

# Mary Hare School

Arlington Manor, Snelsmore Common, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 3BQ

**Inspection dates** 29–30 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Strong and ambitious leadership and the pursuit of excellence have resulted in pupils of all ages making outstanding progress in reading, mathematics and science as well as in their personal development.
- Exceptional personal and academic opportunities ensure that the school makes an enormous difference to the lives of its Pupils. As a result, all groups achieve outstandingly well during their time at the school, attaining good grades in their GCSEs.
- Pupils in the sixth form do extremely well in their accredited courses and are close to the national average for all pupils at grades A-C and above other pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- A high proportion of teaching is outstanding, enabling pupils to make better than expected progress, particularly in oral communication, mathematics, science and in their personal development.
- Teaching challenges pupils very well and makes the best possible use of resources to promote understanding and skills. A strong focus on developing pupils' oracy skills in every lesson ensures that they can communicate very well by the time they leave the school.
- Behaviour is impeccable. Older pupils say they feel safe. Attendance is excellent, and above that in other special schools. Pupils value their school and quickly make friends.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and their parents overwhelmingly agree.
- The exceptionally wide range of learning opportunities, subjects and topics engage pupils very well. This provides high quality enrichment that contributes to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders are rigorous about maintaining the high quality of teaching through regular, training and close links with local schools.
- Governors have improved their monitoring roles since the last inspection and now provide excellent support, guidance and challenge to leaders. They ensure that there is sufficient funding to support the performance of staff and to ensure that all pupils, including those who are eligible for additional funding, achieve equally as well as other pupils.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 23 lessons across the primary and secondary school sites, some jointly with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a few short visits to observe pupils' learning, and listened to a few younger pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, several members of the governing body and some pupils.
- Social care inspectors visited all the boarding houses, looked at a wide range of documentation, and held discussions with boarding house leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspection team observed the work of the different sites and looked at a number of documents, including information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documents, safeguarding information and some pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of the 132 responses to Ofsted's on-line survey (Parent View) and used them to help form judgements about the views of parents. Some parents also wrote to the inspectors to give their views. The inspection team also took account of the 60 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Denise Morris,, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector
Dr. Kanwaljit Singh	Additional Inspector
Pippa Greed	Social Care Inspector
Wilf Maxfield	Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This larger than average, non-maintained special school caters for pupils who have moderate, severe or profound deafness, most of whom have struggled in previous schools. They come from all parts of the United Kingdom, with a few from Eastern Europe and Africa.
- The school has a completely oral approach to language and pupils are all taught to use spoken English. All pupils have cochlear implants and/or hearing aids.
- All pupils, except a very few from countries overseas, have a statement of special educational needs for their deafness.
- The school is based on two sites a few miles apart. The primary site caters for 35 pupils aged five to 11, and the larger secondary site caters for up to 200 pupils aged 11 to 19, which includes the sixth form. Currently there are no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives 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 below average. The school does not receive additional funding for primary sports, or for Year 7 catch-up.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Pakistani or Eastern European, is above average, although the proportion speaking English as an additional language is low.
- The school has boarding provision on both sites.
- The school provides opportunities for off-site work experience for older pupils in local shops and businesses.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Modernise current information and communication technology equipment, ensuring that it works regularly and that all pupils have appropriate access to modern technology such as Wi-Fi, particularly for research and homework.
- Ensure the views of pupils who are boarders are regularly sought, particularly in relation to the use and promotion of sign language.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Pupils' attainment on entry to Mary Hare is often well below average for their age due to their deafness. They make outstanding gains in learning, so that by the time they leave the school, their attainment is significantly above other pupils with statements of special educational needs nationally.
- Parents are rightly very pleased with their children's progress. 'This school gives my kids a chance to thrive that no other school can offer them' commented a parent.
- Pupils make better progress from Year 7 to Year 11 in English and mathematics than all other pupils nationally who have a statement of special educational needs. Progress in developing oral communication skills is outstanding.
- There is no difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils, such as those eligible for the pupil premium, those eligible for free school meals or those who speak English as an additional language. This is because the high quality of teaching and the care and additional support given to these pupils, enables them to make similar progress to their classmates.
- Progress in reading is excellent. Primary-aged pupils benefit from an effective approach to recognising sounds, including through lip-reading. As a result, they learn to read fluently by Year 6. In the secondary school, pupils read widely and often; they undertake independent research and read for pleasure.
- Pupils make very good use of their literacy skills across other subjects. Pupils in Year 10 for example, used their reading, writing and communication skills extremely well as they developed their own response to Lloyd George's budget of 1909 in their history lesson.
- Pupils across the school make excellent progress in mathematics. This was evident in Year 10, where a higher ability group were matching equations to properties. They worked at a fast pace, fully justifying their expected A or A\* grades in their GCSEs.
- Pupils attain well in sciences, art and music because they build on their skills year by year. In Years 4 to 6, for example, pupils achieved extremely well as they explored the water cycle, checking to see if their breath condensed on the cold windows.
- No pupils took the Year 1 phonics screening last year because there were no pupils of that age at the school.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above that of other pupils with statements of special educational needs nationally in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils develop their oral communication skills quickly once they start at the school. They do not use signs or symbols but are encouraged to attempt to speak orally from their first day, making excellent progress. This was evident as a group of pupils in Years 8 and 9 presented talks in assembly with great confidence and fluency.
- Outstanding achievement in the sixth form is a result of the exceptional teaching and provision. Pupils work extremely hard and attain high-quality accreditation. By the time they leave Year 13, most have acquired A Levels or BTEch qualifications that prepare them very well for their futures. Many pupils go on to university to study alongside hearing pupils.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn about the world of work from the wide range of business links available. Work experience opportunities include working in local shops, garages and businesses.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching is the key to pupils' continuing success. Teaching contributes extremely well to pupils' excellent learning and achievement. The careful assessment of each student's skills ensures that suitable work and tasks are set, that are not too easy or too difficult, and help

