

Inspection of The Mark Way School

Batchelors Barn Road, Andover, Hampshire SP10 1HR

Inspection dates: 25–26 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at the Mark Way School are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives. They have consistently positive attitudes towards their schoolwork. They are rightly proud of their achievements. Pupils strive to achieve their personal goals. The school 'virtues', communication, responsibility, tolerance, respect, resilience, independence, courage and organisation, are an intrinsic part of everything pupils do. As a result, pupils flourish. They successfully develop their independence and resilience. They go on to further education as respectful, responsible young adults with a range of useful qualifications.

All staff hold the highest expectations for what pupils can achieve. The 'Mark Way challenge' encourages pupils to aim high in life. Caring staff successfully teach pupils the knowledge and skills needed to reach those heights.

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of all the school does. Highly skilled staff care deeply about pupils' well-being. They support pupils extremely well to manage difficult situations successfully. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Leaders ensure that pupils continually practise and develop effective communication skills. Consequently, pupils get along particularly well together. The atmosphere in school is calm, friendly and studious. Pupils know that if bullying does occasionally happen, it is never tolerated.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils thrive during their time at the Mark Way School. They leave with a range of useful accreditations. The daily focus on functional English and mathematics skills ensures that pupils are ready to tackle real-life situations as independently as possible. There are no restrictions on what pupils can study for GCSE. Leaders make every effort to support pupils in studying specific subjects at local mainstream schools if necessary. Pupils' accreditations allow them to successfully complete relevant courses at college. Leaders make sure that pupils and their families are expertly supported throughout the transition to college.

Leaders ensure that pupils' learning is exceptionally well planned and organised. Teachers in all subjects have carefully sequenced learning into smaller, achievable steps called 'learning pathways'. Teachers have expert subject knowledge. Their deep understanding of how each individual pupil learns is impressive. Teachers ensure that all pupils can understand and access their learning fully. They do this through readily available, supportive resources. For example, pupils who have difficulty ordering tasks can choose to use a 'to do list'. Pupils fully appreciate how much these strategies help them to learn and become independent.

Pupils benefit hugely from the vast array of therapies and personalised support they receive. Teachers carefully monitor pupils' progress towards their individual education plan (IEP) targets, updating targets as required. This ensures that pupils achieve their education, health and care plan (EHC plan) end points. Teachers also

effectively monitor elements of pupils' personal development and behaviour, using an impressive school 'database'. Consequently, provision is well planned, and pupils achieve remarkably well.

Leaders have ensured that school systems are quick and easy to use while demonstrating the maximum positive impact on pupils' learning. Staff fully appreciate this.

Pupils' personal development is exceptionally well catered for. Pupils relish the wealth of interesting activities which develop their understanding of the world and their place within it. A multitude of educational visits inspire awe and wonder in pupils. Pupils benefit from these visits, which allow them to develop socially and overcome personal fears. Pupils told us excitedly about their choir performance in the Royal Albert Hall, for example, and could easily recall how other specific experiences had helped them build their confidence. Pupils also benefit hugely from activities which successfully promote cultural development. For example, topical debates which effectively, and crucially, develop their communication skills.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They feel particularly well supported by leaders. They truly appreciate the way everyone works together as a team. The Mark Way School is a happy, friendly place to work as well as in which to learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding systems and processes are extremely robust. Staff training is relevant, useful and up to date. As a result, attentive, well-informed staff keep pupils safe. Leaders act swiftly and decisively when any decisions need to be made. If outside agencies are involved with a pupil, leaders ensure that communication is strong, and knowledge is shared effectively between everyone involved.

The family support worker is a real strength of the school. They ensure that all staff know and understand pupils and their families particularly well. As a result, pupils and their families receive excellent early help and support when needed.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116641
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10088021
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Waldron
Headteacher	Sonia Longstaff-Bishop
Website	www.markway.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Although the school's designation is for pupils with autism spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulties, this academic year, pupils with more complex learning needs have joined the school.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders. We met with members of the governing body, spoke with the chair of the governing body on the telephone and met with a representative from the local authority.
- We did deep dives in English, mathematics, art and science. In each subject, this included discussions with leaders and teachers, lesson visits with leaders, talking to pupils and looking at their work.
- To look closely at safeguarding in the school, we spoke to staff, pupils and governors. We looked at a range of documentation, including the school's single central record, which contains details of recruitment checks.

- We observed pupils at lunchtime, while they were eating and during their time on the playground or in lunchtime clubs.
- We spoke to pupils to hear their views. We considered the 17 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 17 free-text responses. We also considered the views of 18 staff who completed the Ofsted survey.

Inspection team

Maxine McDonald-Taylor, lead inspector Her Majesty's Inspector

Julie Sackett Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020