

The Misbourne School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110490
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	385054
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Carmen Rodney HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,069
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	217
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Alan Armstrong
Headteacher	Robert Preston
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 September 2010
School address	Misbourne Drive Great Missenden Buckinghamshire HP16 0BN
Telephone number	01494 862 869
Fax number	01494 868 315 admin@misbourne.bucks.sch.uk

Age group	11–18
Inspection date(s)	20–21 March 2012
Inspection number	385054



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 123 4234, 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 information 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'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Carmen Rodney

Her Majesty's Inspector

Karen Roche

Additional inspector

Victor Chaffey

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. Inspectors observed 29 parts of lessons taught by 28 teachers. They held meetings with four groups of students, a few parents and carers, the Chair of the Interim Executive Board, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher from the outstanding partner school and members of the senior leadership team and middle managers. Inspectors did not use the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection because no parent or carer has used this service. They also observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the Interim Executive Board minutes. In addition, they evaluated the school development plan and policies on, for example, childcare and safeguarding. Parental questionnaires were not included as part of this inspection because it was undertaken as part of the Section 8 inspection. The inspectors also observed the school's work and evaluated the school development plan and policies, documents relating to safeguarding and the Interim Executive Board minutes.

Information about the school

The Misbourne is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school. Although the large majority of students are from White British heritage, the school is a diverse community and includes students from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is increasing and is below average. While the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average, few are at the early stage of learning the language. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is above average. The main needs are behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, moderate learning and specific learning difficulties.

The school has had arts and technology status since 2000. It also holds the Healthy School and Artsmark Silver awards. In 2011, the school exceeded the government's floor standard for English and mathematics.

At the time of the previous inspection in September 2010, the school was deemed to require special measures. Her Majesty's Inspector made monitoring visits in March, June and December 2011 and March 2012 to evaluate the school's progress. There have been a few staff changes since the previous inspection. The substantive executive headteacher was appointed in June 2011, following the departure of the previous headteacher.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.
- The Misbourne is a satisfactory school that is improving strongly under the leadership of the senior team. Against all odds of declining standards, the headteacher, staff and Interim Executive Board have all worked determinedly to turn around the fortunes of the school. Consequently, students are making better progress and the school's good reputation has been reclaimed in the community. There is commitment and a cohesive approach from all leaders, staff, students and parents to ensuring that the school sustains the rapid improvement. The school cannot be graded as good because over the last four academic years, students have not made rapid progress to achieve above-average results based on their starting points.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened all aspects of its provision. The headteacher has provided very clear direction and steered staff through accepting and establishing a good range of robust systems for monitoring and reviewing students' progress. Effective systems have also been developed to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which is linked to performance management. As a result, there is increased accountability and a relentless focus on improving teaching and accelerating learning.
- Standards achieved in the 2011 GCSE examinations at five or more grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, are broadly average; however, progress over time was below the national average. The school is aware that there is still more to do so that all students can achieve their potential.
- Students behave well. They respond well to the good quality care and guidance offered and are keen to learn. Students' strong work ethic and above-average attendance contribute to their enjoyment of learning and feeling in the school.
- The sixth form is well established and students achieve well. Good and outstanding teaching, effective support and guidance, and an academic curriculum linked to students' needs and interests lead to them making good

progress and being well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise expectations to ensure that all students are consistently challenged to achieve their potential based on their starting points by supporting them to know and understand their challenging targets and how to improve their work through giving clear and constructive comments that involve them.
- Further develop teaching so that it is consistently good or outstanding by ensuring that:
 - work is carefully matched to the needs of individuals and groups and there is a persistent approach to driving students to achieve highly
 - lesson planning is well structured and learning is consolidated before moving students on to the next steps
 - there is effective questioning to assess learning and deepen understanding
 - good practice, through coaching and mentoring, leads to teachers confidently embedding a range of teaching strategies to deliver well-planned lessons on a day-to-day basis
 - challenging homework is routinely set and deepens students' subject knowledge.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons observed, almost all students achieved satisfactorily, with an increasing proportion making good or better progress. Students worked confidently with each other or on their own, showing tremendous levels of engagement and willingness to learn. As a result of their strong work ethic, they concentrate for sustained periods of time and maintain high-quality discussion and work. Notable examples of teaching and learning at the highest level include: Year 11 and 13 students working jointly in a photography lesson to share and use a range of skills to demonstrate mastery when using software for design and photography; and Year 13 students in psychology discussing and analysing a philosopher's perspectives of miracles before applying the marking criteria to an essay.

