Mary Rose Academy

Address: Gisors Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO4 8GT

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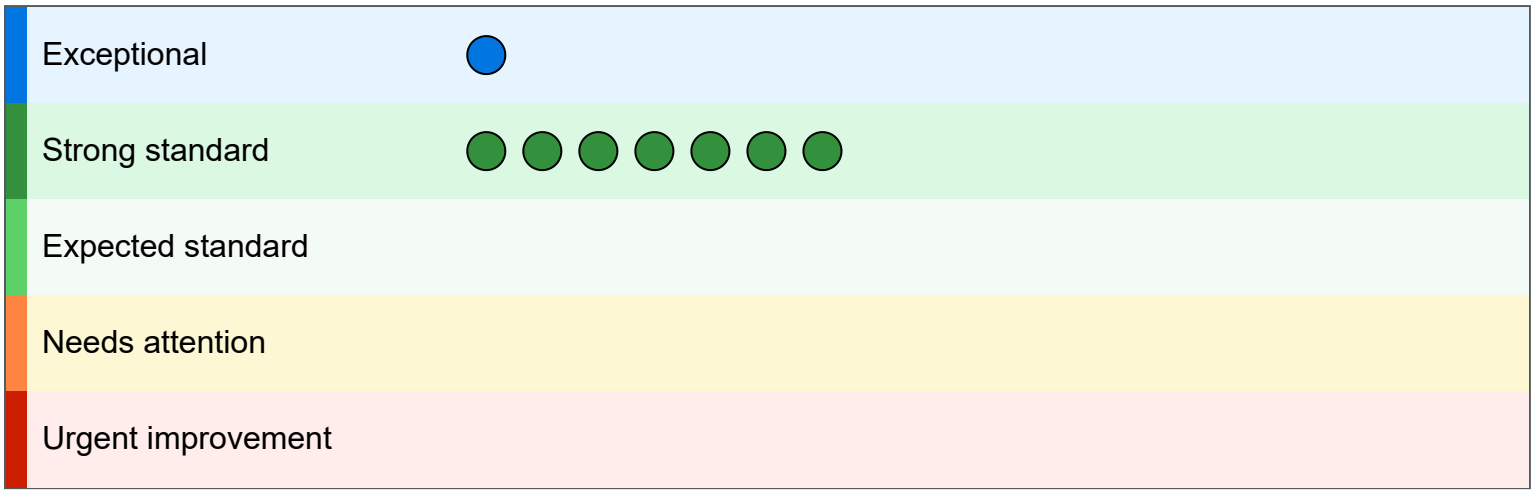

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Exceptional

Post 16 provision

Exceptional

Leaders have a palpable sense of ambition for post-16 students. This is clear in the bespoke curriculum they have designed. Students, including those with the most profound needs, work towards aspirational end-points. Staff know the students very well. This helps them shape the curriculum to meet their changing needs. The curriculum is very well sequenced and builds effectively on students' prior learning. As a result, students' skills and knowledge become increasingly sophisticated over time. They also become increasingly confident and independent. This is evident in the manner in which students are able to reflect on their prior learning. Students learn the essential skills and knowledge they will need in their next steps, including the skills needed for independent living.

Students leave the post-16 provision with a range of meaningful qualifications. This helps them to be very successful in their next steps. All students benefit strongly from the school's innovative 'classroom in the heart of industry' curriculum. This helps them to develop a strong understanding of the world of work. Staff use their deep knowledge of students to amend the activities where necessary. This ensures that all students, including those with the most complex needs, make confident first steps into the world beyond school.

Strong standard

Achievement

Strong standard

Pupils achieve very well. They are expertly supported to make sustained progress from their individual starting points. The vast majority of pupils meet the ambitious targets identified for them. As a result, they become increasingly confident and capable in communicating their wants, needs and views. Pupils develop a love for reading and advance their mathematical knowledge in line with their needs. Their achievement improves and builds over time.

