

Prospect School

Freely Road, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 4AQ

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The school is innovative in finding ways to help students attend, learn and succeed.
- Students make good progress from their starting points. They are well prepared for their next stage of education. As one student said, 'This school has opened doors for me. I can choose what I want to do and know how to get there.'
- Teachers know students well. Together with teaching assistants, they plan for every student individually to make sure that everyone can achieve.
- The majority of students behave well in lessons and around the school. Over time, they learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Staff have very high expectations and are excellent role models.
- The improvements made in achievement and teaching since the last inspection have been led by the inspirational headteacher and her strong senior leaders. Governors, subject leaders and managers support them very well.
- Governors know the school well and regularly check that improvements are being made and sustained. They make sure that teachers' salaries are closely linked to how well they do.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is consistently outstanding. Some teachers do not give students enough time to practise what they need to do to improve their work.
- Some teachers do not give enough opportunities for students to practise the skills they have learnt in English and mathematics in a range of other activities, such as investigations or solving problems.
- Although overall attendance is improving, it is low because some students are too unwell to attend. Also, some students, who had a previous pattern of poor attendance before they joined the school, still do not attend regularly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 10 lessons in a range of subjects and year groups.
- All of the lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector took account of the 28 responses to the online parents' and carers' survey, Parent View, and of the school's own recent parents' and carers' responses made in annual reviews. She also met with some parents in a parents' coffee morning held at the school.
- Meetings were held with various members of staff and representatives from the governing body. The inspector spoke to pupils and looked at behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector also looked at documentation about pupils' progress, teaching and planning. The school's documents on safeguarding were scrutinised, together with records of attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- She listened to pupils reading during lessons and looked at their work.

Inspection team

Helen Howard, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Prospect is a special school for boys aged from 11 to 16 years of age, all of whom have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Some have autistic spectrum disorders. Many have additional difficulties including attention deficit and hyperactive disorder, speech and language communication difficulties, pathological demand avoidance syndrome and learning difficulties. Increasing numbers have severe mental health issues and are too unwell to attend school full time or in a group. They may be educated at home, part time or on a one-to-one basis, depending on medical advice. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes within each key stage.
- Approximately three quarters of the students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals, pupils from service families and those in care), which is much higher than the national average.
- Almost all are from White British backgrounds.
- Nearly one third of students join the school at different stages of their school career and at different times of the year; this is higher than the national average.
- Key Stage 4 students typically attend college placements part time at South Downs, Sparsholt and Highbury Colleges and PETA Skills Centre. They also attend courses part time at the local federation of secondary schools, including Park Community School, as well as other partner secondary schools such as Mill Chase Academy and Baycroft School.
- The school provides support and training for other teachers in local schools. It also has an outreach service, providing support and advice to schools that have pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties including autistic spectrum disorders, and for troubled families.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by making sure that teachers:
 - give students time to practise the advice given so they can improve their work further
 - give more opportunities for students to use their English and mathematics skills in a range of ways, including investigations and solving problems.
- Provide early family support from the school's well-being team for students who are due to start school and who have had a pattern of poor attendance in their previous school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all students start school with gaps in their education or with below average attainment for their age. Some have been unable to attend a previous school for a variety of reasons.
- The school makes detailed and accurate assessments of students as they join the school. The care and support plans that are then provided at Prospect mean that, despite increasing numbers of students with complex needs, most make good progress from their starting points.
- Observations and work in books show that students make good progress over time in all subjects. They make outstanding progress in art because teaching is outstanding, resulting in work of a very high quality.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced different strategies to support functional literacy and numeracy. The reading programme and daily 20 minute practice are improving rates of progress in reading. Teachers expect students to read aloud in lessons and more do so with increasing confidence. Most now leave school with functional English and mathematics qualifications and more are gaining GCSE passes in a range of subjects. The most able students are gaining grade C passes. The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations.
- Students' progress in mathematics has improved greatly since the previous inspection. The new approach to teaching this subject is helping students to make fast progress from when they start school. Students say that they enjoy working individually at their own pace. As one student said, 'It helps me learn more quickly.'
- In Key Stage 4 some students attend courses in schools within the local federation of schools, further education colleges and vocational providers. The choice of up to 40 subjects means that students have individual programmes that are matched to their needs and interests. As a result, more students are able to gain a range of qualifications. Last year, for example, students gained an average of six GCSE passes, making them much better prepared for their next stage at college.
- Students make good progress in communication because staff focus on specific words that are used in different subjects and use visual communication aids, such as story boards, to good effect. Teaching assistants often model answers to teachers' questions before students are asked and this helps students to understand what is expected.
- The school promotes equal opportunities very well. Pupil premium funding, including catch-up funding for Year 7 students, is used to provide one-to-one tuition, family support and individual resources. Although students who are eligible attain approximately half a grade below those who are not eligible in GCSEs, they do as well in other qualifications, such as art and science. Overall, they make the same good progress as those who are not eligible for the funding.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve. They go to great lengths to find new ways to interest students and are very skilled in changing their lessons to meet individual needs. They provide good levels of challenge for the more able students. This means that the majority of students develop positive attitudes to learning. Many students value the small classes and extra help.
- All staff, including the well-being team, plan together to meet students' needs. In lessons they meet not just academic, but also social and emotional, needs. For example, some students are diagnosed with pathological demand avoidance syndrome (PDA). Staff use consistent ways to respond so that potentially difficult situations do not develop and students can stay focused on the lesson. Students develop a sense of trust with staff and this helps them to engage with the school.
- Teachers' questioning is very effective in developing learning. Teachers use different types of questions for students who have a range of abilities so that they can assess how well each

