

# The Misbourne School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110490
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	356755
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Daniell HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Modern (non-selective)
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1239
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fiona Kinsman
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Misbourne Drive Great Missenden HP16 0BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 862869
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 27 lessons taught by 27 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, students and local authority representatives. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including policies, self-evaluation information, performance data, school improvement plans, lesson plans and reports and reviews from the local authority. They also carried out 'learning walks', entering classrooms with a specific focus in mind. The inspection team scrutinised 94 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as 695 questionnaires from students and 53 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- students' achievement, particularly in English and mathematics
- the learning and progress of groups of students and the use of assessment in lessons
- the progress made since the last inspection in addressing the key issues for improvement and the capacity for sustaining improvement
- the quality of sixth-form provision.

## Information about the school

The Misbourne School is a larger-than-average, secondary modern school. The school serves the small village of Great Missenden and surrounding villages and a growing number of students come from the towns of Amersham, Aylesbury, Chesham and High Wycombe. The Misbourne School has just been re-designated as an arts and technology college.

The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Around 85% of the students are from a White British background. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is steadily increasing, as is the percentage of students who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average but the percentage of students with statements of special educational needs is a little above average.

The school holds a Healthy School award as well as an Artsmark Silver award.

The current headteacher took up post in September 2009.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The school has made limited progress in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Much time has been spent on restructuring the support staff to increase cost-effectiveness, but this was at the expense of other important strategic developments, such as raising students' attainment across the school. A review carried out by the local authority from November 2009 to March 2010 and the support which ensued helped the school to identify priorities for improvement more accurately. However, progress in addressing these priorities has been too slow. Recruitment of teachers has been difficult and this, coupled with poor teaching, has led to significant underachievement, particularly in English and mathematics. The school has worked hard to fill vacancies and now has a full complement of teaching staff which, nevertheless, includes some long-term supply teachers.

Progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics has been significantly below expectations since 2008, although attainment overall has been broadly average. Students' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in the specialist subjects, especially art and technology, was above average in 2010. The inspection team saw better progress being made in these subjects, but overall students do not make the progress expected of them and the current Year 11 is not making adequate progress. Students who have been identified as having special needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress due to the specialist teaching they receive.

The sixth form reflects a more positive picture and its effectiveness is satisfactory overall. The quality of care, guidance and support in the sixth form is a strength and the school has adapted the curriculum to create clearly defined pathways for those entering Year 12. As a result of this and very positive relationships between staff and students, the number of students choosing to enter the sixth form is rising. Attainment is just below that found nationally.

Although most teachers display good subject knowledge, they do not always have high enough expectations of what students could achieve. This is because assessment information is not used routinely to inform planning and the delivery of lessons. Although the quality of teaching and learning in lessons is currently satisfactory, it is not good enough to enable students to make up the ground they have lost in previous years. This means that many students are working below their target grades and make inadequate progress over time. Targeted strategies are not implemented effectively to enable

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students to catch up. In some curriculum areas, particularly the specialist areas of art and technology, teaching is good. In these subjects, teachers are skilled at furthering students' knowledge and understanding by the effective use of questioning and checking of students' progress.

There is little analysis and evaluation to measure the impact of the school's initiatives on different groups of students. Consequently, leaders cannot be sure that resources are targeted at the right students. The curriculum has been modified to cater better for the cohorts coming through the school. However, recently introduced courses are yet to be evaluated to assess their impact on students' progress. An extensive extra-curricular programme is available for all students, but the school neither monitors uptake by students nor assesses the impact of these activities on outcomes.

Accurate self-evaluation procedures are at a very early stage of development and subject areas are only just embarking on this self-critical process. An accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses has not been fully established.

In view of the students' inadequate learning and progress and a lack of embedded systems for monitoring and evaluating its work, the school does not show it has the necessary capacity to improve.