The school's deliberate approach to the taught curriculum allows pupils to develop the essential skills and knowledge they need. In some cases, even the smallest of steps made can often represent hugely significant achievements. Each individual step is precisely mapped out in pupils' individual learning plans. Older students, including those in the post-16 provision, achieve a wide range of meaningful qualifications that enhance the skills and knowledge they develop in the classroom. As a result, they are very well prepared for their next steps.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard

Pupils often join the school with significant barriers to attendance. Despite this, leaders ensure that pupils attend as regularly as possible. Leaders track attendance carefully. They use this information to plan a range of deeply personalised approaches to help pupils attend more frequently. The school enhances this offer through skilled work with medical staff. This ensures that the high number of pupils with significant medical needs are safe and can

attend school frequently. As a result, attendance has remained stable and persistent absence has reduced over time. Attendance has remained consistently above national averages when compared to similar settings.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Staff work hard to build strong and caring relationships with pupils. This is evident in the very high expectations staff have of pupils and the care and consideration they show each individual. Staff work hard to provide pupils with the help they need to regulate and manage their behaviour. Where pupils need additional help, skilled staff ensure that they quickly engage with learning. As a result, a deep sense of calm pervades the school. This helps pupils to focus very well on their learning and show high levels of attention in line with their needs.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard

The school offers a high-quality, ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils precisely. Staff clearly identify the skills and knowledge they want pupils to learn. They match this closely to pupils' individual learning needs. The curriculum is highly flexible. Teachers use this flexibility to make the most of every opportunity for learning. The curriculum extends far beyond the classroom. Staff consistently model the skills they want pupils to learn from the minute they arrive in school. This aspect of the curriculum is well embedded and highly effective.

Staff are expert in the subjects and skills that they teach. They use a range of bespoke communication strategies to explain learning clearly to all pupils. Staff design high-quality activities that meet the needs of pupils precisely. The checks that teachers make in class are systematic. They continually check that pupils are engaged in their work and that they are learning the skills they need. Leaders also monitor learning closely. They use this information to support teachers to adapt the curriculum as needed.

Many pupils receive additional support to help improve their reading fluency. This support is very well taught and adapted carefully to pupils' individual needs.

Early years

Strong standard

Children in the early years have a very strong start to their school life. The school has designed an ambitious curriculum for the youngest children. This is deeply personalised to allow learning to meet the needs of individual children. Leaders have considered carefully the key skills and knowledge that children in the early years need. Staff break them down precisely into small steps of learning. This helps staff to design a range of exciting and engaging activities. As a result, children start to learn the skills and knowledge they will need throughout their school life.

Children in the earliest stages of learning to read benefit from precisely designed individual programmes. These foster a passion for reading and for stories. Staff adapt activities carefully to ensure all pupils develop these essential skills.

Children make clear progress from their starting points. All staff model communication precisely. Staff ensure that children have well-designed opportunities to practise their communication. As a result of this high-quality work, children develop the key skills of

communication they need. This also helps children to become increasingly independent. Well-planned activities help pupils to build strong relationships with staff.

The school works very closely with parents and carers. These relationships help staff to understand children's needs precisely. It also helps them to provide high-quality support from the moment children start at the school.

Inclusion

Strong standard

The school's approach to inclusion is of a high quality. The school's work to promote inclusion has had a demonstrable impact on pupils within the school, as well as on individuals within the wider community. Staff have a precise understanding of pupils' highly complex needs. This informs the excellent work they undertake with every pupil. Some aspects of the school's inclusion work are particularly impressive. For example, the school provides training to staff in mainstream schools to help them to offer the same high levels of support in their settings.

Leaders carefully track pupils' progress against their personalised targets. This helps them to constantly reflect on and adapt the help that pupils receive. This supports all pupils to achieve as well as they can. Staff empower families by working with them to break down barriers outside of the school. The school recently acted swiftly to develop their innovative 'Bridge' provision to support pupils with profound needs that could not be met in school. This provision has had a significant impact on pupils who access it, along with their families. One stakeholder described this as providing a 'lifeline' for pupils.

Staff receive high-quality training that helps them to meet the needs of pupils consistently well. Staff develop detailed knowledge of the curriculum and know how to implement it to best match pupils' needs, including, where relevant, their complex medical needs. Staff in school and beyond are experts in the way that they support pupils.

The school has a very well-designed pupil premium strategy. This aligns seamlessly with the whole-school approach of inclusion. Leaders use additional funding effectively to ensure that all pupils benefit from the school's high-quality work. Leaders carefully monitor this to ensure the offer is highly consistent for all pupils.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard

Leaders have a precise understanding of the school and the wider community they serve. They make astute decisions to address the changing needs of pupils. This work is highly effective. The school has an ambitious vision, which they communicate very effectively to staff. This motivates staff effectively, and supports staff to share leaders' high aspiration for pupils.

Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have very high ambitions for pupils. They have created a culture where everyone believes that 'it's got to be possible'. As a result, pupils enjoy consistently high levels of education and care. The highly dedicated staff team uses its expertise and deep levels of care for the pupils to consistently deliver these high standards. All pupils benefit strongly from this tireless effort.