them to move forward.

- High-quality relationships and effective support ensure that lessons are calm, and the clear routines help pupils to know what is expected of them. The very effective organisation of lessons ensures that each student can see the teacher clearly and enables the teacher to monitor each student's work.
- Reading is taught extremely well to the younger pupils at the primary school and several pupils in Years 3 to 6 read fluently to inspectors. There is a strong focus on improving writing skills, starting with the youngest pupils carefully making letter shapes. Older pupils continue to improve. Pupils in Year 7, for example, made excellent progress in pronouncing and writing letters because of the very effective use of pictures and some challenging questions.
- The teaching of mathematics provides many challenging examples to aid understanding and ensure that pupils can all complete the tasks set. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. For example, a low ability group in Year 8, made excellent progress as they used their skills to work out how many tiles of a particular size they would need to cover a given area.
- Teachers have very high expectations of what can be achieved. They regularly challenge pupils to think for themselves and set tasks that are carefully matched to each individual's needs and abilities so that they make as much progress as possible.
- Teachers make very effective use of resources and teaching assistants to support pupils' learning. Marking is regular and helpful, enabling pupils to improve their work.
- More able pupils benefit from high levels of challenge from staff that help them to find answers for themselves and ensure that they reach their full potential.
- Communication skills are particularly well promoted in all classes. Teachers regularly ask pupils to talk aloud in class, present work to others, join in conversations and comment on the work of their peers. This builds confidence in speaking aloud.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers have a clear view of how their pupils learn and what motivates them. They ensure that pupils are given responsibility for evaluating their own work and the work of their peers. This helps pupils to know how they could improve further. Outstanding assessment for learning in a literacy lesson, for example, enabled pupils to improve and deepen their thinking about the story of Frankenstein.
- Excellent links with the residence ensures that any issues are quickly passed on to teachers. This level of effective communication also helps to ensure that pupils receive help with their homework when needed. However, pupils say that they do not get enough access to Wi-Fi and other information and communication technology in the evenings and that it is regularly going wrong.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils are very happy to be at the school and show this by their improving attendance, which is now above that found in most special schools. They get on well together and work happily in small or large groups. Their attitudes to school and to learning are outstanding.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. This has a significant impact on pupils' positive attitudes to learning and full participation in activities. No evidence of any bullying was seen during the inspection. Older pupils and those in the sixth form are made aware of cyber bullying through assemblies, visitors and personal, social and health education lessons.
- Behaviour is managed very well on both sites, and pupils, parents and staff rightly say that behaviour is excellent. Pupils move around school calmly and with respect for others. They say everyone gets along well with each other. School records show that any issues are quickly dealt with by staff.
- Pupils are safe at school. A wide range of policies and practices help to keep them safe. Pupils themselves told inspectors that they feel very safe at all times both in school and in the residence. They say they know how to stay safe in the community. Older pupils have received talks from the police about drugs misuse.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is promoted well through the subjects they study and the visits they make. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the wider world and know how to respond to others in various situations, both in school and outside
- In the past three years, pupils have had opportunities to go skiing in Switzerland, undertake an exchange project with two schools for the deaf, one in Norway and one in Germany, take part in a design and technology day, visit a Nursery school and take part in a National Cultural Olympiad with a local artist.
- High quality college links and work-related learning for older pupils prepare them very well for their futures.

