

Meadows School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119029
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358479
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Timothy Feast

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Newmark
Headteacher	Mike Price
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
School address	London Road Tunbridge Wells TN4 0RN
Telephone number	01892 529144
Fax number	01892 527787
Email address	Chris.wyton@barnardos.org.uk

Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Inspection number	358479

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons, observing seven teachers. Meetings were held with staff and students. Telephone conversations were held with representatives of the governing body. Students' work, information on their progress, behaviour and attendance, safeguarding information and other documents were evaluated. Questionnaires from 17 parents and carers, 12 day students, eight boarding students and 34 staff were scrutinised.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following.

- Whether school leaders and teachers are using assessment information effectively to inform their planning.
- Whether different groups of students and different subjects perform similarly.

Information about the school

The school is owned by the Barnardo's Children's Charity. It is a school for day and residential students with significant behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many students also have additional difficulties including autistic spectrum disorders and social and communication difficulties. All students have statements of special educational needs. Since the previous inspection, the school has opened post-16 provision off site. Most students are in Years 10 and 11 and are from White British backgrounds. About a quarter of the students are girls and this proportion is rising.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Meadows School provides a satisfactory education for its students. There are strengths in many aspects of its provision and in the good or better academic progress of students. Staff provide students with good care, guidance and support. As a result, the students improve many of their personal, social and learning skills which prepare them effectively for the next stage of their lives.

In Years 8 to 11, students progress well in their learning, regardless of whether they are day or boarding students and irrespective of gender or of the specific disability or difficulty they have. This progress is helped by the support they receive which enables them to be known well as individuals and which helps to raise their self-esteem and re-engages them with the education process. The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory, but improving, especially with regard to giving students more active learning experiences. There is not yet sufficient consistency in teachers challenging students to do their best by using assessment and other information appropriately or giving secure guidance to students on what they need to do to improve.

Students say they feel safe in lessons and around the school. They engage well with the range of physical activities and enjoy the healthy school lunches. Students talk positively about the impact of the school on their lives and how it helps them; one student commented, 'I catch up with my college work so I don't get left behind.' The attendance of a majority of students improves while at the school, although overall attendance remains low. Their behaviour improves, although not always to the level that it is consistently good in lessons. The curriculum contributes greatly to students' enjoyment and to their progress. However, staff do not always make the best use of the excellent facilities and resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, to ensure that students always learn effectively and remain engaged consistently.

The headteacher demonstrates considerable drive and ambition for the school as seen by improved facilities for post-16 students. The impact of other school leaders, particularly on the quality of teaching and assessment, is more variable, some because they have only recently been appointed and others because they use assessment and other information inconsistently. Although leaders are accurate in judging the school's strengths and weaknesses, some judgements are generous when set against the current inspection criteria. Moreover, insufficient use is made of the school's data to inform these judgements. Partnerships with other professionals are used well to promote the learning and well-being of students. The school communicates effectively with parents and carers who are very pleased with the impact the school has on the lives of their children. The school values all individuals and promotes community cohesion well. The governing body makes a sound and developing contribution to moving the school forward and this,

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

together with rapid improvements in students' achievement, indicates satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' behaviour in lessons by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan lessons so that students are more consistently engaged by the activities
 - teachers use resources effectively so that students get down to work quickly ?
 - staff implement behaviour management strategies consistently.
- Improve teaching and assessment by ensuring that teachers identify and share consistently with students what they are expected to learn and what they need to do to improve their work to the next level/grade.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all leaders make better use of the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation information to accelerate the impact of improvement strategies
 - leaders at all levels monitor and evaluate the impact of the provision in the areas for which they have responsibility.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students' attainment is well below that expected nationally because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities. Despite this, nearly all of last year's Year 11 students left with a range of accredited grades in GCSEs and Entry Level Certificates. For many students, this represents good, and in some cases outstanding, progress from the time they join the school, which is often in Years 10 and 11. Current students are making good progress with their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. They make good progress in other subjects such as art and in food technology, where some students were preparing to cook at the prestigious Millbank Tower restaurant. Their good progress is evident in lessons in these subjects and reflects both their achievement and enjoyment. Data provided by the school show all groups, including those in the care of the local authority, achieve equally well.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. At the time of the inspection, students were enthusiastically preparing for the imminent Children in Need appeal and this reflected the voice of the student council effectively. In discussion, students showed good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle, emphasising the importance of opportunities for physical development and the universal take-up of healthy lunches. Students identified that their behaviour improves while they are at the school. There is evidence that the school helps students to manage their difficulties effectively in large group situations, such as whole-school occasions or when the musicians worked with the London Chamber Orchestra and with musicians from other schools.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Improving teaching is making a strong contribution to the accelerating rate of students' progress. Teachers know the students well and have good subject knowledge. They are increasingly providing opportunities for students to learn independently and collaboratively and take more responsibility for their own learning. In the best lessons, such as in English, art and food technology, the nature and challenge of the activity, guided by good use of assessment information, are such that students make good progress and behave well. This is not always the case and when teachers are less successful in engaging the students their behaviour deteriorates. Although students' work is marked regularly, a lack of consistency in the quality of the guidance given to students hinders them in making better progress.

