

# Meadowcroft School

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St. Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 0845 404045  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Meadowcroft is a not-for-profit school for boys and girls from 10 to 19 years of age with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school, which is located in Bradford, opened in April 2007. There are currently 19 students on roll, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. The students come from three local authorities within the Yorkshire region. All the students have been placed at the school because of the extreme personal difficulties they have experienced in their previous schools, which resulted in serious disruptions to their education because of poor attendance and poor behaviour. The school aims 'to encourage each and every student in all aspects of learning' by targeting the development of the curriculum, meeting their individual needs, rewarding achievement and helping them to improve their behaviour. The school was previously inspected in January 2008.

## **Evaluation of the school**

Meadowcroft School is providing a good quality of education for its students. Given their low academic and personal starting points when the students are registered at the school, the progress they make in their formal learning and in their all-round personal development is good. The quality of adult support throughout the school is helping the students to mature and develop important aspects of their personal, social and emotional being; alongside extending the range of opportunities for them to gain different types of external accreditation. Secure safeguarding procedures are in place. The school meets its aims and the vast majority of the regulations for independent schools. The school has successfully met those regulations which were non-compliant in the previous inspection.

## **Quality of education**

The quality of the curriculum is good. There is a suitable range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, which are helping to promote the students' formal learning and their personal, social and emotional development. The range of subjects taught reflects well on the needs of the students, although there are some limitations in the opportunities for practical work in science, physical education, art, and design and technology. However, the school makes good use of external specialists in music and sport to enhance the learning opportunities in these two areas, in addition to linking with other educational providers to enhance learning and accreditation opportunities for the students. The school's curriculum policy is clear and there are detailed schemes of work in place. The time allocations given to

different areas of study are appropriate. There is good coverage of basic literacy and numeracy skills for all students, which helps to give them greater confidence and a desire to improve the quality of their reading, writing, and number skills. The opportunities for some students to gain external accreditation in GCSE, especially at entry level, and also in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) are good. There is a satisfactory provision for the students to gain work-related experiences, as an aid to promoting their future economic well-being.

The overall quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are good, but not all teaching consistently reaches this standard. The working relationships between school staff and students are very good because of the effective management, organisation and support for learning in lessons. The use of additional adult support in lessons works extremely well and ensures that all students work within a very good ratio of adult-to-student supervision. Teachers make very clear to the students what they are going to teach, although this tends to emphasise more the tasks to be completed rather than what the students will be expected to learn in terms of further skills, increased knowledge and greater understanding. However, in accredited courses planning and provision is very thorough because teachers make very good use of nationally published syllabuses. Teachers generally use lesson time well, although on a few occasions teachers talk for too long, which limits the opportunities for the students to take greater responsibility for aspects of their own learning. Overuse of worksheets in some subjects has the same result. Assessment procedures are secure and carried out on a regular basis. Teachers' marking is consistent in quality but is not always well balanced in terms of giving praise and in providing comments about where improvements can be made.

Students' attainment ranges from average to below average in the subjects taught. However, given their low levels of attainment when they start at the school, the students make good overall progress, especially in their vastly improved attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The overall quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its students are satisfactory. There are some good features. The school's focus on helping the students to develop their moral and social characters, as a partial way of tackling some of their underlying problems with behaviour and general attitudes, is good. There are very good working relationships between the students and the adults with whom they work, particular in one-to-one activities in lessons. Teachers and other adults use encouragement and praise to good effect, especially when trying to de-escalate potential behavioural tantrums in lessons from a very small number of students. The quality of this work is helping the students to develop their understanding and appreciation of knowing the difference between right and wrong, and the consequences that any anti-social behaviour has on them and others. Lessons are planned to provide numerous opportunities to support the development of the students' social skills, particularly their ability to listen to others, express a personal viewpoint or engage in whole-class discussions. Not all students do this well, but the overwhelming majority do. Staff use a consistent approach to behaviour management, which is helping the vast majority of students achieve a good standard of behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. The students' attendance at

