

# Meldreth Manor School – A Scope School

Fenny Lane, Meldreth, Cambridgeshire, SG8 6LG

## Inspection dates

17–19 September 2013

### Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

**1**

Pupils' achievement

Outstanding

1

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

1

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

1

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

1

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

1

Leadership and management

Outstanding

1

## Summary of key findings

### This school is outstanding because

- Students make outstanding progress over time, from very low starting points, in cognitive, physical and communication skills.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding overall and never less than good, with an exemplary focus on promoting the achievement of individual students.
- The curriculum, supported by high quality facilities and resources, provides memorable personalised opportunities for each student to make progress in every lesson and experience.
- Students, as a result of exceptional attention to their physical and emotional needs, are always ready to learn and to take an active part in lessons, within the limitations of their disabilities.
- Attention to the welfare, health and safety of students is exemplary, supported by high quality policies, extensive staff training, and consistent monitoring of daily routines.
- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The acting Principal communicates an infectious vision of what can be achieved, and staff at all levels of responsibility demonstrate commitment and a desire to improve.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted with half-a-day's notice.
- Seven lessons were observed, including visits to two off-site locations, together with brief observations of students taking part in rebound therapy and hydrotherapy.
- Conversations took place with a number of teachers and support staff, and the parents of two students, together with formal meetings with the acting Principal and the Scope area manager.
- Evidence was considered from 14 responses to a staff questionnaire. There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View to enable publication of the results. Responses from parents to the school's own questionnaire were considered.
- A range of school documentation was scrutinised including policy and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning, school records and evidence of students' achievements.

## Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Meldreth Manor School is a co-educational day and residential school registered for up to 50 students aged between six and 19 years with profound and complex disabilities and learning needs.
- There are currently 16 students on roll in the age range seven to 19 years, all of whom have statements of special educational needs.
- The majority of students live in the children's home which is located on the same site.
- Students have a variety of conditions: many have cerebral palsy and associated conditions such as sensory impairment; others present with a range of syndromes. They all require high levels of personal support with their physical, medical and learning needs and, consequently, receive one-to-one adult support in all lessons.
- The head of education was appointed as acting Principal at the beginning of the autumn term 2013, following the retirement of the previous Principal.
- The school aims to 'promote the self-esteem and personal autonomy of children and young people who have physical disabilities and complex learning difficulties'.
- The school was last inspected in November 2010.
- The school has dual registration as a children's home, and an inspection of the care provision took place at the same time as the school inspection; this is the subject of a separate report.

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

- As the school reviews its current practice and management structures:
  - continue to develop the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all lessons reach the outstanding standard
  - ensure that all aspects of the management and leadership of the school maintain the current outstanding focus on individual students' learning and progress.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Outstanding

Students' achievement is outstanding as a result of the exemplary planning for individual learning and the high quality of its implementation within the classroom. The attainment of almost all students is within the lowest levels of the national 'P levels' attainment scale. Staff have an excellent understanding of how to apply these scales and to identify each small step of progress made by individual students. The school's approach to the assessment of students' progress places an exceptional focus on small gains in physical development, communication and learning by each student. Secure and carefully moderated assessment results over the last two years demonstrate that 78% of students have exceeded national expectations in their progress across these scales in English and communication, and 89% have met or exceeded similar standards in their understanding of number. In those cases where progress over time has been below expectations, the school demonstrates clear evidence of the impact of illness and medical conditions on students' ability to take part in consistent learning. In these cases the school is skilled at limiting the extent of impact. Looked-after children are making progress at a rate comparable to students across the school. Students' skills are maintained and consolidated as they develop into post-16 education in the school. There is some evidence that, for some students, the rate of progress slows when they reach post-16, which is not uncommon for students achieving at these levels.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Outstanding

The behaviour and personal development of students are outstanding because the school and students' residential settings work together very successfully to address any physical and emotional barriers to learning. Students are ready to learn and enjoy learning. Their attendance is good, restricted only by individual health conditions. The integrated, seamless work of therapists, care staff and learning support assistants contributes very positively to students' readiness to learn. Behaviour of individuals is extremely well managed even when occasionally challenging to the smooth running of classes. Intrusive behaviour is rare and largely a result of specific physical conditions at any particular time; staff attend readily to students' personal needs. All staff have an excellent awareness of behaviour triggers and the individual responses of specific students. As a result, a consistent approach is taken to ensuring the emotional development and stability of students in order to underpin effective learning.

Excellent attention is given to the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as these features are integrated into the daily learning environment and activities. The welcoming routines at the start of each lesson are used very effectively to develop students' awareness of each other and to enhance a sense of community within the classroom. The planned activities include many opportunities for students to take an active individual part, for example bowling at skittles and celebrating their scores, individual horse riding lessons, or shopping for ingredients to make a cheesecake. Students demonstrate their delight and enjoyment through a variety of facial expressions, physical movements and oral responses which are successfully interpreted by the adults working with them. They have regular opportunities to visit shops and facilities in the local area, ensuring that they experience the routines of regular activity in the wider community. Preparation for adult life is a key focus throughout students' learning, and transition arrangements have an increasingly high profile in plans and arrangements for post-16 students ready to move on from the school.

