

# Melrose School

Church Road, Mitcham, CR4 3BE

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school because:

- Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Standards have consistently risen since the previous inspection.
- The students achieve well. They make good progress through the school, often from low starting points, and almost every student gains qualifications at GCSE and in more work-related subjects.
- Students make good progress in English and mathematics and this prepares them well for further study or training.
- Students with additional funding make outstanding progress because of the individual support they receive.
- The students behave well. Their behaviour significantly improves when they join the school. This is because students enjoy school, which they see as a safe and secure place and where they do interesting and worthwhile activities. As a result, their attendance improves substantially. The school's procedures to keep students safe and secure are outstanding
- The subjects which students learn are well planned to match their abilities and interests. The school makes a great effort to 'tailor' activities for individual students to motivate and encourage them to reach their full potential.
- The school is well led and managed. The senior team maintains a clear overview of students' achievement to ensure they all make the best progress that they can. The school's leaders rigorously check and strive to improve teaching standards.
- The governing body has substantially improved its capacity to check on standards and to challenge the school to make consistent improvements. Governors play an important part in driving the school's development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable a higher rate of progress.
- There are occasional inconsistencies in assessment which mean teachers are not able to plan sharply for the next step in learning or to adapt work precisely enough for each individual pupil. This can slow down the pace of progress.
- Feedback to pupils, either orally or in the marking of completed work, does not always show them clearly how well they are doing or how to improve further.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons and other parts of lessons, all of which were observed jointly with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with middle and senior managers, the Chair of Governors and another governor, and a local authority representative. Informal discussions were held with several pupils in the course of the inspection.
- The inspector took into account the records of parents' views collected by the school. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be counted. The inspector looked also at 20 returned staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and forward planning. Records of pupils' progress, behaviour and well-being were looked at as well as monitoring reports on teaching, the performance management of staff, and the curriculum. Attendance records were checked as well as the procedures relating to the safeguarding of the pupils.

### Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband

Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Almost all students have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A very small number are in the process of assessment of their special educational needs.
- A minority of the students have additional learning difficulties related to communication disorders.
- Many students join the school at other than normal times.
- Currently there is one girl on the school's roll who has a placement in alternative provision used by the school.
- About half the students are White British in origin. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the make-up of the borough. There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- A significantly above-average proportion of students are entitled to additional government funding, the pupil premium. This is funding for students who are entitled to free school meals or who are looked after.
- A minority of older students aged 14 to 16 attend on a full-time or part-time basis at a range of alternative educational placements, including Carshalton College, which are commissioned by the school.
- The executive headteacher is headteacher of Melbury College, which is comprised of a separate pupil referral unit, the borough's Medical group, the Alternative Education service and Melrose School. There is an additional head of school at Melrose School.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - making sure teachers are consistent in the way they assess each pupil's small steps in learning so that they can plan future work with greater precision
  - giving clear verbal and written feedback to pupils so that they understand how well they are doing and how to make their work even better.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The experience and enthusiasm of the executive headteacher have enabled him to lead consistent improvements in the students' achievement and standards of teaching. He has been well supported by the head of school. Middle leaders in charge of subjects are effective in checking on the progress of students and make a good contribution to the drive to improve teaching standards further.
- Teachers and other staff respond well to the high expectations which leaders have of their performance and that of the students they teach. Morale is good in the school.
- The senior team has ensured that teaching standards have continued to rise through rigorous regular checking. The performance of teachers and other staff is well managed. There are clear procedures to support teachers' improvement, to reward good performance and to combat any underachievement. Teachers are encouraged to maintain improvements through many opportunities for further training and the development of their skills.
- The school's senior and middle leaders effectively check on the students' progress. Swift intervention through increased support is provided for any student who is falling behind. All students are expected to achieve well. As a result, most students, including those with additional learning difficulties and those from minority ethnic groups, make good progress. Leaders carefully check the progress of students in the school who receive additional funding. They ensure they make the best progress that they can and use the funding effectively to support them. There is no discrimination in the school and all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Leaders rigorously monitor the progress of students on alternative placements. They ensure that the students make good progress and effectively develop their academic and personal skills.
- The school evaluates its own effectiveness well and this shapes future planning for improvement. Leaders have identified, for instance, occasional inconsistencies in the assessment of students' achievement and in how teachers give students guidance on improving their work. Governors and the local authority challenge and support the school effectively to maintain consistent progress.
- The school's curriculum is very effective. Well-thought-out policies ensure that students make good progress in reading, writing and in numeracy. This prepares them well for later examination success and for further study or training. Older students are well motivated by a wide range of choices in academic subjects, leading to GCSE and more work-related study. The school makes every effort to adapt courses to students' interests and plans for the future. The school commissions placements with a number of outside providers such as local colleges and training organisations who bring specific expertise in vocational preparation. There are excellent partnerships with these organisations. As a result, students achieve well in these courses.
- The students have many opportunities to extend their social and cultural skills through well-organised sporting activities and adventures such as 'bushcraft'. These activities teach the students new skills in the wider community. They build on the students' social and behavioural skills well and teach them how to keep safe in different environments. The curriculum contributes well to students' academic and sporting achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It prepares the students well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet current statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have become significantly more effective since the previous inspection. They are well informed about the students' progress and how it compares with that in similar schools nationally. The governing body critically examines all aspects of students' achievement and teaching standards and provides positive challenge to the school's leadership. Governors manage finances appropriately; they have a clear monitoring role in performance management and are very well informed about additional funding and its impact on students' progress. They make sure that pay progression is linked to successful teaching. Members undergo regular training in, for instance, finance and child protection. They are up to date in regulations regarding the appointment of staff and ensure they monitor health and safety and the safeguarding of children.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

