

Mary Rose School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134881
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	316289
Inspection dates	13 - 14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Mrs Jacque Cook

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	2-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	118
6th form	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Mitchell
Headteacher	Ms A Beane
Date of previous school inspection	
School address	Gisors Road Southsea Portsmouth PO4 8GT
Telephone number	02392 852 330
Fax number	02392 852 362

Age group	2-19
Inspection Date(s)	13 - 14 November 2007
Inspection Number	316289

(c) Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

An inner city school for pupils with complex needs including severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties (SLD and PMLD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Additionally, a few pupils have physical or moderate learning difficulties (MLD) as their significant need. There are almost twice as many boys as girls. A few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the number of looked after children is very small. Mary Rose is a new school, formed from an amalgamation of two other schools, which opened in September 2006 and moved to purpose built premises in February 2007. An application has been submitted for specialist sports college status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mary Rose is a good school with several outstanding features. The excellent work of the leadership team has rapidly forged two very different schools into one new and exciting place for pupils to learn. Staff form a cohesive team and together have developed an outstanding curriculum that meets the needs of the broad range of pupils highly successfully. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their work related learning very well. Outstandingly high quality of care, guidance and support ensures that pupils are safe and able to learn effectively. Their personal development is outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are very supportive of each other. Their excellent contribution to the community extends to helping a school in Ghana as well as fund raising for a range of causes. Most pupils try to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They eat sensibly and participate energetically in the daily exercise routines. The very high quality of the teaching of physical education (PE) ensures pupils make outstanding progress in this subject. Many pupils in Key Stage 4 opt for additional accredited courses in PE.

Pupils join the school with low and often very low levels of attainment. From this low base they make good progress and achieve well. This is largely due to the overall good quality of teaching and learning that ensures all pupils in a class have suitably challenging work. However, there are instances where teaching is satisfactory which slows learning because pupils' attention is not sustained or there is not enough use of signing and symbols. This is being tackled with clear success by the senior management team using a range of effective strategies. Pupils make exceptional progress in personal, social and health education (PSHE) which is taught in separate lessons and throughout the school day extremely well. They also make outstanding progress in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils quickly learn to operate switches and interactive boards. The more able use computers effectively and operate cameras and other equipment successfully. Excellent data analysis shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve outstandingly well in English as they increase their communication skills considerably.

The outstanding leadership and management team drives forward improvements that lead to raised standards for the pupils. Careful and accurate self-evaluation procedures are used effectively to plan next steps and establish challenging targets. Excellent use is made of the outstanding school building of which the pupils are very proud. As one parent commented 'facilities and equipment are far superior than in the closed school'. The move to the new school was managed so well that pupils settled very smoothly into their new surroundings.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Students in the sixth form make excellent progress and achieve extremely well. They all gain a broad arrange of awards and are very well prepared for the next stage in their lives. This is due to the outstanding quality of the teaching and learning and the excellent fostering of students' growing independence. Teachers are highly skilled and have an excellent understanding of the needs of their students. Relationships are outstanding and staff and students treat each other with the greatest of respect. Students are caring and spontaneous in their applause when other students achieve well or try hard.

Every student has his or her own personalised timetable. As a result, the rich and varied curriculum is customised to suit each individual student's needs. More able students in the Spinnaker class are very well prepared for their transition to college following a one year sixth form course. At the end of the last academic year a highly successful first 'students' prom' was organised. Students, as one described it, 'dressed posh' and thoroughly enjoyed the evening.

Effectiveness of the foundation stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Foundation Stage make outstanding progress in all aspects of the areas for learning. As an assessment nursery, the levels of attainment on entry are always low and often very low. However, several children move on to mainstream provision or to special schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The curriculum is extremely well planned to meet the wide range of needs. Children's achievement is monitored tightly and progress noted immediately and then transferred to detailed records. Staff are experienced and provide outstanding levels of care. High quality teamwork is a key feature in the way the class is organised and links with parents are effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all lessons are good or better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils often join the school with levels of attainment that are very low. Although they all achieve well, their attainment usually remains below national levels. There are no measurable differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils. All do well in English, mathematics and science. Due to the strong emphasis on teaching communication skills, pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve exceptionally well in English. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the sixth form achieve well in award bearing courses.