Attainment in the GCSE examinations in June 2011 was better than the previous year and was the school's best results over the last four years. Students achieved average results in the proportion obtaining five or more GCSE A*–C including English and mathematics, and most made the expected progress by this measure. Nevertheless, the overall five A*–C grades were below average and when the achievement of students is taken into consideration, most did not make the expected progress based on their starting points. For example, too few of the more-able students did not gain the highest grades in mathematics and overall, only a minority of middle-attaining students achieved their potential. While the few students from minority ethnic backgrounds, on average, made better progress than their peers and for similar groups nationally, those disabled students, with special educational needs, and those

known to be eligible for free school meals made good progress. Gaps in performance are narrowing for these two groups of students compared with all groups nationally because of the much-improved individual tracking, support and guidance offered. Achievement in performing arts is consistently high.

Since the start of the current school year, progress is better than expected. The 2012 GCSE targets for five A* to C grades in all subjects and five A* to C grades including English and mathematics have therefore been raised and reflect the rising trend in performance. This has led to the school maintaining a sharper focus on students making rapid progress in order to achieving above-average standards. The school's approach to early entry and the rigorous use of assessment and tracking data indicate that the majority of current Year 11 students already have gained GCSE grades A*–C in English and mathematics. The school ensures that all students have equal access to additional support, as the progress of different groups of students is tracked rigorously and regularly. A good range of intervention support strategies is used well for students at risk of underachieving.

In the sixth form there was a significant improvement in the 2011 A-level results. Where Year 12 students made satisfactory progress, Year 13 students made good progress, notably in art and design and photography, the specialist subjects.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory, with much that is good and some that is outstanding. Students and the few parents and carers spoken to consistently report that the quality of teaching has improved significantly and students are making better-than-expected progress. Reliable evidence from the monitoring visits indicates that teaching is increasingly effective and enabling students to learn. In addition, planning is sharply focused on broadening students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness locally and wider afield. Teachers know their students very well and this contributes to them being at ease with each other; this mutual respect facilitates learning very well.

Outstanding and good teaching bears specific hallmarks that include teachers using very good subject knowledge to plan well-structured lessons that successfully move learning forwards. As a result, students are confident when applying the skills learnt. Pace is good; learning is consolidated through effective questioning that draws on a range of questioning techniques to assess students' grasp of the work. For example, opened-ended questions and discussion are used skilfully to review learning, to address misconceptions as necessary and to deepen students' understanding. In addition, assessment criteria, including peer assessment, underpin every aspect of teaching so enabling students to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Teachers provide opportunities for students to reflect on the work and give insightful comments; collaborative work and exemplar materials are used well to identify and consolidate skills and concepts. However, these features are not consistently evident in satisfactory lessons, where students' progress is compromised. On the very few rare occasions when teaching is inadequate, this is linked to disengagement because expectations of work and behaviour are low.

Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced rigorous systems to assess, monitor and evaluate students' progress over time. Teachers therefore have a clearer understanding of using the data; however, this information is not used consistently to match work to students' needs, expectations are not always high and in a minority of lessons, there is not enough challenge to stretch students and, despite meticulous planning, a few teachers are not adept at skilfully using their plans. The quality and setting of homework is inconsistent, as is the emphasis teachers place on students checking that basic technical grammatical skills are used accurately. In addition, presentation skills are not always reinforced, particularly in mathematics.

The quality of marking is much improved, although inconsistencies remain; it is better in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Comments are occasionally too brief and do not always give students enough explanation on how to improve their work. While all students know their targets and can talk about how well they are doing, they and their parents and carers would like to be involved in setting them.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The attitudes and behaviour of students are good. Around the school, behaviour is good, and in lessons it is mostly good and often outstanding. Behaviour mirrors the quality of teaching and, although there is occasionally minor inattentiveness when lessons are not stimulating, unacceptable behaviour is rare. Within this environment, where relationships are harmonious between groups from different backgrounds, students say that they feel safe and well cared for. Students' strong sense of security is assured because of the 'forever' presence of staff around the building and the knowledge that they can turn to someone if support is needed. They are knowledgeable about different forms of bullying and are confident that discriminatory behaviour of any kind is very rare; older students claim that it is unknown to them.