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

- Raise attainment, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to plan carefully for the needs of all learners
  - planning and implementing effective strategies for students who have fallen behind in their learning
  - ensuring that all staff have the highest expectations of what students can achieve.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels have a clear and shared understanding of how to take the school forward by:
  - clarifying everyone's roles and responsibilities
  - making self-evaluation procedures more rigorous
  - evaluating the impact of initiatives on different groups of students.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****4**

Too many students completing GCSE courses in 2010 made inadequate progress in English and mathematics. The school's data show this is likely to be the case for students currently in Year 11. However, students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress than others due to the specialist support they receive. The examination results in 2010 showed a slight improvement on those in 2009, based on the percentage of those students achieving five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics. However, attainment in the core subjects of English and mathematics was lower than the previous year for a cohort of a similar ability. Attainment in the specialist subjects, especially art, is high but the specialism is not yet having a noticeable effect on raising attainment across the whole school. Boys achieve

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less well than girls. There is a trend of slow progress and poor use of assessment data is preventing the school from raising attainment as quickly as it should.

Inspectors saw lessons where satisfactory and sometimes good progress was made. Some particularly good learning was observed in the specialist subjects where lessons are better planned and teachers' expectations are clear. In a good art lesson, students responded well to effective questioning. Learning was checked at various points during a good French lesson when the teacher paused and asked the students to indicate whether they understood what they were being taught. Many students demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and concentrate well. A small minority of students find concentration difficult and quickly become distracted.

Most students say they feel safe but some commented they would welcome an increase in the number of staff who carry out lunchtime supervision. Most students are well-behaved in lessons and, although the exclusion rate has risen, this is largely due to the school's leaders setting higher expectations for behaviour. Just under half of the students surveyed believed the school does not encourage them to be healthy. However, all students have two hours of physical education each week and the curriculum raises their awareness of what constitutes healthy living. Inspectors visited a range of after-school and lunchtime clubs which encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Attendance is average but the proportion of persistent absentees is higher than the national average. Punctuality to school and between lessons is poor.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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## How effective is the provision?

The school has experienced a high staff turnover in recent times. This had an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and some teaching has been poor. New staff, many of whom are newly qualified teachers, have been appointed and the quality of teaching is improving. Those teachers who demonstrate good teaching skills use a variety of techniques, but teachers' planning does not always make good use of data on students' prior performance and learning. Consequently, although teaching is currently satisfactory, the use of assessment to support learning remains inadequate. In a Year 11 English lesson, students were working at GCSE grades D and E but had been set target grades as high as B. There were no plans in place to make up the lost ground and students were unaware of how to do this without support. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and the pace is slow. Students tend to become too passive in these cases. There are missed opportunities in the use of teaching resources. Students often have to share text books, and information and communication technology is under-used. Written feedback to students is a weakness because it does not show the students how they can improve. The school's specialist subject areas are better resourced and the teachers plan more effectively to support students. Teachers in these specialist areas, as well as individual teachers of other subjects, encourage students to work independently and nurture an increasing self-reliance. More effective use of assessment information in these subjects leads to better outcomes for students.

The curriculum is being developed to meet students' needs and was modified following a review triggered by the identification of students' poor progress. A two-week timetable offers greater flexibility and an increase in the provision for English and mathematics in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 now offers students three pathways designed to better match their needs through both traditional and vocational routes. However, the newly introduced courses and curriculum routes are yet to be evaluated for any impact on students' progress. A recent project involving performing arts, gymnastics and dance successfully linked subjects and attracted over 200 students.

Appropriate systems for care, guidance and support result in satisfactory personal development. Transition arrangements into Year 7 are good and students in Year 11 receive helpful advice on post-16 options. Potentially vulnerable students who met with inspectors were positive about the support they are offered. The school's Additional Resources Provision (ARP) offers support for students with challenging behaviour. While the school has some useful behaviour support strategies, the impact they are having on improving behaviour is not checked.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

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## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Staffing structures are being revised, but the lack of effective communication with those affected by the changes means that staff are unsure of their role in contributing to school improvement. A recently appointed member of the leadership team is taking responsibility for teaching and learning and is starting to put a greater focus on this key area. However, this is at a very early stage. Lesson observations do not yet focus sufficiently on the progress that students are making and judgements are not always accurate.

Monitoring and evaluation processes are only just starting to be introduced. There is little analysis of the progress of different groups of students; this acts as a barrier to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. The school's self-evaluation focuses too much on the action being taken and not on its impact. Consequently, school leaders are, at times, inaccurate in their judgements.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has a secure understanding of the issues facing the school and there are plans to restructure the committees because there are six vacancies. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties in relation to the safeguarding of children.

