

The Mendip Partnership School

2 Orchard Court, The Archers Way, Glastonbury, BA6 9LH

Inspection dates 9–10 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- School leaders make regular checks on how much pupils learn. They ensure that parents and carers have good information about how well their children are doing.
- Students behave well in school because they enjoy their lessons. Their rates of attendance improve significantly during the time they are at the school. They feel safe.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils very well and plan lessons and other activities which capture their interest and make them want to learn more.
- From their very low starting points, pupils make good progress. Some students gain good grades in GCSE examinations, while others gain BTEC or entry level awards.
- Members of the management committee carefully question the headteacher and other senior leaders to ensure that they have good information about how much pupils are achieving. They ensure that the school's budget is used to promote equal opportunities for all.
- Pupils and staff use the limited spaces available for learning as creatively as possible. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Members of the management committee do not have a well-organised plan for using their visits to the school to monitor its work.
- The quality of marking of books and files, and the written advice given to students, are inconsistent.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited the school's two sites and observed four lessons. They spent shorter periods of time in a few more lessons where one teacher was teaching one pupil. One inspector listened to students reading and talked with them about the story.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement for children looked after, on free school meals and the most able pupils. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of support services.
- Meetings were held with students, with members of staff and a representative of the local authority. Members of the management committee discussed their role with inspectors. The views of the 16 members of staff who returned their questionnaires were taken into account.
- Inspectors looked at students' workbooks and files and analysed the progress they make during the time they are at the school. Other policies and documents were reviewed, including information about pupils' attendance.
- Too few parents responded to the online Parent View questionnaire for their views to be reported. Inspectors took account of the school's parental survey.

Inspection team

Bob Pugh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anne Barrett

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2013 following a reorganisation of pupil referral units by the local authority. Students are located in two centres in the town. Other students and their teachers are supported in mainstream settings by teachers from this school.
- The school uses alternative provision for some students including two further education college and REACH, a local authority project which provides additional off-site learning opportunities.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2013. One of the two heads of centres took up her post at the beginning of this term. There have been other teacher changes this term.
- All students at the two centres are in Years 10 or 11. Many students are on the register of this school and of the school that they previously attended. Teachers support a number of pupils in local primary and secondary schools.
- All students have medical needs or behavioural difficulties. An above average number of pupils are eligible to receive the pupil premium, which is extra funding available for those who are eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority.
- All pupils currently on roll are from White British backgrounds and all have English as their first language.
- Because of their medical conditions, some pupils are only able to attend school for part of the day.
- Some students have long journeys to school each day, though all come from the local authority area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen self-evaluation programmes by ensuring that members of the management committee visit each centre more regularly to improve their own understanding of how well each student is doing.
- Ensure that teachers always provide precise feedback to students when marking their books by offering clear advice about the next steps for learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and middle leaders have worked hard from the very start to ensure that staff have high expectations of students. They have successfully created an atmosphere where everyone works with the same goal: to help every student achieve as much as possible in the short time they are at the school.
- As a result of accurate monitoring and feedback, teaching is almost always good.
- Robust performance management systems keep everyone focused on the need to improve. Professional development programmes are well matched to school and staff needs.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed. This is because good teaching encourages students to be considerate of the needs of others in their own and in different communities, and to make positive choices for learning and living.
- The curriculum is relevant to students' needs. Its organisation provides good opportunities for learning to play a positive role in the wider community. Students are encouraged to communicate well, to read and to think critically about their learning. Good opportunities for participation in sport are available in one of the centres, and are rapidly improving at the other.
- The school works well with parents and carers. Teachers ensure that parents and carers receive regular reports about progress and achievement. Parents and carers are supported well when their child enters and when they leave the school. One parent or carer of a recent leaver commented, 'I would now stand up and shout and say how great you all are.'
- The school has not been effectively supported by the local authority. The inspection found no evidence of enquiries about students' progress and achievements by local authority officers, or other forms of challenge or support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Management committee members are well informed about students' progress by means of regular reports from the headteacher and senior leaders. Having received training on how to analyse data, they have a good understanding of how the school checks on students' achievements and they ask searching questions about standards at their meetings. However, they do not always use their own school visits to monitor standards of teaching and learning closely. They scrutinise carefully how additional funding (such as the pupil premium) is spent to provide equal opportunities for all. They ensure that rigorous performance management programmes are in place for the headteacher and staff. They are involved in the decision-making process for rewarding good performance and dealing with weaknesses. They have undertaken training in safeguarding and recruitment and ensure that all statutory requirements in relation to child protection are in place.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. As a result of careful guidance and support, they settle quickly when they join the school. For many, attendance rates improve dramatically, enabling them to make rapid gains in areas of learning which they had missed in previous settings. However, their overall attendance does not yet match the national average.
- Students are positive in lessons. They show respect for each other, for staff and visitors and say that they enjoy their time at school. At the end of last year, one student wrote, 'Staff have helped me so much. I have learned that I can do things I never thought I could do before.'
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe is good. Students say that they feel safe at school. They know who they can talk to if they have concerns or are worried about something.

