

Mayfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116463
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	379262
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Alan Taylor-Bennett HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1053
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bruce Marr
Headteacher	David Jeapes
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 June 2009
School address	Mayfield Road North End Portsmouth PO2 0RH
Telephone number	02392 693432
Fax number	02392 665298
Email address	general@mayfield.portsmouth.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 53 lessons and the work of 53 teachers. In addition, meetings were held with groups of students, representatives of the governing body, and staff, and there was a telephone conversation with a local authority adviser. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's development plans, its self-review, analyses of the attainment and progress of its students, records of lesson observations, and policies. Inspectors took account of the responses on the 138 questionnaires received from parents and carers and other questionnaire responses from staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How securely and how quickly attainment is rising, and the progress of students and quality of learning are improving, in the school.
- How well the needs of vulnerable groups are being met, to ensure that their progress is at least satisfactory.
- The effectiveness of cross-subject coordination to improve students' basic skills.
- The quality of the new systems to improve attendance and their impact so far.

Information about the school

Mayfield School is a slightly-larger-than-average school. It is a specialist school for the arts and it holds the Healthy Schools and the Investors in Careers awards, and the ICT Mark. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is lower than average, and very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is near the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, the main areas of particular need being social and behavioural difficulties. The school has a new headteacher from September 2011.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Mayfield School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its students. Banners around the school proclaim 'Mayfield is changing', students and staff affirm that the school has a greater sense of purpose and focus in all aspects of its work this term. Students wear the new uniform smartly and the new expectations of behaviour around the school and in classrooms are being enforced consistently.

The new headteacher's vision and expectations of the whole school community are communicated clearly and vigorously, and staff and students are responding positively. In the words of one student, 'It's very different here this term, but it's definitely better!' It is too soon to see the impact of these developments, and middle leaders are still exploring the implications for their work. However, their quality, the rigour of their implementation so far, and the tight focus of the school's development planning give the school a secure capacity to sustain improvements.

Although attainment is low, it has been improving consistently over the last few years. Students' performance in external examinations improved significantly in 2010 and this healthy momentum has been maintained since. The quality of students' learning is improving securely and better progress is being made, but significant variation in achievement remains across departments and across groups of students.

The particular learning and social needs of some students who are vulnerable due to their circumstances to underachievement, are met satisfactorily. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities currently make satisfactory progress because of a renewed emphasis on adapting provision for them.

Other key outcomes for students are at least securely satisfactory, with elements that are good. For example, students recognise and respond well to the need to adopt healthy lifestyles in line with the school's work to achieve Healthy School status.

The school exercises satisfactory care for the personal and social needs of its students and ensures their safety and wellbeing. In the words of one student, 'Teachers will look after you here if you need help.' Planning to meet the complex needs of some individuals, to ensure their good attendance and to prevent significant underachievement is satisfactory but currently lacks the necessary rigour for its effectiveness to be good or better.

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Around the school, students show care and respect for each other and respond willingly to staff's reminders about movement in corridors and about uniform. Students' behaviour in lessons, however, is passive: although they show a willingness to learn, there is little active participation or questioning from them.

A very high proportion of the teaching is satisfactory. The proportion that is inadequate is low and decreasing; relatively little is good or better. There is some outstanding practice but this is insufficient to drive rapid improvement in the school without the need for external stimulus. The school is aware of the priority that needs to be given to improving the quality of teaching in order to sustain and accelerate current improvements in achievement, primarily by improving the quality of the continual assessment of students' understanding during lessons, and responses to their written work.

The curriculum meets students' needs and there are strengths, including aspects of collaborative work with other local schools and colleges. Provision for developing literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is not well developed, however. The development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the school is more coherent as a consequence of the school achieving the ICT Mark.

The school's arts specialism is a vibrant aspect of its work and offers a range of exciting and important opportunities for students to respond to significant challenges, show achievement in a wide range of ways, and to enjoy being involved in exciting projects with other local schools and in their community.

