

The Meadows Community School

High Street, Old Whittington, Chesterfield, S41 9LG

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students do not achieve well across a range of subjects. Progress in mathematics and science is slower than that in English. Students' attainment is below average.
- The pace of learning in lessons is often slow. In many lessons, teachers talk for too long and do not use questioning well to help students to learn or to check their understanding.
- Teachers sometimes set work that is too easy, especially for the most-able students.
- Marking is often not helpful to students in explaining what they must do to improve their work and move to the next level.
- Students' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. They sometimes lose interest and their progress slows considerably when the work does not engage or motivate them. Occasionally, a few students choose to do very little work.
- The governing body does not contribute enough to driving the school's improvement. Governors do not provide enough challenge to school leaders, especially in relation to students' achievement.
- The school's systems for checking and managing the quality of teaching are not bringing about rapid improvements. Some of the leaders in charge of subjects do not have the skills to carry out their roles effectively.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the last inspection, students' attainment has risen, particularly in English.
- The school works well to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including students with hearing impairment, in all lessons and activities.
- Care for students' social and emotional needs is good.
- Students have a good awareness of how to stay safe. Most treat each other with courtesy and respect.
- Leaders have developed good systems to track students' progress through the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 28 lessons taught by 28 teachers. Five of these observations were carried out jointly with members of the school’s leadership team. Inspectors also carried out a series of shorter visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff and groups of students. Telephone discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the views of a small number of parents who sent letters to the inspection team. Responses to questionnaires completed by 23 staff were also analysed and considered.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including national published assessment data and the school’s own data, the school’s self-evaluation, improvement plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding policies, behaviour policies and records and documents relating to setting targets for teachers to improve their work.

Inspection team

Julie Price Grimshaw, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jean Whalley	Additional Inspector
Andrew Lagden	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Meadows is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Almost all students are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding to support some students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The school runs specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. It has places for up to 10 students with hearing impairment. There are currently eight students in this provision, all of whom are fully integrated into mainstream lessons.
- The school works as part of a local learning community comprising of a groups of schools and colleges within the area. A few students attend sessions at other schools in this group. The Meadows School itself provides courses in horticulture and construction for its own students as well as some from other schools within the local learning community.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
 - ensuring that learning moves at a brisk pace in all lessons
 - planning activities that motivate and engage students so that they maintain their interest and good attitudes to learning
 - ensuring that lessons are not too dominated by the teacher and that questioning is used effectively to extend learning and check understanding
 - using high-quality marking and feedback to give regular, clear guidance to students on how to improve their work and move to the next level.
- Improve achievement, particularly in mathematics and science, by setting work at the right level of difficulty for each individual student and providing the most-able students with enough challenge.
- Accelerate improvements to the quality of teaching by:
 - checking teaching and students' work regularly and rigorously so that tailored training and support can be provided for individual staff
 - ensuring that all subject leaders have the skills needed to take an active and effective role in developing classroom practice within their specialist areas.
- Ensure that the governing body takes greater responsibility for driving improvement by challenging the school rigorously, particularly in relation to students' achievement. An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When students join the school in Year 7 their attainment is generally below average. Their progress varies across different subjects and in year groups. By the end of Year 11 their overall attainment remains below average.
- Since the last inspection the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen year on year. In spite of this it remains below average. Achievement in English has improved, but many students do not make as much progress as they should in mathematics. Achievement in science is weak.
- In some subjects, progress is not rapid enough because students are not set work at the right level of difficulty. In many lessons, all students are given the same task regardless of their different ability levels. The most-able pupils are often set work that is not demanding enough for them. In mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, very few students attain the highest grades at GCSE.
- In other subjects, such as history, geography, physical education and religious education, students make better progress and their attainment is closer to the national average.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is broadly similar to that of other groups. However, a minority of these students, including those with hearing impairment, make good progress and achieve well. The specialist support that they receive helps them to learn effectively and they often benefit from working alongside their peers in lessons, particularly where teaching is good.
- The school has used its additional funding through the pupil premium to provide adult support in literacy and numeracy for eligible students. It has also been used to fund revision groups, including some during school holidays, as well as visits to places of interest. In 2012, the attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals was similar to national figures for this group. The school is closing the gap between the attainment of these students and their peers within the school.
- The school is taking steps to encourage students to read for pleasure, for example through the purchase of electronic reading tablets, and students are beginning to respond well to these initiatives. There is an increasing focus on developing students' literacy skills but this is not consistent across different subjects.
- The small number of students who attend sessions within the local learning community benefit from the opportunity to follow courses that appeal to their interests. Their needs are met well through tailored support.
- The school has recently revised its policy on examination entry so that no students are entered early for GCSE examinations.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Many teachers expect too little from their students. This is often shown in their lesson planning, where they emphasise what pupils will do rather than what they will learn. As a result, the pace

of learning in these lessons is too slow and students do not make good enough progress.

