

The Mark Way School

Batchelors Barn Road, Andover, SP10 1HR

Inspection dates 7–8 May 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

- Ambitious leadership at all levels, together with the pursuit of excellence, has resulted in improvements that have enabled students to make good progress during their time at the school.
- All Year 11 students in 2013 gained GCSE or work-related qualifications appropriate to their starting points and moved on successfully to further education, training or other specialist provision.
- Teaching is good, enabling students across the school to make good progress, particularly in communication, literacy and numeracy and personal development.
- Teaching makes very good use of the improved resources to engage students' interests and develop their skills.
- Students' behaviour is consistently good. Attendance has improved because students enjoy school very much and arrive eagerly each day.
- The quality of teaching is monitored rigorously by the senior staff. This has led to an improvement in achievement across the school.
- The range of subjects provides many opportunities for students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- Members of the governing body know the school very well and provide consistent support and challenge to drive improvement.
- The school receives very effective support from the local authority.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the good progress their children make.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of marking is not consistent across all subjects. It does not always provide students with an understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- The school's plans to improve students' access to, and achievement in, outside activities and music have yet to be implemented or embedded.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons and some part lessons, five of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, others with posts of responsibility, members of the governing body, and some parents.
- The lead inspector also held a discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- There were too few responses to take account of the online questionnaire (Parent View). However, the school’s own parental questionnaire returns, together with the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire, were considered.
- The inspectors observed the school’s practice and looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s checks on how well it is doing and improvement planning, information on students’ progress, documents used by senior leaders to check the school’s work, governing body documentation, as well as records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Marshall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mary Geddes

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Mark Way School caters for students with moderate learning difficulties. Some have communication and interaction difficulties. A significant number has a diagnosis of autism.
- All students enter school with a statement of special educational needs.
- Most students are from families of White British heritage.
- Students are drawn from a large area of Hampshire.
- Many students enter the school other than at the normal times.
- Students are not entered early for examinations.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well above average. This is government funding that the school receives for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who are in local authority care and the children of military personnel. The school receives the Years 7 and 8 catch-up funding for a few students. This is additional government funding for students who did not reach the expected Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and of achievement so that both are outstanding, by:
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides students with an understanding of what they need to do to improve their work
 - providing more opportunities for students to take part in outside and musical activities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with attainment that is well below expected levels. All have additional learning difficulties and some have missed parts of their education through extended periods of absence or illness. School records show that most students have weaknesses in their reading, writing, speaking and number skills.
- All students receive a very good start on entry to the school as checks of what they know and can do are rigorous and integration plans, with supportive care, are very well thought out. This means they settle quickly. The school's information shows that by the time the current Year 11 students leave they will have made good progress from their starting points. They are all on course to achieve a range of qualifications in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Observations of teaching during the inspection confirmed that, throughout the school, all groups of students are taught well and make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress towards the clear and challenging targets in their individual education plans. Students' levels of self-esteem improve due to the committed relationships students enjoy with adults, and the sensitive way in which their needs are met through one-to-one support.
- Teachers have become skilful in motivating students to take qualifications in Year 11. Each student has a carefully planned programme that is set at the right level so that increasing numbers of them gain a range of qualifications. Combinations of work experience and college placements ensure that students are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. In 2013, all students in Year 11 left the school to go on to college or a place of work.
- Students make good progress in science, which was an issue at the time of their last inspection. This is because teachers' high expectations, good subject knowledge and enthusiasm motivate students to do well.
- The school promotes equal opportunities very well. All groups of students, including those who receive additional government funding, make the same good progress. The school has used this funding to support individual interventions and further therapy sessions. The boost this gives to students' confidence means that, for many, the success they experience leads to greater engagement with learning in all lessons.
- The school has focused additional help in literacy for the students entitled to Years 7 and 8 catch-up funding. This has been successful in enabling these students to make good progress and become enthusiastic readers.
- School records show that parents think that their child is achieving well and students agree. As one said, 'I have learnt so much more since coming here.'
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because there are opportunities for students to progress in some subjects, such as music and horticulture, that although well planned have still to be implemented in full.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is good over time and some is of high quality, enabling students to make at least good progress.
- When teaching is most effective, teachers use their high levels of expertise to instil good learning habits. Regular and accurate checks ensure that teachers know their students well and set work that is pitched at the right level of challenge. Teachers help students to improve their thinking skills and test out what they have understood by asking well-considered questions.
- Teachers make effective use of a range of practical activities and a variety of high-quality resources to engage and motivate students. In an outstanding food technology lesson, students knew which foods were appropriate for a packed lunch, how the different foods would help them to be healthy, and how much they would enjoy eating them.
- Teachers are provided with clear and helpful information regarding the specific learning needs of each student. A range of teaching strategies is used to support students including small-group

work. One of the most effective of these is the in-class support, provided by specially trained teaching assistants who use their expertise to help students learn very successfully.