The school works in partnership with a range of organisations which leads to positive outcomes. Some productive work has taken place with a local primary school and the school's specialism opens up opportunities for exciting projects such as the Turkish puppet show. The school is aware of the need to address the needs of the increasing number of students of ethnic minority heritage who are joining the school. An audit for community cohesion has taken place and a plan drawn up. It involves links with the local and wider community as well as contact with international communities. There is as yet no clear link between the community cohesion plan and the potential impact on teaching and learning. This, linked with variation in performance between groups of students and under-performance in some cases, means that the school's equal opportunities policy is not being successfully implemented.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Sixth form

Students make satisfactory progress from their starting points at the end of Year 11. Staffing difficulties have affected sixth-form provision. Where these have been most acute students' progress has suffered. These difficulties have eased, and learning and progress observed in the sixth form during the inspection was at least satisfactory and sometimes better. Students following art and applied subjects have traditionally made faster progress than elsewhere and this remains the case. The number of students wishing to join the sixth form is increasing and includes a growing number of external applicants. Students speak positively about their experience and welcome the range of extra-curricular choices provided including World Challenge, Young Enterprise and links with a partner school in Ethiopia. Relationships with teachers are positive and students value the close-knit, inclusive community. Students are offered many opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community. Attendance in the sixth form is improving but is still below the school's target. The care, guidance and support from tutors are greatly appreciated by members of the sixth form.

The Head of Sixth Form has an ambitious vision to take the sixth form forward. To realise this vision he has completed a review of the curriculum which has resulted in an increase in the range of A-level courses. The school is aware that the time and status currently afforded to leadership of the sixth form means this plan can only be implemented slowly.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Eight per cent of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire; many of those who responded added written comments. Most report that their children enjoy being at the school and that the school keeps them safe. A large majority of those who responded say they feel happy with their child's experience at the school. However, a small minority feel the school does not keep them fully informed about progress. A minority of those who responded feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and some added comments about specific incidents involving physical and intimidating behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be generally satisfactory overall during the inspection and, on occasion, witnessed some staff correcting unacceptable behaviour.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Misbourne School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	32	50	53	9	10	4	4
The school keeps my child safe	18	19	64	68	10	11	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	15	48	51	24	26	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	17	53	56	16	17	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	10	11	61	65	8	9	4	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	12	55	59	21	22	5	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	12	53	56	21	22	3	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	10	11	54	57	13	14	4	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	20	52	55	10	11	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	9	39	41	30	32	7	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	7	51	54	14	15	7	7
The school is led and managed effectively	11	12	51	54	14	15	7	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	19	58	62	8	9	5	5

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



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September 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of The Misbourne School, Great Missenden, HP16 0BN**

You will remember that inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for the welcome you gave us. Many of you told us that you enjoy being at school and most of you said you felt safe.

These are our key findings

Strengths

- Teaching and learning in some curriculum areas, including the specialist subjects of art and technology, are good and here you attain high grades.
- The curriculum has been recently adapted to better meet your needs and is now satisfactory.
- The sixth form is inclusive and students are happy with the provision; outcomes and effectiveness are satisfactory.

Areas to improve

- Teaching has improved recently and is satisfactory. However, poor teaching in the past, particularly in mathematics and English, has left many of you behind in your studies.
- Your teachers' use of the data they have about your learning to plan lessons is often not good enough to help you make up this lost ground.
- Strategies to boost your progress are at an early stage of development and there is no systematic plan to address previous underachievement.
- The senior leaders have tried to make changes to the school for the better. However, these changes have not improved your progress quickly enough.

For these reasons, we have judged that the school is not providing you with an acceptable standard of education and it needs extra help to improve as quickly as possible. This means that inspectors will visit the school regularly to check the progress that is being made.

We have asked your school leaders and teachers to make smarter use of assessment information when planning lessons to ensure that you make better progress and also to make sure that teachers make clear their expectations of you. For your part, you all need to be on time to lessons and make the most of them. We ask you to remember that good behaviour usually results in better learning and progress.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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