- Students are sometimes given work that is repetitive and too simple for them. When students do not find tasks motivating or challenging they work slowly and often lose interest. For example, in a number of lessons observed during the inspection, students were asked to work in pairs to design posters. Often they would not share the work, with one of the pair sometimes choosing to do very little.
- Teachers sometimes talk too much, especially at the start of lessons, and miss opportunities to involve students and encourage them to contribute. When asking questions, many teachers rely on a small number of students who raise their hands to answer, rather than seeking to involve a wider group. Not enough teachers use questioning to extend students' learning or check their understanding.
- Where teaching was good, tasks and activities engaged and motivated students. There was a good balance of individual work and group work. Resources, such as video clips, were used well to explain and reinforce learning, and teachers asked probing questions to encourage students to developing their thinking skills. In such lessons, the pace of learning was brisk and students made good progress.
- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and some convey their enthusiasm for their subjects to their students, which helps to motivate them.
- The quality of marking varies considerably across the school. The best written feedback gives students a clear indication of the level that they are working at, together with detailed and helpful guidance on how to improve their work. However, too much marking consists of little more than ticks, with very little guidance. In such cases, students often neglected to correct errors and this slowed their progress.
- Teachers have a secure awareness of those students within their classes who have special educational needs, including students with hearing impairment. They often work well with support staff to make sure that these students are fully involved in lessons and are given support where needed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' attitudes to learning vary too much and depend largely on the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good, they are enthusiastic learners, keen to make good progress and achieve well. However, the students themselves say that their work is dull and repetitive, and they would like more lessons to be as interesting and lively as the best.
 - Occasionally students choose to do little work in lessons, or work very slowly, particularly when involved in some group activities. Although they are very rarely disruptive and do not usually prevent others from learning, they make slow progress in such lessons.
 - Students are generally polite and courteous to each other and to adults. They behave well at break times and lunchtimes and move around the building in a calm and orderly manner.
 - Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Adults give good quality support to students. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including students with hearing impairments, receive good support from staff and this helps them to be fully involved in school
-

life.

- Students have a good awareness of how to stay safe and are well aware of the issues associated with safety and the internet. They say that bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, is not an issue in the school and are confident that staff would deal with any such incidents quickly and effectively.
- Attendance is broadly average. The school has well-established systems for dealing with persistent absence.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the school's leaders and governing body have not yet secured the necessary improvements to raise achievement and the quality of teaching to good. Although there have been significant improvements in English and there is evidence that teaching in some subject areas is improving, too few students are making the progress expected of them.
 - Senior leaders and those in charge of subject areas carry out checks on the quality of teaching and students' work. However, this monitoring is not frequent or rigorous enough to bring about rapid improvements and some subject leaders lack the skills to carry out this aspect of their role. In a few cases, their own teaching is not strong enough to enable them to provide high-quality support to other teachers within their departments.
 - The school has well-organised systems for managing staff performance. All teachers have targets and meet with their appraisers to review progress against them. Targets are sometimes not specific enough to help teachers measure their progress, and although there are clear links to training activities, these are not always tailored to meet the needs of individual staff.
 - Senior leaders have recently developed improved systems for tracking students' progress. These emphasise the need for students to make at least the progress expected of them and have helped some teachers to focus on increasing the pace of learning. It is too early, however, to see the full impact of these systems. The new tracking systems are helping leaders to check on the progress made by those students receiving support through the pupil premium, and to check on the impact of particular activities provided for these students.
 - There are some strengths in the range of subjects and activities offered to students. The school is well-equipped to deliver subjects such as construction and horticulture to its own students as well as those from other schools within the local learning community. The Meadows students benefit from the wider range of courses this enables them to study. In the past, the range of examination courses offered by the school, particularly in science, has not supported students' achievement. The range of courses offered has recently been changed to give more students the opportunity to attain higher grades, although it is too early to judge the success of these measures.
 - Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is adequately promoted. Assemblies provide opportunities for students to reflect on a range of issues and some lessons, particularly in the arts, focus effectively on cultural education.
 - The local authority has provided support for the school since the last inspection, including coaching for individual staff, training aimed at developing the skills of leaders and advice on establishing systems for tracking students' progress. However, the impact on the school's overall
-

effectiveness has been limited.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is supportive of the school but does not provide enough challenge to school leaders. There is little evidence of governors asking probing questions related to students' achievement and they are largely dependent on information supplied by the headteacher. Their understanding is related mainly to attainment rather than progress, so although they are aware that attainment has been on a rising trend since the previous inspection they are much less familiar with data on students' progress from their starting points. Governors take a keen interest in matters relating to finance, including spending of the funding received through the pupil premium. The governing body is involved in discussions relating to managing the performance of staff, including pay awards to individuals. However, governors' understanding of the quality of teaching across the school is limited and there is not enough urgency in driving forward changes that will improve the overall effectiveness of the school.
-

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112958
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	401328

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	513
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Frost
Headteacher	Lynn Asquith
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2010
Telephone number	01246 450825
Fax number	01246 456014
Email address	info@meadows.derbyshire.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', 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.



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 and as part of the inspection.

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 2013