- Teachers provide helpful comments in their marking in some subjects, particularly in English and ICT, and students show that they understand how to improve. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because this is not always consistently applied in all subjects.
- Leaders have ensured a strong focus on developing students' language and communication skills. Consequently, their literacy development is planned for and promoted well. For example, the outstanding art work being produced across the school is inspiring students to think carefully about the media and language to use to be most effective. The range of well-articulated responses from all students was stunning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. This was evident in and around the school in their willingness to please and the way they respond very positively to others and to staff. They thoroughly enjoy school. Attendance has risen despite the level of medical absences.
- Students told inspectors that there is no real bullying of any kind at the school and that all students get on well together. The very caring behaviour management by staff means that those students who have challenging behaviours learn effective ways of coping. So, over time, their behaviour improves and they take part in all the activities that the school offers.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes are very well promoted by the wide range of learning opportunities. As a result, there are no exclusions and very few persistent absentees.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of the range of subjects on offer, together with trips and visits, provides many memorable experiences, particularly for older students.
- Students are very proud of their achievements and are keen to share their successes with others. For example, different students take turns at being school councillors and act as very good role models for their peers.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. As a result students are safe and secure at school at all times. Older students told the inspectors that they feel really safe. They know the importance of staying safe whilst using the internet and in the local community.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because students are sometimes over reliant on adult supervision in their learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The outstanding work of the headteacher, in the last two years, and the focus of other senior staff have created a culture of high expectations at the school. This is as evident in the displays and tidy classrooms as in the improved amount and presentation of students' work. As one staff member wrote, 'The school has improved a lot since the head joined the school. There are still things to work on but the school knows what they are and everyone is heading in the same direction. I am extremely proud to work here now and see the students' progress.'
- The monitoring of teaching and students' work is well organised and systematic and involves both senior and middle leaders. There are clear links to the well-coordinated arrangements for the management of staff performance. They have ensured that there is a good match between how well teachers are paid and how well students achieve.
- Middle leaders make an effective contribution to good teaching in the school. They, and senior leaders, are aware of the need to improve the implementation of the school's marking policy so that marking consistently provides students with an understanding of what they need to do to improve their work in all subjects.
- Planning to secure improvement is robust and comprehensive, involving all staff and the governing body. Specific priorities are clearly identified each year and are closely aligned with regular and accurate analysis of the quality of teaching. Training is given a high priority and

senior staff are instrumental in providing opportunities for all staff to move forward in their careers at the school.

- The school provides a good range of subjects that contribute strongly to students' good and improving achievement, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a keen focus on academic achievement and, for most subjects, it is very carefully planned. However, leadership and management are not yet outstanding because leaders have only just begun to review the range of outside and music opportunities students can participate in.
- The local authority provides extremely useful support to the school through termly meetings.
- Arrangements for safeguarding students, including vetting new staff appointments, are rigorous and meet all current requirements.
- Parents and carers, including those who came into school to meet the inspectors and in the school's own surveys, express high levels of satisfaction with the school's performance. They are particularly pleased with the careful attention paid by the school's family support worker to their needs and concerns whenever it is needed.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is an active and committed group which uses high levels of educational and other professional expertise to provide effective support to the school. The school's finances are well managed and the governors have ensured that the government's additional funding has been used well to close the achievement gap with other students. Governors are aware of the main strengths and areas for development in teaching and how the process of setting targets for staff is used.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the school's track record of achievement over the past two years, and how it compares with similar schools. They take up opportunities for training and have completed recruitment, safeguarding and data analysis training. Governors have a firm grasp of the finances and of systems for pay progression and rewards for good teaching. They have supported the headteacher in some difficult decisions about staffing and promotions. They carefully monitor, in detail, how effectively leaders are securing improvements in achievement for all groups of students across the school.

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	116641
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	430604

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	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Waldron
Headteacher	Sonia Longstaff-Bishop
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2012
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