

Samuel Cody Specialist Sports College

Ballantyne Road, Farnborough, GU14 8SN

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Students make good progress from their low starting points. Many gain GCSE passes or other worthwhile forms of accreditation for the work they complete. They are prepared well for their future lives.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers plan lessons which challenge and enthuse students. They regularly check how much students have learned by asking effective questions and using students' answers to shape the direction of the lesson.
- School leaders and managers, including the governing body, know their school well because they regularly monitor the quality of teaching. They scrutinise students' achievements and plan good, personalised support programmes when they note that an individual is struggling.
- Students behave well. They are polite and considerate of each other's needs. Students say that they feel safe at school and know who can help them if they have a problem. They grow in confidence and self-esteem during their time at school.
- Governors and school leaders have established a clear vision for the school. They make sure that all resources, including those made available from the school's specialism in sport, serve to provide a range of exciting and memorable opportunities for every pupil.
- As a result of the actions of school leaders, managers and governors, the quality of teaching and students' achievement have improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always follow consistently the school's policy for giving verbal feedback in lessons or for marking and annotating students' work.
- In a very few lessons, teachers' planning does not focus sufficiently on the needs of each individual pupil.

Information about this inspection

- A total of 16 lessons taught by 15 teachers were visited by inspectors, representing almost eight hours spent in the classroom. One inspector carried out a joint lesson observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors met students at lunchtime and at break times to hear their views about the school and to listen to their ideas about its strengths and weaknesses.
- A range of the school's own documentation was scrutinised, including those on behaviour and safeguarding, governors' minutes and the school's improvement plan.
- The views of the 21 parents who completed the on-line Parent View survey were taken into account and one inspector held a telephone conversation with a parent to hear his opinions.
- The views of 43 members of staff who completed a questionnaire were considered.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the school's leadership team and a representative of the local authority.
- One inspector met a group of students to look in detail at their work files, to hear them read and discuss their favourite books. These students were keen to give their opinions about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors talked to school leaders, teachers and governors, about the school's programmes for professional development and performance management.

Inspection team

Bob Pugh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Howard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school, which holds specialists sports college status, provides for students who have moderate learning difficulties. Approximately 40% of students have an autistic spectrum condition.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Almost all students come from the surrounding districts in the county of Hampshire, with a very few travelling to the school from other local authorities. The school plays an active role in the local consortium alongside mainstream primary and secondary schools.
- The school moved to its current spacious site, which formerly housed a secondary school, approximately 18 months ago. A number of community recreation and leisure facilities are to be found on the campus.
- Students are able to participate in a range of after-school clubs on most evenings, with school staff providing transport home for those who require it.
- More than one quarter of all students on roll are entitled to receive the pupil premium, which provides additional support for those in the care of the local authority, those with families in the services or those who are known to be entitled to free school meals. This is higher than the national average.
- The overwhelming majority of students are from White British backgrounds and for almost everyone, English is the first language spoken at home.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Drive up the standard of teaching even further so that it consistently matches the very best by:
 - making sure that teachers give regular verbal and written feedback to students that accurately describes how well they are doing and provides them with advice about future learning.
- Make sure that the needs of every individual pupil are fully met in every lessons by making better use of small-group and one-to-one teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- During the years that they are at the school, students make good progress. When they join the school, students' attainment levels are low. They settle quickly and develop good learning skills so that by the time they leave, very many have gained good qualifications. Over time, the number of students gaining GCSE A*-G passes has increased. Almost all students gain GCSE or Entry Level passes in a range of subjects, including those who joined the school with attainment levels well below Level 1 of the National Curriculum.
- Thus, students make good progress from their earliest days at the school. The school has good systems for assessing how much they know when they join the school and this information is used to plan effective learning programmes which help students to achieve well.
- There are no differences in rates of progress made by students in different groups. The few students who are in the care of the local authority often do better than others and achievement by students who have an autistic spectrum condition is good. In a few lessons, the rate of progress slows because teachers have not always set work which closely matches the needs of all individuals.
- Funding made available by the pupil premium has been used well to boost rates of achievement. Extra support for reading and numeracy is provided and the school can show how this has raised the performance of these students who make similar rates of progress to their peers. Funding has also been used to ensure that all students gain equal access to the after-school clubs, trips and residential visits which provide rich and memorable experiences for them. One younger pupil told an inspector, 'This school gives me better opportunities than I had before.'
- Students' reading skills develop well over time. As a result of good teaching, they are able to use their skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to read unfamiliar words. In most lessons, communication skills are taught well and students learn to express their ideas clearly and confidently.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting lessons which challenge students to think and to work hard. In almost all lessons, they regularly check how much students are learning and they encourage students to work together and compare results.
- In a very effective science lesson, the teacher used students' knowledge about current affairs to build on their learning about vaccines, and in a good technology lesson, the teacher encouraged students to comment on what they had produced as well as on the efforts of others.
- Examples of outstanding teaching were observed. In a religious education lesson, younger students held animated discussions after watching a video about a Jewish festival. Their behaviour in this lesson was outstanding and they demonstrated real understanding of the video's content as well as excellent communication skills.
- Teachers nearly always have high expectations and make sure that they use the best techniques for helping students to understand. In a very good art lesson, the teacher enthusiastically modelled what he wanted students to do and, with good support from the assistant, students built on his suggestions and completed high quality work.
- However, in a few lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently to meet the needs of all students. Here, the pace of learning drops and students do not concentrate so well. In these lessons, learning support assistants are not used well enough to help students make progress.
- Teachers give students regular verbal feedback about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Sometimes this feedback is not as accurate as it should be and students' books and work files are not always marked regularly and carefully. Nevertheless, students who met the inspector were able to talk with confidence about their personal learning objectives and to comment on how successful they had been in achieving their goals.

