

The Mandeville School Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110497
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	378111
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2011
Reporting inspector	John Daniell HMI

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

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	1,002
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Webber
Headteacher	Peter Patchett
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 November 2008
School address	Ellen Road Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP21 8ES
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 37 lessons taught by 35 teachers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school performance data, school improvement documentation and policies. Meetings were held with staff, students and members of the governing body. Telephone conversations took place with organisations with which the school works in partnership as well as with the local authority's School Improvement Manager. Inspectors scrutinised 492 questionnaires from parents and carers, 157 from students and 69 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which levels of attainment have risen since the previous inspection, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Whether there are signs that students' rates of learning and progress are accelerating.
- The impact leaders, managers and governors are having on school improvement.
- Whether the quality of teaching is securing improved outcomes for students.

Information about the school

The Mandeville School is a larger-than-average school within a local education authority which operates a selective school system. The large majority of students are of White British heritage with a smaller number being of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, as is the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs.

The school is a specialist sports college and has National Healthy Schools Status. It is a member of the 'Get Set' network in preparation for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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

The Mandeville School provides its students with a satisfactory standard of education. Students enter the school with a level of attainment which is below average. Although when they leave school their attainment remains low, not least in English and mathematics, their achievement is satisfactory because of the progress they make from their low starting point. The school provides a safe environment and this, coupled with good behaviour and effective care, guidance and support, creates a friendly and welcoming school where students feel happy. The school's specialism provides opportunities for students to practise a variety of sporting activities. Students are proud of their school and make a positive contribution to both the school and the wider community.

Attendance is average and the preparation of students for their future workplace is satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and can be seen in lessons and in the way students respond to each other's actions and beliefs. The new system of vertical form tutoring is establishing a positive ethos which encourages older students to be positive role models for the younger ones.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some that is good. Teachers do not always make best use of assessment information in their planning, and the marking of students' work is variable in quality. Achievement in some subjects, including in the school's specialism, has been disappointing. Leaders at senior level are taking decisive action to address these aspects of underperformance. Leadership below senior level is sometimes weak, with uncertainties about accountability. Members of the governing body are not always clear about how to bring about school improvement, although governors are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school's self-evaluation documentation gives a reasonable picture of the school's current situation, although some of the school's judgements are over generous. However, appropriate improvement plans are in place, the school is well supported by the local authority's School Improvement Manager and its capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

The school's curriculum is good. The vocational aspects of the school's provision are appropriate for many but the school recognises the need to build a curriculum which addresses the needs of all its students, including the most able.

The sixth-form provision is satisfactory. There is an improving trend in the overall attainment of sixth-form students but their achievement is still below the national

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average. Students in the sixth form speak positively about the provision. The curriculum meets the needs of many who choose to continue their studies at the school but does not yet address those of the least able. The development of the sixth form has been held back because of its small size, although a sixth-form development plan is in place and the provision is managed satisfactorily.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by:
 - making more effective use of data to ensure that work is more closely matched to the needs of students
 - ensuring that the marking of students' work is more detailed and provides clearer guidance on how to move up to the next level.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - clearly identifying the strengths and areas for development of each lesson observed
 - sharing and extending the existing good practice within and across subjects.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels, including members of the governing body, are fully accountable for their areas of responsibility by implementing agreed policies and procedures consistently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons, students' progress ranged from inadequate to outstanding. Good or better progress was seen in a range of subjects including English, music, and information and communication technology. In an effective Year 11 English lesson, students were highly motivated. The teacher had planned the lesson making good use of available data and students made outstanding progress. They knew what they had to do to improve and were ready to rise to the challenge. However, in many other lessons, students did not have high enough expectations and work was at too low a level.

The proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE in 2011 was below the national average and, when English and mathematics are included, the proportion falls to well below the national average. Current data indicate that results are set to rise in 2012 on both measures. There are no significant differences in the performance of those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who speak English as an additional language. However, students with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities at School Action Plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, achieve particularly well.

The large majority of students say they feel safe when in school and that the school responds appropriately when there are problems. Students behave well in lessons and the school supports students who present challenging behaviour effectively; the number of fixed-term exclusions is declining. Students understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and most groups of students take advantage of sports clubs both during the school day and after school. They make a positive contribution to the school and willingly take on leadership positions and express their opinions through the school council. Students are aware of cultural differences and they mix well with those from different backgrounds within the school.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

In the better lessons, teachers’ good subject knowledge and planning skills, and their positive relationships with students, result in exciting lessons where the students are fully engaged. Teachers’ questions challenge students’ ideas and perceptions. For example, in a good Year 7 science lesson on the topic of acids and alkalis, the teacher engaged students immediately through the use of target setting, and they assessed their rate of progress towards achieving their targets. Additional adults in the classroom were effective and facilitated students’ learning. However, too many lessons lack the creativity required to motivate the students to maintain an interest and follow up things on their own. The lack of challenge, especially for those

¹ 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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students who are gifted or talented, is often a missed opportunity in the classroom. In an otherwise satisfactory lesson, the pace was too slow and there was insufficient focus on learning. Teachers do not consistently use assessment information effectively to plan or teach their lessons, which affects the rates of progress of individual students. As a result, instead of providing a range of activities of varying difficulty to meet each student’s individual needs, all do the same work.