School surveys show that parents and carers agree that their children are safe at school and that their behaviour improves.

- Staff work hard to teach students about common dangers. Other professionals, including police officers, are invited to help students learn about staying safe on line and other common dangers. In an English lesson, students were seen to be carrying out individual research to formulate arguments on the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol abuse.
- All staff have been trained in safeguarding and school leaders have undertaken additional training in child protection. Staff have received training in behaviour management and on how to intervene positively to keep everyone safe. Risk assessment is thorough, especially when students are at venues in the community or with other providers, for example, further education colleges or sports activities providers.
- Students learn to behave well because of the respectful relationships which are in place at the school. There are no records of any restraints, and bullying is hardly ever heard of. Learning is very rarely interrupted by difficult behaviour. There have been no permanent exclusions from school and just one fixed-term exclusion in the past year.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. Teachers expect their students to work hard. As a result, pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and in other subjects.
- Teachers know their students very well. By planning highly personalised programmes, they ensure that those who had very high rates of absence in other schools build confidence as learners. Good use is made of lunch and break times to extend teaching of social skills and communication.
- Their good planning captures students' interests and enthusiasm because teachers are skilled at relating work to individuals' everyday experiences. They promote good communication, literacy and numeracy skills at every opportunity. For example, while teaching about the design of garden furniture in technology, a student was challenged to use his mathematical knowledge to create an accurate drawing and model, which he did with some success.
- Students' good ideas are taken up by teachers and used to shape the next piece of learning. Teachers question pupils to good effect, testing out how much they have remembered from previous lessons and the depth of understanding they have of current work. As a result, they can be confident that students are clear about what they have learned and that they are ready to move on to new topics.
- Teachers and their assistants make well-pitched interventions to support and challenge students. They assess how much new students know with sensitivity and care, stretching them and supporting them as deemed appropriate.
- The climate for learning is positive in both centres, in spite of the difficult working conditions caused by the accommodation. Teachers and students have worked together to make the very best use of the space available by producing attractive art displays. There are many photographs and examples of students' work on walls, providing information about their achievements in school and elsewhere.
- Teachers regularly mark students' work but their written remarks are of inconsistent quality. While they comment on work completed, they do not always provide written advice in books and files on what needs to improve or about the next steps for learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their very low starting points, students make good progress and achieve well. Students in all groups achieve equally well; there are no differences in rates of progress between boys and girls. Students eligible to receive additional funding achieve as well as others.
- Students at this school generally make gains which are in line with those in similar schools nationally. Almost everyone makes the progress expected of them and many students exceed

the expectations of their teachers.

- Students make sure their work in books and files is well presented. They enjoy reading and can answer questions about the story and about other work they have completed in recent terms.
- In the last academic year, the most-able students gained good GCSE passes in English, mathematics, art and technology, including grades at A* to C. Other students were able to gain entry level qualifications or BTEC accreditation. Everyone leaves the school with appropriate accreditation for the work they have completed.
- Students’ communication, reading and writing skills develop well. They enjoy the opportunities for visiting colleges and workplaces, and all bar a very few (who may have complex health or emotional needs) go on to college or work when they leave. They are well prepared for the next stages of their lives and education.
- Students know their current targets and what they want to do when they leave school. They understand that they have to work hard and attend well to gain and keep places at college or in work. They know how well they are doing because their progress is tracked effectively by teachers.
- Students speak with enthusiasm of the wide experiences they have while at school. One student described the rules of frisbee-golf to an inspector following a day out with the school’s local activities partner. This student believes that the combination of classroom and community-based learning will help him into employment.

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	134694
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	431091

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Mr Terry Napper
Headteacher	Judith Walker
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01458 837350
Fax number	
Email address	JWalker2@somerset.gov.uk

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