## Behaviour

- The students' behaviour is good. They make significant improvements in their behaviour and attitudes to learning as they progress through the school, after having, very often, a history of extremely challenging behaviour in previous schools. This underpins their good progress.
- Most students quickly settle at the school. They value the high levels of attention and support they receive and respond well to classroom activities which are challenging but adapted well to their ability and interests. This has a significant impact on their progress. On occasion, students become less willing to behave. This is most often because the work they are given is not matched effectively to their ability or they do not know how to proceed with it.
- Students behave well outside the classroom. They conduct themselves sensibly and politely in the dining room and playground; they are friendly and supportive to one another and there is rarely any serious disruption. There is a positive ethos to the school. For instance, the many striking displays of work are left undamaged in the corridors and students move round the school calmly and quietly.
- The school manages behaviour effectively. There are very clear records of each student's conduct which are used well to support students. Staff hold daily meetings to discuss each student's performance through the day. Students are very aware of the school's reward and sanctions procedures and appreciate the consistency with which these are applied. Exclusions, though still relatively high, have significantly declined since the previous inspection.
- A few students remain resistant to the school's procedures and account for almost all the exclusions and incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- The school makes good use of the alternative provision which it commissions to individually adapt subjects and learning for the benefit of the few students who do not settle. Because of careful planning with the students and their parents, almost all students gain interest in their studies and become successful in gaining appropriate qualifications.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. Students are invariably well supervised at all times, especially when out of school taking part in social or sporting activities. Procedures to manage the safety of students who are subject to child protection procedures or who are looked after are exemplary.
- Through highly effective counselling and regular opportunities to take part in supervised activities in the community, the students develop an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Students also benefit from learning about keeping safe, in sex and relationships education and drugs awareness.
- Students have a very secure understanding of different forms of bullying and how to prevent it. There are few instances of bullying, including prejudice-based discrimination. Students are confident that adults deal with these effectively. The school's records show few incidents since the previous inspection. Parents and students feel confident that students are safe at school.
- Most students attend regularly and this is a substantial improvement on their previous school history. The school makes determined and successful efforts to reduce absence.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good in most subjects and is occasionally outstanding. There has been a consistent improvement in standards over time and since the previous inspection. As a result, all groups of students achieve well, including those in alternative provision, students who receive extra funding, those with additional special needs and those from minority ethnic groups.
- Improvements in teaching are a result of regular and rigorous checks by senior staff. There are high expectations of each teacher's performance. This is accompanied by good opportunities for further training, for coaching and for extra support where necessary.
- Teachers in turn have high expectations of their students' progress. They plan challenging activities which motivate the students and which promote their good progress. For instance, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, the students were given increasingly complex problems to solve. The teacher clearly explained the process and adapted the work effectively through searching questions to confirm the students' understanding. As a result, students made exceptional progress in this lesson. On occasion, however, teachers do not match activities closely enough to students' interests or abilities and this can slow down

learning.

- Teachers in most lessons actively encourage and plan for students to increase their literacy skills. Lessons involve reading and writing in a variety of contexts to extend and develop the students' skills.
- Teachers generally manage their classrooms well. Support staff are well trained and skilful in supporting students who are finding difficulty. The students value the high levels of individual tuition they receive. They apply themselves well because of the adult support, and this promotes their good progress. Adults use questions well to check the students' understanding. This is particularly effective with students who may have communication difficulties. Teachers in most cases, and where necessary, quickly adapt their explanations or the students' tasks to improve learning.
- Teachers check regularly to ensure the students are making appropriate progress against their challenging targets. On occasion, however, they do not check carefully enough on the small steps in learning which the students make. This results in their planning for each individual student sometimes not having enough sharp focus to ensure the next small step is quickly achievable, and can slow down progress.
- On occasion also, teachers do not give clear enough feedback to students on their progress, either in the way they mark the students' work or in verbal discussion with the students. Because of this, students are sometimes confused about how much progress they have made and how to improve their work.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students generally make good progress. The rate of progress across the school has increased consistently since the previous inspection. The majority of students make progress at or occasionally above levels expected nationally in mainstream schools. They make good progress in reading, writing and in mathematics and this prepares the way for their achievements in nationally accredited examinations.
- Students often enter the school at varying times during the year and with lower-than-average levels of attainment. Despite these low starting points, almost all students gain at least one GCSE pass, and over two thirds gain five passes, albeit generally at lower levels.
- The most able students achieve highly, gaining up to five GCSE grades at A\* to C.
- All the students, either at school or with external providers, gain vocational subject accreditation at BTEC or City and Guilds, in subjects such as motor vehicle technology and building trades. These qualifications are linked very well to future college courses as a result of effective liaison between the school and colleges. They prepare students well for future education or training. There have been no students since the previous inspection who did not go into further education, employment or training. School leaders closely monitor the achievement of students at external providers to ensure they are making the progress of which they are capable.
- Students with additional difficulties, especially in communication, make comparable progress to other students as a result of specific attention by teachers to their language needs such as in re-phrasing questions or allowing the students time to order their thoughts. Students and teachers receive well-directed support from speech and language therapists. Students from minority ethnic groups make equally good progress.
- Students who receive additional funding have made outstanding progress. Over time the gap has narrowed with other students until currently, on average, students in Year 11 who receive additional funding perform as well as or better than the other students and are approaching the attainment of other students nationally.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	102697
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	439452

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	40
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	James Holmes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Childs (executive headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8646 2620
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