student has understood the lesson. Teaching assistants have aids to prompt them to use the same level of questioning and so they support students very well to make fast progress.

- Teachers have introduced lessons to develop thinking skills, called 'Philosophy for Children'. For example, in a Key Stage 3 lesson, students were discussing crime. Using a range of statements, they were considering whether any one murder was worse than another. A lively debate ended with every student being able to state his own opinion and justify it, showing good progress in developing speaking skills.
- Teachers regularly assess how well students are doing in lessons and give good advice about how to improve work. When marking, they give 'next steps' or hints for improvement, and this helps students know what they need to do to improve. Students do not always have enough time to practise this advice, so they do not consistently make the fast progress they could.
- In some lessons, teachers give students opportunities to practise the skills they have learnt in order to research, investigate or solve problems. For example, in a booster lesson in Key Stage 3, students were making a Monopoly-style game, but had to adapt the rules and place names. This encouraged them to practise researching and writing instructions in order to apply them to the game. The students clearly enjoyed the task and were making good progress in using their skills in a different context. Teachers do not always give time to students to practise their skills in this way, so their progress is not as fast as it could be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. The vast majority behave well in lessons and around the school in spite of their severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. They have positive attitudes to learning and most present their work neatly, showing a pride in learning.
- The school has accepted a high number of new students in the last year and a few of these students have not yet settled into the school's routines. However, there is convincing evidence from school documentation, behaviour logs and parents' and carers' views that, over time, students' behaviour improves considerably.
- Data show that the number of incidents for students reduces over time. Exclusions are occasionally used as a short term response to students' physical aggression. This reinforces the school's policy of not tolerating violence.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The school is very calm and orderly, greatly enhanced by the quiet courtyard, where students are invited to calm down or have some personal space. Teachers make regular risk assessments in lessons to manage behaviour and this helps students to concentrate on learning. The school uses physical handling occasionally to keep students safe. Staff are kept up to date with training and carefully record all such incidents. Students say they are safe in school and parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree. The school carefully monitors people who work there or visit. Students are well supervised and the school is secure.
- Staff are excellent role models for students. They remain calm under pressure, are always respectful and courteous, and skilfully use a range of ways to manage sometimes difficult behaviour. Consequently, students experience consistent responses from adults and learn to manage their own behaviour well. A few older students earn the right to leave the premises at lunchtime, following consultations with parents, carers and the local community, and they respond well to this.
- The school uses 'restorative' approaches that encourage students to take responsibility for their behaviour and understand the impact that it has on others. As one student said, 'It helps because it's a safe way to face people and say how you feel. It sorts out problems.' The school tackles discrimination effectively, although such incidents are very rare.
- Students have a wide range of support to help manage their difficulties. This includes intensive family support, counselling, referrals to child and adolescent mental health services or social services. A well-being team has been introduced since the previous inspection and includes specialist social care staff. This highly effective team has had a huge impact in engaging