The curriculum takes account of the range of abilities and learning styles of students. For example, the provision of vocational courses with BTEC qualifications and the addition of triple science to the curriculum demonstrate the school’s commitment to building a curriculum which is fit for purpose. The school’s specialism makes a positive contribution to the curriculum through its personal, social and health education programme which guides students on how to lead a healthy lifestyle and provides advice on medical issues. Students appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer and the school monitors participation by different groups of students.

Good care, guidance and support for students ensure that those who join the school in Year 7 settle in quickly and those who leave school in Year 11 make informed choices about the next stage in their learning. Specific support targeted at those students whose situations make them vulnerable to underachievement is effective. Close monitoring of these students’ academic performance and their changing needs and circumstances aims to identify any change in trend and triggers appropriate intervention.

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 senior leadership team is aware of the challenges the school faces with regard to improvement and has introduced a number of initiatives. The introduction of a house system and vertical tutoring, the appointment of a new special educational needs coordinator as a senior leader and an insistence on high-quality data analysis demonstrate a commitment to improvement. However, it is too early to assess the impact of many of these initiatives. A revised school development plan was implemented from September 2011 following a whole-school evaluation and performance review and this plan is fit for purpose. Expectations at senior level are high but these expectations are not yet demonstrated consistently by leaders at all levels, through the implementation of agreed policies and procedures, and the

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improved management of teaching and learning has not yet had an impact on the students' experience in the classroom. Information gathered from lesson observations is not yet fully utilised.

The governing body is committed to school improvement and fulfils its statutory duties to safeguard students. Governors promote inclusive practice well but there is little evaluation of the impact of community cohesion initiatives on students' outcomes. The importance of working in partnership with parents and carers, and of engaging them in their child's educational journey, is well understood. The school communicates with parents and carers through newsletters and plans to develop communication links through the virtual learning environment. However, although leaders and managers listen to parents' and carers' views, it is not always clear to what extent they have been influenced by them. The school's partnership work with other organisations is effective in securing satisfactory outcomes. Links with local businesses, the pupil referral unit and local primary school serve to enhance students' experiences.

Equal opportunities enjoy a high profile in the school and the school makes every effort to track and monitor students' performance by group.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with lower levels of prior attainment than the national average. All candidates gained A* to E grades at A level in 2011, compared to 83% in 2010, but the proportion gaining grades A* to C was below the national average. This represents satisfactory progress given students’ starting points.

Students are positive about the sixth form and enjoy the support they receive. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and there are some good lessons where teachers' expectations are high and students are required to be more independent and take overall responsibility for their learning. The development of the curriculum is limited due to the small size of the cohort but links with other schools allow for some flexibility within the provision. Attendance in the sixth form is average.

The head of sixth form recognises that the curriculum in the sixth form does not yet fully match the needs of the students and that some classes have too few students, which does not represent value for money. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored but this does not yet directly involve the head of sixth form. Nevertheless, the head of sixth form demonstrates a clear understanding of how the provision can improve and development plans have appropriate priorities.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
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

A large proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and many chose to add additional comments. Some parents and carers expressed concern about bullying and homework. Systems are in place to address any incidents of bullying and students know who to approach in these circumstances. Scrutiny of students’ planners shows that they do not always write down their homework. Homework is set but the quantity varies between subjects. A very large majority of respondents are happy with their child’s experience at the school. A small minority believe that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. During this inspection, inspectors saw good behaviour in lessons and generally when moving around the school, and note that the number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions has declined.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Mandeville 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 492 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1002 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	119	24	324	66	32	7	11	2
The school keeps my child safe	110	22	352	72	18	4	5	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	97	20	325	66	49	10	8	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	88	18	320	65	50	10	10	2
The teaching is good at this school	71	14	351	71	36	7	4	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	66	13	310	63	75	15	9	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	10	332	67	84	17	4	1
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)	78	16	334	68	31	6	7	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	69	14	330	67	58	12	5	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	14	300	61	70	14	23	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	9	317	64	72	15	15	3
The school is led and managed effectively	84	17	350	71	23	5	7	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	113	23	329	67	25	5	7	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



13 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of The Mandeville School Specialist Sports College, Aylesbury, HP21 8ES

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. You told us that you know how well you are doing and that you learn a lot in lessons.

These are our key findings.

- Your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education.
- Your behaviour is good and you are supported and guided well in school.
- You are making satisfactory progress overall but your attainment in English and mathematics is low.
- Some leaders and managers are less effective than others but the school is working to rectify this.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and some lessons are outstanding. In many lessons, teachers are not making effective use of what they know about you in their planning, and marking is not always as helpful as it could be.
- Your curriculum is good because it offers appropriate courses and clubs which you say you enjoy.
- The sixth-form provision is satisfactory and those of you in the sixth form enjoy being part of the school.

We have asked the senior leaders of the school to raise achievement and to make sure your teachers make better use of the data they have on you, as well as telling you more clearly how to improve your work. We have asked them also to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure that all staff and governors are consistently effective. For your part, we ask all of you to work hard and have high expectations of what you can achieve.

Yours sincerely

John Daniell
Her Majesty's Inspector

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