

The Mary Rose School

Gisors Road, Portsmouth, PO4 8GT

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Outstanding leadership and management and the pursuit of excellence across all areas of the school have led to the excellent provision and high quality outcomes, along with an extremely supportive environment in which all pupils flourish.
- Exceptional personal and academic opportunities ensure that the school makes an enormous difference to the lives of pupils and their families. As a result, all groups achieve outstandingly well from their individual starting points.
- A high proportion of teaching is outstanding, enabling pupils to make better than expected progress particularly in communication and reading, in the use of technology and in their personal development.
- Teachers challenge pupils very well and make the best possible use of teaching assistants to fully engage different groups of pupils in learning.
- Behaviour is impeccable. Older pupils say they feel safe. Attendance is above that in other special schools and is above mainstream secondary schools.
- High quality accreditation and vocational experiences prepares those in Year 11 and in the sixth form extremely well for their futures and the world of work.
- A vibrant range of topics, subjects and experiences for all groups of pupils including a wide range of therapies, promotes their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher has very high aspirations and a strong vision for the school. Senior leaders and managers place a high focus on improving staff performance through regular high quality training and checks on their work.
- The governing body has improved and now makes an excellent contribution to the school's effectiveness. Governors regularly monitor the school's effectiveness through regular reports and visits to check teaching and learning.
- The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding, preparing students exceptionally well for their futures.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, most jointly with the senior leaders. In addition, the inspectors made a few shorter visits to observe pupils' learning, and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, other staff, health and therapy workers, and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with a local authority representative.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and pupils' books and files.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and spoke to a parent at the school during the inspection. Inspectors also took account of 49 responses to the staff inspection questionnaire

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

- The school caters for all-aged pupils from across Portsmouth and a few from surrounding counties. The vast majority have a statement of special educational needs for their severe, multiple or profound learning difficulties. About a third of pupils also have autism spectrum disorders, and/or sensory difficulties.
- Almost all pupils are White British and a few pupils speak English as an additional language. There are far more boys than girls.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for certain groups, including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is average.
- The school has discrete provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage from the age of two.
- The sixth form has its own separate accommodation. Students have opportunities to undertake a wide range of accredited courses such as Entry Level qualifications and spend some of their time following vocational courses at the local St Vincent College, Gosport.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the teaching of shape, space and measures, so that all groups of pupils have more opportunities to improve their knowledge and understanding of these aspects by exploring them for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- All groups of pupils including those with additional needs and those who receive pupil premium funding make similar progress to other pupils in the school.
- Pupils make better than expected progress in communication, reading, the use of technology and in their personal development because of the very high focus placed on these areas of learning. More-able pupils read well by Years 10 and 11 and can search for information in books, find answers to questions and write their answers accurately.
- Pupils of lower ability also make better than expected progress because of the high quality innovative communication aids and technological approaches used across the school. Older pupils with profound and multiple difficulties and/or autism spectrum disorders, for example, made outstanding progress as they showed how well they could use ipads, 'Eye-Gaze' and a wide range of interactive systems to make choices, create animations and change pictures on the screen, sometimes through their own eye movements.
- Younger pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, get off to an excellent start to their education in their exciting environment, benefiting from a wide range of age-appropriate resources which help them engage fully in their learning and achieve exceptionally well.
- Pupils make better than expected progress in numeracy. They enjoy working with numbers and some of the youngest pupils showed that they could hold their fingers up and count to five. Older pupils learn to use and manage money, regularly shopping in the local shops for ingredients.
- Because of the outstanding way that communication systems are used, every pupil who needs it is able to have a means of expressing a choice, responding to questions or asking for help. Signs, symbols and switches are a very regular part of everyday lessons and pupils are confident users, helping their communication skills to flourish.
- Pupils' improvements in their personal development are outstanding. They develop confidence and self-esteem through the high quality opportunities that the school offers. The local 'Rock Challenge' in which pupils perform on stage with mainstream schools, is a prime example of how pupils are encouraged to develop their skills by presenting themselves very well and taking a full part in the community.
- Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress in academic and vocational achievement. This was evident as they worked in a charity shop that they help to run in the town and also in the way they focus intently on their studies, acquiring good quality accreditation by the time they leave the school. Vocational experiences through the local St Vincent's College help to prepare them extremely well for further training and employment.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make better than expected progress in communication, technology and reading which is similar to other pupils in the school. Those eligible for free school meals also achieve as well as other pupils in these areas.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching in the vast majority of lessons is the key to pupils' high quality achievements. Teaching typically enables all groups of pupils to make excellent progress in their learning and their behaviour. High quality questioning and the use of many innovative resources ensure that teaching meets the needs and abilities of individual pupils helping them all to fully engage in learning.
- The teaching of reading has been improved by the very strong emphasis on reading together, using a phonics approach and allowing non-readers to follow stories through symbols and pictures. As a result, the vast majority make excellent progress in reading.