students and parents and carers and in improving attendance.

- Students make positive relationships in school. As one student said, 'We are all alike here so I can find friends.' Staff encourage students to work together in lessons and by offering clubs and out-of-school activities.
- Students are aware of different types of bullying and say that it does sometimes happen. They are confident that staff deal with it very well if it cannot be sorted out in a restorative meeting.
- Although below average, attendance has improved greatly as a result of a whole-school focus. The school has been innovative in getting students to school. For example, it provides its own transport to pick up students and members of staff visit homes. The well-being team back up the school's efforts with intensive support to families and this has resulted in improved overall attendance.
- Overall, attendance is affected by a number of students who are diagnosed as being not well enough to attend. Despite this, although the majority of students attend regularly, some do not attend often enough. Many students have a previous pattern of poor attendance and the school recognises that it needs to begin its support to encourage students to attend before they join the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has moved forward considerably since the previous inspection, largely as the result of the inspirational and visionary headteacher. Many staff and governors spoke of how she is the driving force behind improvements and they clearly value her leadership. She is well supported by a strong senior leadership team, including governors. Together, they have created a calm, caring community where everyone works hard to help students succeed. High expectations, strong boundaries and consistently-applied routines have led to many improvements. Staff constantly look for new ways to encourage students to attend and learn to enjoy school.
- Leaders and managers have made sure that self-evaluation systems identify the strengths and further improvements for the school and lead to actions that make a difference. The improvements in achievement, teaching and attendance since the last inspection demonstrate that the school can improve and have the capacity to do so
- Leaders and managers, including governors, regularly monitor teaching so that they can support teachers to improve further and provide effective training. It is this, together with the improved use of students' data, that is driving the improvements in achievement.
- Subject leaders and managers are increasingly effective in evaluating how well the school is doing. They are a strong team and share the best practice that is in the school. They work closely with staff from other schools so that they can develop their leadership skills further.
- The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and ensures that students are well prepared for their next stage by placing importance on basic literacy and numeracy skills. Students benefit from the federation of schools' curriculum in Key Stage 4, which provides a wide range of vocational subjects and maintains their interest in school. Individual guidance and good information help students to make informed choices about college placements. Consequently, all students go on to college when they leave school.
- The school offers good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through subjects, assemblies and trips and visits. For example, students study Japanese as a foreign language and learn about the culture.
- The school works very closely with other schools and agencies. The highly-effective multi-agency approach to supporting families and individuals means that students get the best possible level of support and care, enabling them to make the most of school. The well-being team also offers support and guidance to other schools and families in the local area and this service is highly valued by the community.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and appreciate the help they receive to manage their sons' behaviour. As one said, 'My son is doing well at school. It's a total transformation.'

- The local authority has provided effective support to the school, both to support leadership and offer training opportunities to improve teaching and governance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors now have data given to them in a way that helps them carefully check how well the school is doing, so they are much more able to challenge the school about students' progress. They know the school very well and regularly visit to make sure for themselves that information given to them is accurate. They keep up to date with training and sometimes use specialists from other schools or the local authority to help evaluate teaching or students' work. They carefully monitor how well staff are doing and make sure that teachers' pay awards are closely linked to performance. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and carefully check that it is making a difference. Safeguarding arrangements 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 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	133581
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	426404

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Cooper
Headteacher	Marijke Miles
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 February 2012
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