The high level of staff expertise that leads to enjoyable and challenging lessons contributes strongly to pupils' outstanding progress in PE and ICT. One pupil said 'I like ICT - looking for stuff on the internet'. Pupils strive to improve their performances in physical activities and extend their skills in using control technology effectively. Pupils' outstanding progress in PSHE is based on a very well-structured programme that is reinforced through all lessons. Very good progress is made towards meeting challenging targets on individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils behave extremely well in and around the school. They are polite and considerate. Pupils speak of how they are very pleased with their new school and how much they enjoy their lessons. They are confident that, should they have any problems or feel 'down', they can always talk to the staff. Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding. Cultural and spiritual development is good. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and take a pride in doing the right thing, praising each other, for example for correctly returning equipment, a mirror to a box, during a science lesson. Their support for a school in Africa was highlighted at a 'harvest festival with a difference' this year. Instead of the usual edible harvest, pupils focused on bringing items such as notebooks and pencils to be sent to the Ghanaian school. Pupils gain very high levels of independence. They take responsibility for looking after themselves as far as it is possible. A few older pupils represent the school on the Council of Portsmouth Students. They take their roles very seriously and report back on discussions and decisions. There is a very clear understanding amongst pupils about healthy eating and the wisdom of following a healthy diet. They eat carefully at lunchtime and enjoy fruit and a drink at break-times. Pupils improve their general fitness in PE lessons, during morning exercise sessions and through attending sporting clubs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn effectively because the staff know their needs and how best to offer support. Lessons are planned well. There are often several activities so that work is pitched at the right level for each individual. Pupils' progress is assessed accurately against clear teaching points. In the sixth form and in the Foundation Stage, flexibility is a key element. For instance, when, due to illness, there were very few children in the nursery, activities were adjusted so that children had time together as well as working individually. Pupils rise to the very high levels of challenge that the excellent staff expertise engenders in PE and ICT. For instance, pupils improve their throwing skills systematically through learning how to stand correctly so aiming is more precise. Older pupils learn to control devices through establishing a series of commands. Well-established routines and clear lesson structures enable pupils with ASD to have the security they need to make progress. This is particularly successful in the special class in Key Stage 3. In all lessons, the teamwork of staff is excellent and ensures no time is wasted. Occasionally, when a class is taught together for too long, particularly at the beginning of a lesson, the pace of work slows and pupils' interest begins to wander. While most staff use signs and symbols very well, there are instances where opportunities are missed to support communication in this way. This notably poses difficulties for primary aged pupils with ASD who take longer to conform with requests if they are not consistently reinforced.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is extremely comprehensive and is tailored effectively to meet individual needs. Planning is very detailed and ensures pupils build on previous knowledge successfully. PSHE is an important element for all pupils and plays a very significant role in developing their clear understanding of how to safeguard themselves. The local community is used effectively to enrich the curriculum. There are many visits out and visitors in to the school as well as residential stays further afield. An excellent range of after school clubs are well attended by pupils. There are very strong elements of work related learning which prepares pupils well for when they leave school. There are several enterprise activities for older pupils and students. Once a week the sixth formers currently provide a 'bacon roll' service which they say is 'quite healthy' and 'makes money'. All Key Stage 4 and sixth formers do work experience or work shadowing on-site or in the community. They also gain a wide range of experience from studying vocational courses at college. There is a wealth of opportunity for pupils to follow appropriate award bearing courses in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Their curriculum is broadened through options and choice sessions that include courses such as dance, drama, outdoor pursuits and world cultures.

The curriculum for pupils with ASD is based very well on a modified specialist approach which enables pupils to learn and to develop positive relationships with staff and peers. Another specialist curriculum which uses the senses is highly effective in helping pupils with more complex needs to make sense of and relate to their environment successfully.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents speak very highly of the school. As one wrote, 'We feel that the school has a very positive and caring attitude, taking into account the exceptional needs of our child.' Pupils thrive in the safe and secure environment where safeguarding procedures are robust. The school nurse plays an important role and there are very strong links with therapists and social services. Regular meetings, home-school diaries, newsletters, coffee mornings and training sessions (the next focus group is on behaviour) ensure parents are well informed and involved in their children's education. Excellent, highly successful procedures are established for working with parents where there is a need to improve their child's attendance. As a result, attendance is good and virtually all absence is due to medical conditions. Effective procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development give excellent information about how well pupils are doing. Looked after and vulnerable children are carefully monitored to ensure they make similar progress to their peers. Systems to encourage outstanding behaviour and hard work and to celebrate achievement are very effective. The school prides itself in having excellent arrangements for helping pupils to manage changes smoothly, whether from class to class or in preparation for the next stage when students leave school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The senior leadership team work together exceptionally well. The headteacher is skilled in identifying and using the strengths of staff members. A highly successful strategy of pairing individuals to 'kick start' an area of development has worked extremely well with the curriculum. In a very short time it very effectively meets the needs of the wide range of pupils in the school. This is part of the excellent track record of improvements made since the new school opened demonstrating an excellent capacity to improve further. A clear vision has been established where every step is considered in the light of the benefit it will make for the pupils. Rigorous monitoring procedures quickly identified a range in the quality of teaching and learning. An intensive programme of mentoring, team teaching and training has successfully decreased the amount of satisfactory teaching and learning to less than twenty per cent. There is now significantly more that is good and outstanding than early last term. Other developments have included the creative provision of the 'fast track' curriculum for the class of Key Stage 4 and Year 12 pupils, which has worked well in preparing these students for appropriate college courses. Excellent data-collection and analysis has enabled challenging targets for pupils' progress to be set and monitored to ensure all are making good progress.

The merger was managed extremely well especially as the move to the new building was delayed by six months. Characteristically this potential difficulty was turned into an asset as an intensive leadership and management training opportunity for the assistant headteachers. Staff are committed and work very well together. Co-ordinators have effective roles highlighting development in their subjects through development plans and target setting. Governors are well-informed and provide a good level of challenge to the senior managers. Links with the Mary Rose Trust are developing very well and they have a representative on the governing body. The well managed outreach team are working with the trust to make the museum exhibits more accessible for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
---	----------------	-------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness in the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

26 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mary Rose School, Portsmouth, PO4 8GT

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when my colleague and I visited recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and learning what you liked about your school. You are right - it is a good school and there are several things that are outstanding.

This is what we liked about your school:

- you enjoy coming to school and make good progress
- you make outstanding progress in PE, ICT and PSHE
- pupils at the Foundation Stage make exceptional progress
- students in the sixth form do exceptionally well
- what you are taught is excellent, extremely well planned and interesting
- you are outstandingly well behaved
- your headteacher and senior staff lead the school exceptionally well and have worked hard to make the new school work well
- you are taught well
- your staff look after you very well
- you try to stay healthy by eating well and taking exercise.

This is what we have asked your school to do now:

- your teachers are always trying to help you improve and we have asked them to make the school even better by making all your lessons as good as most of them are.

With best wishes

Jacque Cook
Lead Inspector