- Improvements in writing, which is often linked to what pupils have read, are also noted. Pupils benefit from the high quality support provided by teaching assistants who are skilled at enabling pupils to achieve their tasks. Evidence in the older pupils' work books shows excellent improvement over time.
- The teaching of numbers is excellent because of the strong focus on counting, and recognising number names. This was evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage class where tasks were practical, resources were used very well and questions were clear. As a result, pupils were able to 'find one more' or say 'how many ducks', for example. Their progress was accelerated by the high quality use of age-appropriate resources and toys, which they loved.
- Not enough attention is always paid to the teaching of shape, space and measures in a way that enables pupils to investigate practically to develop their understanding.
- There are many examples of older pupils using their mathematical and communication skills to undertake everyday challenges and enterprise, such as shopping, and making and selling cakes to make money or raise funds for charities.
- Inspirational teaching in technology was evident when some older pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties were able to make appropriate responses because of innovative use of resources providing them with some choice and autonomy in their learning.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' skills provide very helpful comments for parents and pupils, helping older pupils to improve further and to know what their targets are. Teaching assistants are used outstandingly well to promote pupils' learning, self-esteem and confidence.
- Teachers engage very well with parents. One parent told the inspectors, 'It is a fantastic school and I can't praise it highly enough.'
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is outstanding because it promotes interest and challenge. Teachers promote students' excellent maturity by enabling them to do things for themselves. For example, because of the very well prepared tasks, students were able to use their reading skills extremely well to read posters for a film-session they had organised for other students. They described their feelings about the task, and used a search engine independently on the computer to look for pictures of characters.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in all areas of the school is exemplary. They are polite, helpful and eager to please. They benefit from the way that staff encourage them to do things for themselves, such as taking on jobs, giving out the resources, and clearing away.
- Older pupils told the inspectors that they feel really safe at school. They fully understand the importance of staying safe on the internet and in the community.
- They said that there is no real bullying of any kind at the school, saying that all pupils get on well. Their excellent behaviour is promoted by the very well organised and managed outdoor areas and the wide range of after-school clubs often run by the teaching assistants.
- The vast majority enjoy school very much. This is evident in their above expected, and improving, attendance.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very well promoted by the wide range of opportunities and exciting learning opportunities. This results in no exclusions and fewer persistent absentees than in other special schools.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, through the very wide range of exciting trips, visits and residential experiences for pupils. They are fully prepared for their lives after leaving school.

The leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher has very high aspirations for pupils and ensures that they also have fun. She drives improvement through rigorous monitoring of provision and outcomes and by seeking the best from each and every staff member and pupil. She is very ably supported by the senior leadership team and governors. They have built effectively on the outstanding performance of the last inspection.
- Leaders make excellent use of the national standards for teaching and are uncompromising in their drive to maintain the very high quality of teachers' skills. Teachers themselves are fully aware of the Teachers Standards and work hard to achieve them. There are many excellent examples of staff at all levels progressing up the pay scales and seeking promotion.
- Leaders rigorously keep checks on teaching and learning. Middle leaders are very effective in monitoring their own subjects and seeking innovation. All staff have opportunities to discuss their own practice with leaders and are provided with very high quality training to help them fulfil their roles.
- The governing body is fully involved in monitoring outcomes and ensures that each teacher is provided with feedback to consolidate or improve skills. As a result, leaders are fully aware of which teachers deserve promotion.
- The school has strong links with the local authority responsible for placing pupils at the school. As a result, it is well supported by the local authority's special educational needs department.
- There are some excellent links with local schools and businesses helping to develop pupils' academic and personal skills and providing experiences that will benefit pupils in the future.
- The high quality range of subjects and topics taught provides outstandingly well for the needs and abilities of all groups. Successful links with families result in a consistent approach to supporting individual pupils' needs.
- The school has a productive link with a school in Ghana which is helping to widen pupils' horizons as they share photographs and letters.
- Leaders have already identified the need to improve provision for the teaching of space, shape and measures as identified by this report.
- Leaders successfully eliminate discrimination through their very effective policies and procedures which make sure positive relationships are fostered and that all pupils have equal opportunities to all the experiences on offer.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has improved since the last inspection and now provides excellent challenge to leaders. Governors are fully involved in monitoring provision, checking teaching and behaviour and looking at how well pupils are doing. They have a clear view of what is working well and what needs improving including a very good knowledge of school performance data and of the quality of teaching because of the good training they have received. Governors have an excellent range of skills which they use to benefit the school. Effective management of finances means that money is very well spent to enrich pupils' learning, including the particular funding allocated for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. This money is used well to provide additional resources and experiences for these pupils enabling them to make similar progress to their classmates. Governors know about performance management and work to ensure that the best teachers and staff are rewarded through promotion. They are fully aware of where underperformance has been tackled in the past.

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	134881
Local authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	426649

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Mitchell
Headteacher	Alison Beane
Date of previous school inspection	September 2010
Telephone number	02392 852330
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Email address	headteacher@maryrose.portsmouth.sch.uk

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