- Good emphasis is given in all subjects to helping students improve their literacy and numeracy skills. In a good mathematics lesson, particular attention was placed on learning and remembering key words while in an effective history lesson, students were encouraged to read well and to compare and contrast written sources and pictorial evidence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well. In lessons, they settle quickly to learning and are positive throughout.
- In class and in the playground, students show consideration for each other and for the school environment. In their school council meetings, they suggest ways in which the site might be improved and are pleased when their ideas are acted upon.
- At the end of each lesson, a points system is used to indicate how much each pupil has achieved. They enjoy this dialogue with teachers and make sensible suggestions about their own performances. They understand the importance of working hard and behaving well and the contribution that they can all make to gaining points for their houses which leads to appealing rewards.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers and all members of staff are very positive about the behaviour of students.
- Occasionally, in lessons which are less well planned, students' attention wanders and the pace of learning slows.
- Students say that they enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their high rates of attendance. Students know who they can turn to if they feel concerned and are aware that help is readily available. Bullying of any kind is extremely rare and dealt with well when it occurs. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Important information about staying safe on the internet is provided for students. Work in their books shows that they have understood these messages. During a conversation at lunchtime with an inspector, one pupil related how he helped his parents overcome their initial fears about possible problems with the internet.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and her senior colleagues provide strong leadership. They have put into place good systems which provide them with useful information about the performance of teachers and the amount of progress made by students in all subjects.
- Teaching is regularly monitored. The management of teachers' performance is closely linked to whole-school priorities for improvement and an effective training programme for all staff contributes well to driving up standards.
- The school's curriculum is well planned, offering a wide range of opportunities for learning useful skills which helps students to prepare well for the future. It ensures that all students have equal opportunities to succeed.
- School leaders are rightly proud of the successful development of the sports specialism. Olympic stars have visited the school from time to time and provide great role models for students. Resources are used well to make sure that everyone has equal access to participation in sport and the chance to attend national sporting occasions.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well catered for by means of strong teaching about similarities and differences amongst people of various faiths and lifestyles. This is enhanced by regular visits to theatres, sports events and community-based activities.
- Students were proud to participate with their mainstream peers in events such as the 'Poetry Slam' when they visited a theatre in London, participated in a number of workshops and won national recognition for their compositions and performances.
- Good monitoring and checking systems make sure that the school environment is as safe as it can be. School leaders, governors and other members of staff have completed necessary

training in child protection.

- The hard work which school leaders put into maintaining good links with parents is greatly appreciated. One parent commented 'I don't know what we would do without this school.'
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding about the quality of teaching and students' achievement because they visit regularly and ask challenging questions of school leaders and other members of staff. Governors each monitor an improvement target and report to colleagues on progress towards meeting it. They receive and scrutinise reports from members of staff. They know about the ways in which teachers' performance is managed and how well they are meeting their targets. They have made sure that the pupil premium monies have been used well to boost rates of progress for those entitled to it and to extend access to after-school clubs and school visits. They manage the school's resources well and can provide evidence of how they have used them to develop the career of members of staff who are working in particularly effective ways. They know how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance as well as linking salary steps to performance management. Governors have a secure overview of the school's finances.

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	116640
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	403793

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Vanessa Binnie-Richie
Headteacher	Mrs Anna Dawson
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 November 2009
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