

# Meadowhead School Academy Trust

Dyche Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S8 8BR

**Inspection dates** 7–8 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	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
Sixth form provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Standards continue to rise and students make good progress. Achievement in English and mathematics is good and a strong feature of the school.
- Teaching is good overall. Leaders and governors have worked with teachers to ensure that the majority of students receive good or outstanding teaching over time.
- Students demonstrate good behaviour in and around the school.
- Students enjoy coming to school. They feel very safe in an exceptionally caring and supportive environment. Staff take full account of potential risks and take extremely effective steps to keep all students safe and cared for.
- The structure of the curriculum is strongly matched to the needs of students and so benefits their achievement and personal development. Students have excellent experiences at school and are very well prepared for their next phase in education, training or employment.
- Students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and supports them to take their place in modern Britain.
- Leadership at all levels is highly ambitious for all students, and leaders are successfully committed to the school’s clear vision and continued improvement.
- The new sixth form is effectively led and students receive good teaching, advice and guidance which support their good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are still some remaining gaps in the achievement of different groups of students.
- Teaching is not yet consistently outstanding to ensure that all students make sustained and rapid progress.
- Not all teachers use the information they have about students to plan and teach lessons that ensure students make rapid and sustained progress.
- Leaders do not check the impact of their improvement plans with sufficient consistency and rigour to measure the impact of their leadership on improving teaching and achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 part-lessons during the inspection. Two of these were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to students in lessons and around the school at break and during lunchtimes. They also spoke formally to five groups of students about their experiences at the school and their opinions of the school and the education they receive.
- The inspection team observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation, its plans for the future and relevant policies and information about the school’s performance.
- Inspectors reviewed students’ work in their books both for this year and for the last academic year. They also reviewed the school’s information about students’ achievement and attainment.
- The inspectors looked at behaviour logs and the school’s safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took account of 85 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 29 responses to the staff inspection survey.

## Inspection team

Edwin de Middelaer, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Judith Gooding	Additional Inspector
Susan Hayter	Additional Inspector
Ramesh Kapadia	Additional Inspector
Neil MacKenzie	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Meadowhead School Academy Trust is a much larger than average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- Most students are of White British heritage with few students who do not speak English as their first language.
- Meadowhead School Academy Trust converted to become an academy on 1 August 2012. When its predecessor school, Meadowhead School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The school is also part of the Meadowhead Community Learning Trust (formed in 2009) with local primary schools, the local further education college, two universities and local business partners.
- The proportion of disabled students or students who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is below average. The proportion who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is slightly below average. Pupil premium is additional funding to provide support for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- There are 27 pre-16 students who receive one day of their education each week off-site with approved training providers. The providers are: Construction Design Centre, Educating through Angling, Heeley City Farm, Sheaf Training, Re-cycling, Sheffield School of Beauty and Sheffield Media Productions.
- The school opened a sixth form in September 2013, following a shared partnership arrangement with a local further education college prior to that date. The school still works closely in partnership with the college, sharing expertise in a range of courses.
- The school had a policy of early entry for its students who sat examinations in 2014. This policy was communicated to parents at the beginning of the academic year 2013/14 and school leaders decided to continue with it. As a result, Year 11 students sat GCSE English Language in November 2013 as well as in summer 2014. About half of students sat GCSE mathematics in November 2013 as well as in summer 2014. The school does not now have an early entry policy.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is outstanding by:
  - ensuring all teachers use the information they have about students and their previous learning to plan and teach lessons so that students make outstanding progress in all subjects
  - continuing to drive for even more consistency in the implementation of key school policies to improve further teaching and learning across the school.
- Improve further the impact of good leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that any gaps in achievement among students across subjects close completely so that achievement is outstanding
  - developing the skills of leaders to check the implementation of their improvement strategies more rigorously against measurable outcomes so that they can show clearly the impact of leadership on teaching and progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and governors, led by the headteacher, have established a culture of integrity, ambition and high expectations. They have a clear vision for the school. Staff and students have taken to this and created a very positive ethos and learning environment. Good learning takes place and students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. As a result, there have been improvements in behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching over time.
- Middle leaders are well informed and have high aspirations for the school. They are clear about their role and responsibilities, and understand fully what they are expected to do to improve the school further. This, combined with the drive of senior leaders, means the school has good capacity for further improvement.
- The leadership of teaching is good. A robust system manages teachers' performance, linked to rigorous performance management processes. Salary progression is closely linked with good teaching and good student progress. Objectives for teachers to improve their work are linked to the school's priorities for development, and leaders also recognise that some teachers may need support and guidance in particular aspects of their performance.
- A wide range of professional development is organised to improve teaching. It also supports the drive for further consistency in implementing key aspects of teaching across the school. As a result, improvement in classroom practice is evident. Staff appreciate the support they receive for their professional development. Leaders do not check the impact of their leadership rigorously enough against measureable outcomes to accelerate the rate of improvement in teaching and so assist their ambition to be outstanding.
- The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of groups of students and has clear pathways for progression to improve students' achievement and develop their interests. It provides excellent opportunities for academic and technical education. There are many additional opportunities for students to develop further their interests and personal skills. The curriculum enables students to explore the values of tolerance, democracy and other elements which prepare them well for life in modern Britain. As such, students have a very good and varied range of experiences while at school and are well prepared for their next phase of education, training or employment.
- Careers' advice and guidance are comprehensive and effective in supporting the progression of students aged either 16 or 18. Students appreciate this advice and support which helps them to make appropriate choices.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength, strongly promoted through the ethics curriculum and the range of subjects. It plays a key role within the ethos of the school and promotes tolerance and understanding among students. It is a strong feature of how effectively the school promotes equal opportunities for its students, ensures good relationships and tackles any discrimination.
- The school seeks the views of parents and students, and takes appropriate action to work with parents to support students' education. Leaders do not yet seek a wide enough range of views from parents and students to influence the school's plans for continuous improvement.
- There is good use of pupil premium funding. Leaders use it to increase support for disadvantaged students who have difficulty in reading, or with other aspects of literacy and numeracy. There is also an effective support team for students who are most in need or disadvantaged. This has increased the attendance of these students significantly in the last year and supported their improved achievement.
- School leaders check rigorously the attendance and progress of students at off-site provision through good communication and relationships established with providers. Students make good progress and attend regularly.
- There is good use of external support from consultants as well as the support from the local authority. Leaders also make good use of partners in the Meadowhead Community Learning Trust to support improvement and also to increase the provision and guidance available for students at key times in their education.
- Leaders have established rigorous and highly effective safeguarding procedures to prevent risk or harm to students. These meet government requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well organised and led. They receive good induction and training and are clear about their roles. They helped to create the school's vision and work alongside school leaders to contribute to, and monitor, the school's improvement. Governors are very aware of the school's strengths and areas for development, and hold leaders to account well. They ask pertinent questions, challenge leaders and support them very well. They have an in-depth understanding of the school's performance, students'