school is excellent, and reflects their high level of enjoyment of what the school offers and how it supports them. Students' cultural development is satisfactory and although there are activities that help them to develop their understanding of other religions, as part of this aspect of their learning, the provision in school has yet to include a broader appreciation of different cultures at all levels, from the local to the international. Some ASDAN work includes the public services and aspects of the law.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school's overall measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of its students, including child protection, are good. Procedures for safeguarding the students are very clear and are well adhered to by all adults who work in the school, which makes the students feel very safe in school. The supervision of the students in lessons and when they move about the school site is effective and unobtrusive. The students know clearly what is expected of them in respect of their attitudes in lessons, especially to other students and staff. There are also very clear expectations about students' behaviour, which are applied fairly by staff. The school policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, discipline and sanctions, first aid and health and safety are compliant with the regulations. The school promotes healthy living through its personal, social and health education programme, and its timetabled provision for physical activities. The school currently does not comply fully with the regulation relating to the admissions' register. Fire safety checks comply fully with the regulations. The school meets fully the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

The school meets all the regulations for ensuring that all staff are suitably qualified and appropriately checked for them to work with the students. The school maintains a single central register as required, which is fully compliant with statutory requirements.

## **Premises of and accommodation at the school**

The school's premises and accommodation are of a satisfactory standard. Classrooms are of a suitable size for the age and number of students on roll. The school makes very good use of displays of students' work in classrooms and around the school. However, there are limitations in available space for some practical aspects of science, physical education, art, and design and technology. Partnership links have, however, been established with local providers to extend learning opportunities in some of these subjects. For example, the students' use the facilities in local sports and education providers for some practically-based accreditation courses. The students have suitable access to washrooms and toilets.

## **Provision of information**

The school is meeting most of the regulations relating to the provision of information for parents, carers and others. Currently, it does not make the contact address for the chair of the management group explicitly clear, and neither does it make it known that the policy for

health and safety on educational visits is available on request. Furthermore, the level of detail provided by the school for students that are wholly funded by local authorities is insufficiently precise to meet fully the regulation relating to a statement of annual account. Information in the school brochure is clear and concise, as is the additional information provided for parents and carers throughout the academic year. Annual reports are of a satisfactory standard.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The procedures for handling complaints is thorough and very detailed but does not yet make clear that the written outcome from any formal panel meeting is to be made available for inspection by the proprietor on the school site.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>5</sup>(delete if not applicable)

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- maintain an admissions register, in accordance with Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide the contact address for correspondence to the chairperson of the management committee (i.e. board of governors) (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- ensure that parents, prospective parents and others are aware they can request a copy of the school's policy relating to the health and safety arrangements on educational visits and particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations. (paragraph 24(1)(b))
- provide an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school to the funding local authority in respect of any pupil who is registered at the school, either wholly or partly and, on request, to the Secretary of State (paragraph 24(1)(h)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints procedure stipulates that a copy of the findings and recommendations from the formal panel hearing are available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteacher (paragraph 25 (i)).

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Further develop teachers' planning in order to achieve a better balance between the details of the tasks to be covered in lessons, and the expected learning outcomes for the students undertaking these tasks.
- Reduce the reliance on the use of worksheets in lessons and provide more opportunities for independent work from the students.
- Provide a wider range of opportunities for students to develop their appreciation of different cultures including those found locally, nationally and internationally.

# Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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## The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

## Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			√	
The behaviour of pupils		√		

## Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent day school		
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for boys and girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties		
<b>Date school opened</b>	2 April 2007		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10–19		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 15	Girls: 2	Total: 17
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need</b>	Boys: 15	Girls: 2	Total: 17
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys:	Girls:	Total:
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£54,416		
<b>Address of school</b>	145 Bolton Lane Bradford West Yorkshire BD2 4AT		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 634 666		
<b>Email address</b>	info@meadowcroftcareandeducation.co.uk		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Smith		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Luke Smith		