## **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher has a very strong vision for the future of the school. He is ably supported by the senior staff, teachers and members of the governing body. He has made many successful improvements in the past two years that are having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils. Teaching in particular has been improved because of more rigorous monitoring and assessment of pupils' abilities.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that teaching is the best that it can be. They make effective use of the National Teachers Standards to develop and manage the performance of teachers and other staff so that they can improve and progress up the pay scale. Senior leaders have a positive impact on improving the skills of other leaders and staff. There are some good examples across the school of how high-quality training and rigorous monitoring have improved the staff's effectiveness at all levels and led to their promotion.
- Parents who spoke, or wrote, to the inspection team were extremely supportive of the school and fully agree that their children have done very well in their time there, and are well looked after and safe. Comments include 'The difference in my child since starting at Mary Hare is astounding.'
- Subject leaders have worked diligently to strengthen subjects and topics so that they meet the needs of all pupils well. In the primary school, there is excellent attention to developing spoken English. This is essential because some pupils have only been hearing for a short time, since they had their cochlear implants, and other pupils have come from other schools with extremely low language acquisition.
- Leaders place a high focus on improving language and communication skills and ensure that pupils benefit from high quality, regular speech therapy support.
- Leaders agree that information and communication technology equipment across the school requires updating.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed and are not subject to discrimination, as shown by the excellent progress made by pupils who receive additional support through the pupil premium. Governors are fully involved in monitoring outcomes for different groups of pupils at the school. In the secondary school, there is an excellent focus on accreditation and qualifications.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding and the curriculum meets the abilities of pupils extremely well, taking full account of individual needs so that it is tailored to each student. A wide range of A and AS levels are offered as well as vocational qualifications. For example, one student wanted to study construction and a course was designed specifically for him.
- There is a strong partnership with the local authority and with local schools. These have resulted in school staff supporting deaf children in other schools and providing training in oral approaches for mainstream teachers. The school works well with all the authorities who place pupils at the school.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures meet current national requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have worked diligently to improve their skills since the last inspection. They have

received training on the interpretation of data and now have a good knowledge and take a full and active part in monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes. Monitoring is regular and provides strong support for leaders. Members regularly visit the two sites to check the quality of teaching and learning, talk to pupils and discuss actions with leaders, providing written reports. Members are fully committed to managing the performance of staff and have a successful track record of providing high quality training and ensuring that the best staff are rewarded for their efforts. They manage the budget well and ensure that pupils eligible for the pupil premium benefit from additional provision so that they achieve as well as their classmates. Governors know this because they monitor the outcomes of all groups of pupils each term.

**Outcomes for boarders**

**are good**

**Quality of boarding provision and care**

**is good, with outstanding care**

**Boarders' safety**

**is good**

**Leadership and management of boarding provision**

**are good**

- The overall effectiveness of the boarding provision is good and it provides outstanding care for all groups of pupils. The setting has numerous strengths and very few weaknesses. The school has proactively addressed all actions from the last welfare report.
- The residential leadership team regularly monitors, identifies and implements improved practices and procedures to ensure continuous improvement. These include reviewing policies and ensuring they are up to date, improving audits in the boarding houses, reviewing recording methods for medication and addressing health and safety matters to ensure full compliance.
- Boarding pupils receive outstanding quality of care. They are cared for by a stable, experienced and sensitive residential staff team who understand pupils' needs very well. This is enhanced by very effective pastoral care, along with a vigilant staff team who work hard to support pupils with emotional well-being.
- Outcomes are good ensuring that pupils make at least good and often excellent progress in their personal development from their starting points. Pupils are aware of their strong progress in education, social and life skills
- Safeguarding is effective and leaders liaise closely with the local children safeguarding board and police. Staff are well trained in child protection.
- Behaviour is managed well with a successful reward system which motivates pupils to develop positive behaviour.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that they like the boarding care staff. A few pupils say they would like their views listened to more often by boarding house staff. For example, when they have been lip-reading all day, they say they feel tired and would like an ethos where sign language is promoted more positively. They say this would make them feel valued.
- The vast majority of parents say their child enjoys the welfare experience. However, a significant percentage of parents were unsure if the school deals effectively with bullying.
- Accommodation is good and pupils enjoy a warm and comfortable environment that provides a wide range of activities. Pupils benefit from some good additional experiences. Younger pupils at the primary department benefit from an inspirational range of outings and activities.
- Health and safety matters are addressed to a very good standard and there are robust checks ensuring safety for boarding pupils and staff. The fire procedures are good and pupils confirm that they undertake evacuation drills regularly. There are appropriate resources in place for continuing maintenance upgrades across the school setting.
- Comments from residential pupils include: 'I like the care staff, they are nice, always good fun.'





## What inspection judgements mean

<b>School</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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>

<b>Boarding/Residential provision</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110180
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC011137
<b>Local authority</b>	Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	432092

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	235
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	68
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Granatt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tony Shaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29–30 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 244200
<b>Fax number</b>	01635 244200
<b>Email address</b>	Tonyshaw@maryhare.org.uk

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