Attendance has been low for some time, but it is improving. The number of students who are persistently absent is falling as a consequence of the school's efforts. Senior staff are giving this an appropriately high priority this term and the very good systems and practices recently introduced are enforced with rigour and have the capacity to improve attendance.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of teaching that is good or better to 60% by April and 70% by September 2012, by:
 - undertaking frequent assessments of students' understanding throughout every lesson, using a range of strategies, and using this information to steer the teaching and learning
 - devising ways to ensure that students have more opportunities to contribute in lessons and explore their own grasp of the work, and that of their friends

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- working with external agencies to provide stimulus to the programme of professional development for teachers
 - extending the current Mayfield Teaching Model to describe the characteristics of good and outstanding teaching and learning
 - making marking more diagnostic, so that students know what to do to improve their work.
- Improve attendance in each year group to at least the national average by Easter 2012 by:
- working closely with parents and external support agencies to tackle persistent absenteeism
 - decreasing the amount of absence for reasons that could be avoided, by working with parents more closely and employing appropriate sanctions when necessary.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students' progress is satisfactory and the quality of their learning is improving securely because of the emphasis on achievement and more consistent approaches to learning around the school. This is driving up what is still low attainment. However, girls' progress is generally very much better than that of the boys, and key subjects such as mathematics and science have lagged behind the overall improving trend over recent years. In many lessons, students tend to experience learning as a series of tasks rather than a chance to become inquisitive and develop their understanding. This is a consequence of much of the teaching not challenging them to think for themselves sufficiently. Students with special education needs and/or disabilities make progress which is similarly satisfactory, but the degree to which teachers adapt aspects of their teaching to meet their particular needs is generally not sufficient for their progress to be good or better.

The majority of students usually treat each other with consideration and respect. Students say that bullying is rare and that it is the behaviour of a very small minority that sometimes makes them feel uncomfortable. They demonstrate interest in other cultures and religions when given the opportunity to learn about life in multicultural Britain but lack the opportunities to acquire a strong understanding of the implications and gain any global perspective. Work in the specialist subjects, and in sports, often generates high levels of enthusiasm and enables students to find in themselves previously untapped potential. The Rock Challenge develops significant skills of teamwork and leadership in many participants, and the chance to work with younger children in local primary schools, for example in the School Shakespeare Project, is very successful and hugely enjoyed. Many students make important contributions by being prefects, members of the school and sports councils and helping to run Mayfield Radio. There is no real opportunity for students to engage with the school to discuss their learning in ways that could help promote better practice.

Students benefit from the good links the school has developed with local colleges

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and Portsmouth University, and many have a clear sense of their next steps. These opportunities, and the decision-making skills acquired in setting goals, make an important contribution to their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

There are pockets of good and outstanding teaching that generate great enthusiasm and involvement in learning. For example, in one lesson observed, progress was outstanding because students, absorbed in planning a number of sports tournaments in small groups, worked with impressive focus, and the teacher skilfully and occasionally tested their ideas and supported them with specific issues. However, too many lessons are dominated by teachers’ input and there is little frequent checking of students’ understanding and grasp of the ideas throughout the lesson which can then be used to steer the learning. Marking tends to concentrate on ensuring that work had been done, and little marking offers individual students insight into how to improve.

The curriculum gives opportunities for students to follow courses that reflect their needs and interests. Clear progression routes have been established from school-based courses into college courses through some very useful links with other local institutions. There is appropriate flexibility for students to move on to more demanding courses of study when they are ready. The need to support literacy and numeracy skills as a priority across the school is recognised, but provision is underdeveloped. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to reinforce skill development across all subjects. The extent of the extra-curricular provision is wide and varied but participation rates are not high, particularly in older year groups.

Students are often cared for well as a result of staff having genuine compassion for them and their individual circumstances, and some well-developed care structures in the school. Systems to respond to the specific and sometimes complex needs of students who are vulnerable due to their circumstances are underdeveloped. This results in their underachievement, and higher levels of absence in these groups than would otherwise be the case.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher is driving change very energetically. Staff and students are responding willingly. The advantages of consistency of approach, through for example the adoption of the Mayfield Teaching Model, are becoming apparent. These

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changes have the capacity to generate improvements in students’ achievement and well-being. Middle leaders, in particular, relish the opportunities they have to explore how they may influence the work of their individual departments by working more consistently as a middle leadership team, and through the greater accountability they now feel to senior leadership. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching are concentrating on eradicating inadequate practice. Only a minority of staff currently have a sense of what constitutes good and outstanding practice. Senior staff are aware of this and have established plans for further training, some through partnerships established locally, that will provide clear messages about the improvements that are required.