Governors and trustees are knowledgeable and well informed. They use their precise understanding of the school and context to offer high levels of support and meaningful challenge. Governors have a clear understanding of the school pupil premium strategy. Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory duties appropriately.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to high-quality professional learning. They have designed an extensive programme of training. This contributes significantly to the excellent work that is undertaken throughout the school. Leaders use their knowledge of the school to ensure that staff have the expertise to best support pupils. Leaders work closely with external agencies. This has created a culture of mutual expertise that benefits pupils in the school and beyond.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing is excellent. All pupils benefit from the school's comprehensive and personalised curriculum. This extends far beyond the classroom. Pupils experience well-designed opportunities to develop their understanding of the world. Leaders ensure that pupils learn the skills and knowledge they need to keep safe. Pupils learn essential concepts, such as consent and water safety, at an appropriate level. They also benefit from practical experiences to help develop their understanding of important values, such as democracy and the rule of law. Staff enhance this by careful use of 'values mascots' to promote key skills such as resilience. This work empowers pupils to express their choices and to become increasingly independent.

The school has designed an ambitious careers programme. Pupils develop a meaningful understanding of the world of work. All pupils have well-designed opportunities to put these into practice. Older pupils produce high-quality products as part of an ambitious enterprise programme. This helps prepare them very effectively for work experience with carefully selected employers in the local area.

Pupils enhance their learning through well-planned trips that develop their independence. This includes carefully adapted residential trips that all pupils are supported to access. The school also ensures that pupils have ample opportunities to develop their skills and talents. These ambitious activities are skilfully adapted to allow all pupils to enjoy these experiences. For example, pupils benefit from the use of adaptive technology to perform in the school orchestra. Pupils' wellbeing is a priority for leaders. The school ensures that teaching and support staff work closely with clinical and therapeutic staff. This supports pupils' complex medical and wellbeing needs to be met, and allows them to enjoy the breadth of school life. The skilled family support team works closely with families to help meet pupils' pastoral needs outside of school. This supports pupils' engagement and attendance very effectively.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school's ethos of 'it's got to be possible' is evident throughout the school. Staff show no limits to the aspirations that they have for pupils. This is evident in the high-quality opportunities that all pupils benefit from. For example, all pupils enjoy a school residential,

designed to develop their resilience. Pupils have their individual needs met consistently well at this highly aspirational school. The impact of the school is transformative for many pupils.

Staff work closely with each pupil to ensure that they learn the essential skills needed for their next steps. Pupils are expertly supported to become increasingly independent and confident in their communication. Pupils, including those with the most complex needs, are supported to feel valued and to have a voice in the school.

Pupils love learning. They show high levels of attention to their teachers. They engage very positively with the purposeful activities staff provide. Many pupils are supported to make their first meaningful steps into the world of work as a result of the school's innovative 'classroom in the heart of industry' approach. Pupils achieve very well and make clear progress from their starting points. They are highly prepared for their life beyond school.

The school provides a calm and purposeful environment in which all pupils flourish. Staff work hard to build deep and caring relationships with pupils. Pupils feel safe and happy as a result of this work. This is evident in the smiles and laughter that pupils exhibit on arrival at school. Pupils who need additional help to regulate their behaviour are very well supported. Skilled staff work tirelessly with pupils to engage with them and return them to learning. Deeply embedded routines and expectations lead to pupils behaving very well.

Next steps

• Leaders should continue to refine and connect their evaluative processes so that developments across sites and pathways are understood well and used to shape provision with increasingly far-reaching benefits for pupils' evolving needs.

About this inspection

The school is part of the Solent Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sharon Burt, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Andrew Hill.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under Section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education, qualifications and apprenticeships.

The inspectors met with the executive headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the CEO, chair of trustees, the trust governance professional and a group of governors. The inspection team also spoke to indicative groups of staff and pupils during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school also, under the same registration, runs an off-site unit and sixth form.

The school does not use alternative provision.

Faye Watton-Lawrence: Executive Principal

Lead inspector:
Gavin Thomas, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:
William James, Ofsted Inspector
Louise Ling, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

This data is from 6 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

197
Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

125
Well below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,152

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

55.48%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

87.82%
Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.1%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

12.18%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13%

Location deprivation

Above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SLD - Severe Learning Difficulty

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	100%	91%	Not available
2022 leavers (revised)	100%	93%	Not available
2021 leavers (revised)	100%	94%	Not available

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	13.3%	8.1%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	14.0%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.1%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	46.7%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	42.6%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.8%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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