punctual to school and lessons.
- Most students described the academy as a happy place to be and appreciate the support and advice provided by their tutors and heads of houses. The emphasis on personal development is strong, and as Year 9 students reported, 'We are taught to care for the Year 7s and respect the sixth formers.'

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The Principal's determination and pursuit of excellence, which are shared by the key senior leaders, have been instrumental in ensuring that this academy provides its locality with the good life chances, both educationally and socially. This is a very inclusive academy with a 'no excuses' policy in terms of its expectations of students' achievement.
- Although a small minority of staff questionnaires had negative responses about the leadership and management of the school, the majority have a shared understanding of the strengths of the academy and know what needs to be refined further. One member of staff explained that 'what has happened since the opening of the academy is nothing short of a miracle'.
- The effective use of data, accurate self-evaluation and the consistent implementation of initiatives have enabled the academy to develop successfully and ensure that the students make good progress.
- The pupil premium has been used extremely well to support students' progress, for example through enrichment programmes, specific tuition and the employment of specialist support.
- Leaders are strongly committed to the continuing professional development of all staff and

ensure that it is closely related to the academy's development planning. There are 'no hiding places' for weaknesses in the quality of teaching. As one member of staff reported, 'The level of expectation on all staff and students has been a catalyst for improvement.'

- The detailed documentation is extremely impressive; the evaluation of the contribution of all staff to the academy's work is accurate and therefore supports continuing improvements in the teaching. Although inconsistencies remain, the improvements secured since the academy opened are reflected in students' progress and attainment data which show a sustained trend of improvement.
- The academy's exciting and interesting curriculum contributes significantly to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through a strong focus on its marine specialism and wider global issues. Students enjoy many wider learning activities, including participation in the Plymouth Marine Festival, the Tall Ships event and the Ten Tors outdoor challenge. The close links with the National Aquarium and Royal Navy also enhance the students' learning experiences.
- There is a commitment by all leaders and managers to ensuring the best in resourcing, in terms both of equipment and staff. This is resulting in an exciting and nurturing learning environment.
- The academy uses its exceptionally strong partnership with Plymouth University, Cornwall College and the feeder primary schools to raise aspirations and promote greater community involvement in further education. Parents' attendance at consultation meetings and celebration evenings has improved considerably and these events are now well supported.
- The local authority, as one of the academy's sponsors, has given the school a good level of support to enable it to move to a position where its overall effectiveness is now good.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - is strongly committed to the academy's success. Governors know the academy very well and offer their expertise and support
  - is extremely proactive in ensuring performance management is robust and in supporting the senior leaders when making difficult decisions
  - ensures all safeguarding and child protection policies meet requirements.

## 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 pupil's 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 pupil's 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

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 136166 |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | N/A    |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 399809 |

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

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Academy sponsor-led          |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Maintained                   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 11–18                        |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                        |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                        |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 1023                         |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 161                          |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body           |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Professor Mary Watkins       |
| <b>Principal</b>                              | Helen Mathieson              |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | Not previously inspected     |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 01752 213939                 |
| <b>Fax number</b>                             | 01752 213909                 |
| <b>Email address</b>                          | contact@marineacademy.org.uk |

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