

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Mary Hare School

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

---

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 May 2025

## Outcome

Mary Hare School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to show their school values of ready, respectful, safe and successful. They are welcoming, friendly and confident communicators. All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). While all pupils have a hearing impairment, some also have additional needs. Staff are highly attuned to pupils' individual needs and ensure they are met effectively. The school has high expectations for how well pupils will conduct themselves and learn. Pupils know why it is important to work hard and be kind. Pupils regularly meet these expectations by behaving and achieving well.

The school implements a therapeutic approach to support pupils' development. Staff have been well trained to understand what needs pupils are trying to communicate when they find it hard to regulate their behaviour. On the rare occasions when this happens, staff skilfully support pupils. Pupils have positive and nurturing relationships with staff. Pupils trust that adults in the school will help them with any problems or worries they may have.

Pupils' lives are positively transformed by attending Mary Hare. Pupils are eager to share their lived experiences. Many say that when they arrived here for the first time, they felt like they belonged and were able to meet children and adults who understood them well.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and well sequenced overall. In most subjects, staff regularly check how well pupils are learning. They use information from these checks to choose effective activities. These activities are precisely adapted to meet pupils' SEND and enable pupils to complete high-quality work. In a small number of foundation subjects, knowledge is not well sequenced. This means that teachers are not clear about the

knowledge that pupils need to learn and in what order. As a result, in these subjects, understanding of pupils' learning lacks precision.

In the primary phase, pupils build essential knowledge that prepares them for learning in the secondary phase. The school tailors its curriculum to meet the diverse needs of all pupils. In the secondary phase, pupils embark on one of three ambitious accreditation pathways. Pathways are personalised to each pupil's strengths and aspirations for the future.

In the sixth form, students continue to engage with a broad and enriching curriculum. They study a wide range of academic qualifications. Students can also opt for BTEC and technical pathways in areas such as animal care, plumbing, construction and digital media.

Many pupils arrive with limited vocabulary exposure. Every area of the curriculum emphasises vocabulary development to strengthen pupils' language skills. This focus begins with the youngest pupils, who first build essential listening and interaction skills as they learn to read. Expert staff swiftly identify struggling readers and provide effective phonics support. Pupils here are confident and accurate readers.

Mary Hare School has an effective approach to behaviour management. The school ensures staff are well trained in strategies that support pupils effectively. Pupils are polite, engaged and motivated. They have excellent conduct in class and around the school. Disruption to learning is rare and is managed well when it occurs. Staff consistently implement the rules and routines that help pupils to thrive. Students in the sixth form are focused on their future goals. They show commitment and positive attitudes to their learning.

The school promotes inclusivity, ensuring pupils understand different cultures, religions, families and relationships. Each week, pupils explore topical questions and global issues in form time. This activity supports pupils to recognise the importance of their views and opinions effectively. Pupils also learn to respect the perspectives of others and take part in constructive discussions. Pupils learn how to be responsible members of a community when they take part in school and local events. Specific leadership opportunities in secondary and sixth form allow students to develop vital leadership and teamwork skills. They contribute as house captains, prefects, mentors and school council members.

From Year 7, pupils start to learn about careers. Pupils in Year 9 receive independent careers guidance. This helps them to make informed decisions about future qualifications and career pathways. Pupils in Year 11, and students in the sixth form, take part in meaningful work-based experiences. The school's speech and language team supports pupils well to access these experiences. Tailored career discussions support pupils to explore a wide range of qualifications, apprenticeships and further education pathways.

Most staff feel valued and supported by school leaders. They appreciate the high level of training they receive to complete their role effectively. Governors and school leaders

provide effective leadership. Governors balance challenge and support to school leaders well to ensure the best possible provision for pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school is still refining a small number of non-core subjects. In these subjects, staff currently lack clarity about what pupils need to know and when. Consequently, checks on pupils' understanding are not as effective as they could be. The school should ensure that knowledge in these areas is clearly defined and that teachers know how to precisely identify pupils' knowledge gaps so they can provide precise support to close them.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110180
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379728
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	160
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	43
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Tim Polack
<b>Principal</b>	Robin Askew
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.maryhare.org.uk">www.maryhare.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	11 and 12 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Mary Hare School is part of Mary Hare, which is a registered charity.
- Mary Hare School is a school for the deaf, supporting pupils with a hearing impairment. All pupils have education, health and care plans.
- Most pupils have cochlear implants and/or hearing aids. They are all taught to use spoken English throughout the school day.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- 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 only inspected the education provision at this school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other members of the leadership team.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and other members of the governing body.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, communicated with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also communicated with pupils in lessons and during play times and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan and minutes from governors' meetings.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments.
- Inspectors took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

## Inspection team

Nina Marabese, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jason Philipsz

Ofsted 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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2025