The curriculum is tailored well to meet the needs of individual students and there is a good focus on the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Students have good opportunities for vocational courses, accessing courses at local colleges and placements in local businesses such as horticultural nurseries. Provision is being enhanced by the use of a range of therapists, such as for speech and language, to meet the complexity of students' needs. There is a good range of enrichment activities which students enjoy and participate in well, such as swimming and visits to activity centres.

Staff make sure that all students, including day and boarding students and those who arrive at different times of the year, settle quickly and happily to school life.

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

Staff adopt effective strategies to improve personal outcomes for students. Attendance, while low overall, improves for a majority of students and they reflect positively on the improvement in their behaviour since arriving at the school. Students enjoy and value the opportunities for work experience and for work-related courses and articulate confidently what they want to do with the next stage of their lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leadership has introduced considerable and ambitious changes from September 2010. For many of these, there is very limited evidence of impact yet. Senior leaders monitor the quality of provision effectively but there is less evidence of this being done routinely by middle leaders. Leaders are successful in maintaining a safe and caring school where students make at least good progress. Safeguarding procedures, including risk assessments, are satisfactory. The governing body is supportive of the school, knows its strengths and weaknesses and plays an appropriate role in determining financial priorities. Links with parents and carers are good as seen by their attendance at annual reviews. The school works well in partnership with other organisations to enhance students' opportunities in ways that the school could not provide; a good example of this is the link to the Windermere project where students acquire skills relevant to the construction industry. Community cohesion effectively promotes good understanding of the local, national and international contexts and the school works well in removing barriers to progress, thereby promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination well, so that there is little variation in the progress of different groups.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Sixth form The sixth form moved into new off-site premises at the start of the present academic year. The small group of boys who comprise the sixth form are making satisfactory progress with their studies although a few individuals are demonstrating better progress, particularly with their college courses. Students are developing their personal skills appropriately for when they move on to the next stages of their lives. There have been a number of different teachers since the start of the autumn term. The quality of the teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Other staff are deployed appropriately to help students make secure progress with specific aspects of their work and encourage them to develop their skills of independence, for example in planning and producing the midday meal to a good and nutritional standard. The head of the sixth form has been in post since the start of the autumn term and has been effective in getting the new facilities ready. She has a clear vision for how she wants the provision to develop.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
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

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

Views of parents and carers

Over a third of the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. They were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its impact on their children. One parent said, 'After many years of negativity at mainstream, I now feel my daughter is happy.' The inspector supported many of the parents and carers' positive views but found teaching to be satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadows 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 inspector received 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 43 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	6	35	9	53	2	12	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	11	65	5	29	1	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	65	6	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	35	9	53	2	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	53	8	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	59	7	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	47	9	53	0	0	0	0
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)	8	47	8	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	53	8	47	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	71	5	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	65	6	35	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	53	7	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	71	5	29	0	0	0	0

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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



20 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Meadows School, Southborough, TN4 0RN

Thank you for being so helpful when I came to visit your school recently, particularly those of you who came to talk with me. I liked hearing all the positive things about Meadows School and how much you benefit from attending the school.

I have found that your school is satisfactory. Although you make good progress with your studies and improve many aspects of your well-being, your behaviour has not yet improved enough for the school to be judged as good. I think you are well looked after and given good support and guidance. You are given many exciting opportunities to improve your performance, both in school and further afield. I was particularly impressed with those of you playing alongside the London Symphony Orchestra. The teaching you receive is satisfactory. Teachers are not consistent in helping you to want to learn and managing your behaviour. The headteacher leads you well but you have many new staff and it is too soon to see how they will improve your learning and attitudes.

Because the school wants to be even better, I have asked leaders to make sure that lessons are planned so that they help you to behave better and stay in class and that you are given better guidance on how to improve your work. I have asked that school staff use all the information about your progress to decide what they are going to do next to help you improve even more quickly.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tim Feast Lead inspector

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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.