Students are tolerant and, like their parents and carers, they feel they are well prepared for living in a diverse society and for the next stage of their life. They learn about different faiths and cultures across the curriculum. Students have a strong sense of social responsibility towards each other. For example, sixth form students mentor younger students and support them to improve their reading skills. Similarly, the school council acts as the voice for their peers. Moral and spiritual values are derived from the strong emphasis teachers place on developing students' awareness and understanding of different perspectives locally, nationally and globally. For instance, in assembly, students explored the view points of renowned disasters around the world before considering and reflecting on their personal response to a national event.

Leadership and management

The school is well led by an astute headteacher who commands respect and loyalty. Within a very short time, he has secured the support of all staff by working with the senior team and Interim Executive Board to re-order the way in which the school works. The vision for improvement has been shared and accepted because of the clarity of direction. A strong foundation has been laid on which to increase the school's effectiveness. Planning for improvement is advanced and well considered; it

includes short-, medium- and long-term steps, all of which have been shared with the staff. Review and feedback on improvements are regular and, because there is a relentless focus on the impact of teaching to accelerate students' progress, staff are able to see tangible examples of clear actions being measured and realised. Morale is therefore high. Teachers at all levels show commitment to improving provision by working well with senior leaders to develop good practice through monitoring and training. There is therefore a good understanding of how well staff are doing.

The school's specialist status is integral to the development of teaching and is used effectively to nurture students' talents and participation in performances. However, it does not permeate all areas of the school's work. The specialist school status reaches out to the community but the pace of involvement is not extensive.

Improved tracking systems and increased accountability begin at a strategic level with a highly experienced and knowledgeable Interim Executive Board. These have enabled senior and middle leaders and all staff to know how well the school is moving forward. Performance data are kept under review and there is no compromise or complacency when evaluating outcomes in relation to teaching and the performance of students. Equality of opportunity is kept under review to ensure all form of discriminatory practices can be tackled quickly. For example, outcomes for different groups of students have been identified and supportive systems have been put into place to ensure that all can access additional tuition. Remedial support is also offered from Year 7 onwards for students with low-level literacy and numeracy skills. The disproportionate number of exclusions of disabled students, those with special educational needs, and those of Caribbean heritage is kept under review, as is the much-improved provision for students with special educational needs. However, provision for students at the early stage of learning English is a relatively new development.

Leaders and managers know very well the strengths and weaknesses of the school; priorities are clearly ordered. As a result, leaders and managers have increased the school's capacity to move forward. The restructured leadership team, based on a distributive model, has been strengthened by the addition of aspiring assistant headteachers with specific portfolios. Furthermore, well-thought-out structures to increase effectiveness have been developed, for example, the effective support for disabled students and those with special educational needs and potentially vulnerable students with challenging behaviour in the school's Additional Resourced Provision (ARP). In addition, good and sustained improvements are linked to a satisfactory and improving curriculum. This includes ensuring all subjects maintain a sharp focus on increasing students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. The revised curriculum offers good guidance and relevant courses to meet students' interests and needs in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Additionally, in Key Stage 3, there is good attention to developing literacy and numeracy skills by allocating more time to these key skills. Procedures to ensure that students are safe are robust.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

22 March 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of The Misbourne School, Buckinghamshire HP16 0BN

Thank you for the welcome extended throughout every visit to your school between June 2011 and March 2012. We very much appreciated meeting and talking with different groups on every visit. Your willingness to talk openly about the journey your school has been on was very much appreciated.

In our discussions with you, you were very clear on every visit that the quality of teaching had improved, and you are making better progress. We are pleased to let you know that your school is no longer causing concern in relation to the quality of education it provides for you. The Misbourne School is providing you with a satisfactory education that is improving strongly. Your attitudes and behaviour to learning are good and linked to the improvements in teaching. Sometimes, teaching is outstanding. You enjoy attending school and this is shown in your above-average attendance. The high level of mutual respect between all groups of students and staff contributes well to the mature and harmonious relationships in the school. You feel safe and secure in your school. The headteacher and all senior leaders have worked very hard to make important changes to teaching, the curriculum and developing plans to make the school more effective. They are determined to ensure that the school is one of the best in the country and you and your parents also share this opinion.

We have therefore asked the school to make two important changes to realise this priority. First, we would like them to ensure that you are all achieving your potential, with most of you obtaining the higher examination grades. Second, to achieve this, teachers are asked to ensure that all lessons are good or outstanding. All of our findings indicate that the school is moving forward and is determined to sustain the improvements.

You are proud of your school and want it to succeed. We therefore urge you to support the leaders and staff in their quest to achieve the best for you.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's 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 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**