

Robert May's School

West Street, Odiham, Hook, RG29 1NA

Inspection dates 24–25 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students reach high standards in a broad range of subjects by the time they leave the school, particularly in English, science and physical education. All make the expected progress, with some groups of students and students in some subjects doing much better than this.
- Teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers are skilled at setting tasks to match the ability of each student. They adapt work swiftly to extend students' learning.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to their work are outstanding. They are eager, enthusiastic and curious to learn. They want to be in school.
- Students say that bullying and discrimination are minimal and parents and carers agree.
- The headteacher has the overwhelming support of staff, parents and carers. The academy is a warm, cooperative and trusting community where everyone feels they belong.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. This is because not all teachers plan lessons to ensure all students make the best possible progress. The work they give students is sometimes too easy or too hard and marking does not always show students what they need to do to improve their work.
- Some staff are not using what they have learned in the training provided by the school to make sure all students make rapid progress.
- The rate of the school's improvement is sometimes too slow because targets have not been sharply focused on improving the quality of learning and teaching.
- The monitoring and evaluation of changes have not been carried out frequently enough to know whether they are making a positive difference.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 lessons and made 13 other short visits to lessons and classrooms.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students, senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, teachers and support staff. A telephone conversation was held with a local authority officer.
- Inspectors took account of 151 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 65 staff responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on students' progress and attainment, planning and monitoring documents, including performance management procedures and outcomes, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Judith Rundle, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mary Massey

Her Majesty's Inspector

Marcia Headon

Additional inspector

Paul Jacobs

Additional inspector

Joseph Skivington

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Robert May's is larger than the average-sized secondary school. The school converted to an academy in May 2012. At its last inspection the predecessor school was judged to be outstanding. It has a specialist resource provision for 12 students with autistic spectrum disorder.
- The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is above average, and the proportion who need extra help is well above average. These proportions include students with a specific or moderate learning difficulty, with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, with autistic spectrum disorder or with speech, language and communication needs. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average. This includes students from armed services families.
- Most students have a White British background. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is in line with the average.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision outside the academy at different times of the week.
- The academy 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?

- Speed up the pace of change by:
 - making sure that leaders and teachers have clear, easily measurable targets that focus on improving the quality of students' learning
 - carrying out monitoring and evaluation more frequently to find out if changes are making a positive difference
 - analysing school information more thoroughly to inform future planning.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers maintain a consistent focus on the quality of students' learning in lessons
 - ensuring that all lessons include activities and tasks that are matched to the different abilities of all the students in each class
 - making sure all teachers follow the marking policy so that all students know exactly how to improve their work and have time to make corrections
 - encouraging teachers to adapt their teaching more swiftly after observing and evaluating students' progress in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students start at the academy with standards that are much higher than those found nationally. They maintain these high levels in all year groups so that, by the time they leave, their GCSE examination results are significantly above average in a broad range of subjects; they are particularly high in English, science, religious education and physical education. A number of students have been entered early for mathematics qualifications in previous years. However, senior leaders found that this did not consistently meet students' needs so have taken the decision to stop early entry from this year.
- Students' GCSE results in mathematics, although still above average, have been below their results in other subjects. Changes introduced to tackle this are starting to have a positive effect, particularly in Years 7 to 9, although the pace and urgency of their implementation have sometimes been too slow. In one Year 7 lesson, where changes have been embraced, students were using exciting problem-solving activities to learn about the mean and median, and used their answers to reveal a hidden picture. As a result they were interested, motivated and learned quickly.
- All students make the expected progress for their age. When they are set ambitious targets, which they are motivated to achieve, some students do better than this. Students' progress in modern foreign languages, science and history, geography and religious education is particularly good. Almost all parents and carers said that their children are making good progress at the school.
- Senior leaders and governors have made sensible and well-chosen decisions about how to spend the pupil premium. As a result, the progress and achievement scores of students eligible for free school meals has improved so that they now reach standards that are close to the national average for all students. Students from armed services families make good progress and reach the same high standards as others in the academy.
- Disabled students and those who need extra help with their learning are making faster progress than in previous years because the work and activities in lessons are more specifically planned to help their learning. As a result, there is no longer a gap between their standards and those achieved nationally. Students hosted in the specialist resource provision benefit from being prepared well for their future learning and skilful staff ensure that they are helped to develop their independence when working with others.
- The work seen in lessons showed that students have a broad range of opportunities to use their good reading and communication skills across the curriculum. However, there are fewer opportunities for them to use their mathematical skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall. While some teaching is outstanding there also remains a small proportion that requires improvement. Relationships are very positive in classrooms, and students feel confident to contribute in front of their peers. For example, in one Year 9 lesson, the boys, including some with a statement of special educational needs, were keen to speak and practise their German with friends and with the teacher.
- Teachers use a broad range of resources and methods to stimulate students' interest in their work, including electronic whiteboards to show video clips or to model best practice in answers. Students use laptops confidently to support their work, for example when independently researching different artists who use natural forms in their work in preparation for art coursework.
- In the best lessons, teachers effectively match the tasks they set to students' different abilities and there is a healthy mix of teacher input and student activity. In one outstanding English lesson, students read confidently in small groups and stopped frequently to check and challenge

each other's thinking. The teacher then used probing questions that skilfully extended their deduction and inference skills. In weaker lessons, the work set is often pitched at too low a level so that students find it too easy, or there is too much teacher input so that the students are not able to contribute enough.