Governors are becoming well placed to offer more challenge to the school, as well as the support they have consistently provided for some time. They have developed strategies to hold middle and senior leaders to account for the quality of outcomes for students. They contribute to the satisfactory safeguarding practices in the school by monitoring the implementation of the policy but there is greater scope for the governing body to become more actively engaged in this and in other evaluative practices.

The school has satisfactory systems and procedures for monitoring the performance of groups of students to ensure equality of opportunity and to give the chance for targeted responses to specific needs. These systems have generated improvements by closing some gaps in performance between groups, but they are not operated with sufficient rigour to enable this to happen consistently and speedily. Responses to the parental survey indicated that although communication is generally informative and useful, some parents feel insufficiently well informed about how they can contribute to the school’s development and to their child’s progress. The school recognises this. For example, it has prioritised the active role of parents in the half-termly assessment scheme currently working its way through its first cycle.

Through its specialist work, and a number of other curriculum partnerships, the school contributes satisfactorily to the development of community cohesion in the local area. It is aware of the need to plan these developments with the same rigour it brings to its general school improvement planning, if they are to be more influential and mutually beneficial links.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the questionnaire was broadly in line with the national average. The very large majority indicated that they were happy with their child’s experiences at the school. Positive responses were given to the questions that explored their children’s enjoyment of school and the extent to which parents felt that the school ensured their safety. Some concerns about the school’s response to poor behaviour were apparent; however, the inspection team found evidence of satisfactory care, guidance and support. Two other areas indicated that more parents wished to have opportunities to work with collaboratively with the school and have their views heard. This is in line with the team’s judgement of the quality of the school’s engagement with parents and carers being no better than satisfactory. Comments offered did not tend to focus on any particular issues and reflected more individual circumstances, but several indicated that the new uniform and the more consistent emphasis on higher expectations this term are very welcome.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mayfield School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1053 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	25	98	71	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	24	101	73	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	33	24	86	62	10	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	17	89	64	14	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	23	17	88	64	11	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	21	15	77	56	27	20	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	12	84	61	23	17	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	21	84	61	8	6	2	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	29	21	88	64	11	8	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	18	65	47	23	17	10	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	17	70	51	23	17	5	4
The school is led and managed effectively	21	15	88	64	10	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	27	78	57	10	7	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

30 September 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Mayfield School, Portsmouth PO2 0RH

Thank you for giving the inspection team such a warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, speaking with some of you, and seeing you work in lessons. We judge your school to be providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. We saw improvements taking place in many aspects, including in your attainment and progress.

We noticed the banners around that say 'Mayfield is changing' and it was obvious from our conversations that you feel that the changes this term are significant and welcome. We judged many of the outcomes for you to be satisfactory and saw some strengths. Provision for you is also satisfactory, with a curriculum that offers you breadth and balance in the types of courses available to meet your needs and interests, and some effective systems of care, guidance and support. Teaching is satisfactory but more needs to be good or better, and this is one of the areas for improvement that I have agreed with your new headteacher. He will ask teachers to check much more often how well you understand work in lessons, and then take this into account to help you to learn better. Marking should also provide you with better quality feedback to help you to improve, and you need to be encouraged to be much more critical of your learning and take a more active role in lessons so that your progress can accelerate.

Many of you are happy at school, and you behave kindly to each other. Some of you do not choose to attend as often as you should, however, and so cannot benefit from all of the opportunities on offer. Improving attendance so that it reaches the national average is the other area for improvement I have agreed with your headteacher. This will involve tackling persistent absence as well as addressing the fact that some of you take time off school unnecessarily.

This letter only gives you a brief summary of our findings and I know that many of you will want to read the full report on the Ofsted website. This will enable you to continue to make a strong contribution to your school, and play an active role in the changes currently underway and those planned for the future. I extend to you my very best wishes for your future success and happiness at Mayfield, and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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