### Quality of teaching

### Outstanding

The quality of teaching is outstanding overall and never less than good. A major strength of the teaching is in the focus, in all lessons, on the individual learning targets of each student, derived

from their statements of special educational needs and individual education plans. The school's practice is exceptional in breaking down common learning themes into discrete activities which enable each student to work towards their own personal targets. All staff have a precise understanding of the teacher's intentions for how these may be achieved through the learning activities. While sharing a common activity, individual students may be assessed on diverse achievements such as choosing through the use of symbol cards, using their sense of touch to identify objects, or communicating appropriate answers through eye or head movements. High quality support by all the staff working with each student, including teachers, learning support assistants and therapists, ensures that appropriate strategies are used to interpret the lesson requirements for the individual. Excellent use is made of a variety of technological aids and the school places an appropriate emphasis on equipping students to respond and communicate, for example, through the use of touch-screen computers or touch switches according to their individual needs and abilities.

Staff maintain high expectations of what students can achieve from very low starting points and work tirelessly to reinforce the strategies required to ensure that students' achievements are recognised and recorded. All members of staff contribute to the assessment of students' progress against their agreed targets, resulting in a high quality of discussion and identification of significant achievements. This in turn results in a team approach to identifying the next challenge while not neglecting the need for reinforcement and consolidation of previous learning. The school's systems for assessment and recording of progress are outstanding and strong evidence is available to demonstrate the extent of progress made by individuals.

#### **Quality of curriculum**

#### **Outstanding**

The curriculum is outstanding because it is translated on a daily basis into activities and challenges pitched at the appropriate levels for the abilities of individual students. The structure of the curriculum is planned around the required areas of learning which are implemented in creative ways to ensure engagement. Students have highly memorable experiences and are stimulated through the activities provided. Planning for individual subjects is securely underpinned by good quality long- and medium-term plans which provide coherence to the daily work of the school. The integration of cognitive, physical and emotional dimensions is well planned for, and enhanced by the variety of adults working alongside the students. Staff are aware of how each new step in learning may be built on earlier achievements, even with students who make slow and limited progress with their learning.

Students' learning is consistently deepened by the imaginative use of a variety of resources. Students benefit greatly from the variety of environments in which their lessons are conducted. These include rich experiences of sound, colour and touch in the sensory room or through visits to the local garden centre; outdoor challenges in the riding school; and physical exercises in the hydrotherapy pool or in rebound therapy. An extensive 'learning curve' has been constructed in the grounds of the school which enables students to experience movement up and down slopes or across uneven surfaces, to work at height above the ground, or to move from open to closed environments, stimulated by a variety of sensory activities throughout. In all areas of learning, staff retain the same effective emphasis on the development of students' awareness and ability to communicate. Regular trips out of school are well organised and purposeful, enabling students to experience unfamiliar environments while undertaking tasks which encourage them to make small steps in their learning.

#### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

#### **Outstanding**

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students' are outstanding. The school gives excellent attention to the welfare and safety of all students in risk assessments and classroom

practice. The one-to-one supervision of students is outstanding. Arrangements for safeguarding and training of staff in child protection and first aid are exemplary. The designated person for child protection receives updated training at the required level and appropriate intervals, as do all members of staff. All the required checks on the suitability of staff are completed systematically and the details recorded on a comprehensive, up-to-date single central register. Robust policies and procedures for all aspects of students' welfare, including the management of behaviour and prevention of bullying, have been developed and are implemented consistently. The behaviour of students is well managed and ensures that risks to themselves and to others are managed appropriately.

Site and premises safety and security, integrating the school and home, are exemplary. Premises and fire risk assessments are routinely reviewed and all required aspects of fire and electrical safety are regularly checked and recorded. Extensive movement within the school and off-site is well planned for and systematic. Accessibility throughout the site is very good and the needs of individual students are carefully assessed and addressed. Parents and carers have confidence in the staff and the ability of the school to ensure the safety and well-being of their children. Excellent attention is given to the health and medical well-being of students and the integration of services is very effective in this regard. Admission and attendance registers are maintained to the required standard.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Outstanding**

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding and the school meets all the regulatory requirements for continued registration. A vision of excellence is communicated through all aspects of the leadership of the school. The headteacher understands what can be achieved and works tirelessly with the full staff team to ensure a consistent and inclusive approach to the development and implementation of good practice. This results in consistently high expectations of what students can achieve and a team approach to successful practice. There is a relentless focus on the physical well-being of students, the development of their cognitive skills and ability to communicate successfully. All members of staff demonstrate respect for their students and highly professional standards in the implementation of their responsibilities. The premises and accommodation are maintained to a high standard and have been developed imaginatively to accommodate a variety of stimulating and challenging environments for students.

The extensive paperwork which underpins school policy and practice is meaningful and appropriate. Parents and carers are provided with appropriate information about the school, its services and essential contact details. Staff and parents both report positively about the quality of communication and the openness of leadership within the school. The complaints procedures meet statutory requirements and there have been no recent formal complaints. Arrangements for the management of staff performance are thorough and clearly bring about improvements. The proprietor's oversight and support for the school provides a context in which the skills of staff are recognised and developed through effective training and professional development. Planning for future developments is well focused and derived from effective strategies for school self-evaluation. The senior leadership of the school demonstrates excellent capacity to maintain these excellent high standards.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110920
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC393048
<b>Inspection number</b>	422702
<b>DfE registration number</b>	873/6008

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	6 to 19 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	16
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	SCOPE
<b>Chair</b>	Not applicable
<b>Headteacher (Acting)</b>	Petrina Lodge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17–18 November 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£58,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01763 268000
<b>Fax number</b>	01763 268099
<b>Email address</b>	Meldreth.manor@scope.org.uk



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