- Students know how well they are doing and know their target levels or grades. However, the whole-school marking policy is not used consistently by all teachers. As a result, some students are not given enough information to know exactly what they need to do to improve their work. In the best lessons, students are given time to make corrections following feedback and marking but this good practice is not consistently applied.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to students' learning, especially for lower-attaining students or those hosted in the specialist resource provision. They are skilled at judging the right time to offer support or when to challenge students to find solutions for themselves.
- Teachers use assessment information and their understanding of what the students already know to set high expectations and to give lessons a sharp focus on learning. At times, teachers do not adapt their plans quickly enough if they see that the work they have set is either too hard or too easy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students' behaviour is outstanding at all times. Students know what is expected of them, and live up to this, because all staff apply behaviour policies consistently. Students are polite and courteous and display good manners when interacting with each other, staff and visitors. Students are rewarded for their good behaviour and even minor disruptions are not tolerated.
- Students are eager, enthusiastic and show a curiosity to learn. They enjoy lessons, are active participants and display high levels of independent thinking. They pay careful attention in lessons; students in Year 11 particularly said that they cannot afford to waste time.
- They show pride in the academy and said that there is a real sense of community. Students are tolerant of one another. One commented, 'It is ok to be different here.' Robert May's is a place they want to be, and, consequently, attendance is well above average and students arrive punctually at school and lessons.
- Students treat teachers, including supply teachers, with respect and they receive respect in return. Teachers act as good role models. Students said that teachers are always willing to support them and that they are unafraid to ask for help.
- Students said that they feel safe in school and parents and carers are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Good attention is paid to keeping students safe in lessons, particularly in practical subjects, and there is well-organised provision for students' health, well-being and medical needs when necessary.
- Peer mentors, prefects and a 'concern box' ensure students have avenues to raise any concerns and they are confident that any issues are dealt with swiftly. Students said that there is very little bullying and any that does occur is followed up strongly. There is no toleration of bullying or of language that is bullying or insulting. Levels of exclusion are low and falling and there is very little reoffending.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has the overwhelming support of staff, parents and carers. She has very successfully created a warm, cooperative and trusting community where everyone feels they belong. She and her senior leaders know the school well, especially the areas where it needs to get better. At the inspection of the predecessor school, it was found that good teaching was leading to good achievement and this has been sustained into the academy. The leaders of some subjects, for example, English, physical education and science, have a greater impact on the quality of teaching and students' achievement than others.
- Short- and long-term planning covers important issues although plans are not always sharply

enough focused on measures that will lead to consistently outstanding teaching and learning. Senior and middle leaders collect a wealth of information about what is happening, but analysis is not consistently thorough to help make the best decisions about what they are going to do next. New systems for tracking and monitoring students' work have been introduced recently to support improvements in this area of the school's work.

- The school's leaders have provided an extensive programme of training and coaching for teachers, as well as opportunities to share good practice, and the positive effect of this was seen in the best lessons. However, leaders, including some heads of department, do not check often enough to see whether this is making a difference to every teacher, by looking at improvements in the quality of teaching and students' progress. As a result, the pace of change is too slow.
- The targets given to teachers as part of the process of managing their performance are not as effective as they could be in bringing about improvements. This is because they are not always focused sharply enough on the quality of teaching and effect on learning. The process is, however, tightly linked to salary progression.
- The curriculum is broad and offers students an extensive and interesting variety of experiences, which ensures all students are included, and supports their good achievement. Students who attend local colleges for vocational activities, such as engineering, are monitored closely. These students have good-quality experiences and consequently make good progress. Students are particularly enthusiastic about the extent of the enrichment activities on offer after school each day and the opportunities to broaden their horizons through national and international visits. Students have good opportunities to complete work experience in other countries, helping others less fortunate than themselves in the process.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very proud of the school's achievements, particularly the exceptional behaviour and attitude of students and the high standards of pastoral care. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and understand why students' achievement and the quality of teaching are not yet outstanding. Although they challenge the school, particularly about students' achievement, they have not pushed for changes to happen fast enough. They play a full role in managing the performance of the headteacher and have a good understanding of arrangements for monitoring staff performance, salary progression and promotion. They have provided extensive support for the headteacher through the difficult process of converting to academy status. Financial management and safeguarding arrangements are very secure.

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

Unique reference number	138135
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	403846

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	N/A
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve McKenzie
Headteacher	Susan Rafter
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	01256 702700
Fax number	01256 703012
Email address	rms@rmays.hants.sch.uk

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