achievement and make good use of assessment data. They have a good understanding about the quality of teaching and are working towards further improvement with leaders. Governors are active in the performance management of teachers and rewarding those who perform well. They have been effectively involved in tackling any underperformance among teachers.

- Governors manage the school resources highly effectively and have excellent processes and controls to ensure good financial planning, probity and stability. This leads to highly effective deployment and use of resources.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students have good attitudes to learning, are polite and behave well in and around the school and these have a good impact on learning. School leaders are aware that these attitudes to learning can improve even further, in order to contribute to the school becoming outstanding, by students taking more responsibility for their learning.
- Students have good relationships with staff and feel well supported and cared for. Staff have high expectations of students' behaviour as shown by the specialist support team (MIST) who provides excellent support and care for students and so helps their learning. Students arrive with the appropriate equipment for lessons.
- Students with special educational needs and disadvantaged students also benefit greatly from the school's specialist support team. The school provides a very high standard of independent advice and guidance for students to prepare them for learning and the next phase of their education.
- Students, parents and staff are clear that behaviour in school has improved markedly over recent years. They have very positive views about behaviour in the school and about how well school staff tackle any incidents of poor behaviour. The management of students' behaviour is effective. There is little bullying or discrimination and, on the rare occasion one of these occurs, it is tackled swiftly and effectively. Low-level disruption is rare and any incidents are managed well by staff and consistently follow the behaviour systems in place. Students respond quickly to staff instructions in lessons and around the school.
- Students who attend off-site provision behave and respond well during their time there and so they develop their skills well.
- Students have many opportunities to take on responsibilities and develop leadership. This can be through volunteering for paired reading with younger students, taking up enrichment opportunities or through being a mentor, for example.
- Attendance is above average. There is a highly effective support team to work with students and families which has resulted in further improvements in attendance over the last year. In particular, the attendance of disadvantaged students has increased significantly as a result.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Systems and staff structures ensure all aspects of safety are taken extremely seriously. The school has a secure site and there is a very strong emphasis on safeguarding. All staff and others who work with students are fully trained in safeguarding issues and identifying any students who may be at risk. The school engages with partners to respond appropriately to any risk and takes positive steps in educating students about the potential for harm.
- Students understand what risks are and how to keep themselves safe. School staff also promote this with parents to help them be aware of risks and help prevent any harm.
- In the off-site provision, leaders work with providers to ensure there are excellent procedures in place to keep students safe.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good or outstanding for the majority of students over time. Teachers mostly have high expectations of students who then show a willingness to learn and do well, and so make good progress and achieve well over time.

- Teachers have responded well to the leadership's drive to improve the quality of teaching. Where achievement improves quickly, teachers use all the available information about students to plan and teach lessons that match the needs of all students.
- Questions are carefully targeted, understanding regularly checked and work is adjusted quickly to consolidate learning. Students know exactly what they have to do to improve and then act upon this information. This was evident in science in Year 10, for example, where the teacher's planning and skilful questioning ensured that students knew exactly what was expected of them. Students supported each other's learning by assessing each other's work and this deepened their understanding and resulted in their rapid progress.
- Leaders are aware that to improve further the quality of teaching, they still need to strive for greater consistency in the implementation of key policies. For example, ensuring students follow up regularly on advice from feedback given to them and use this as an opportunity to improve learning, and the development of core skills in teaching such as information and communication technology across the curriculum. In addition, not all teachers use the good information they have about students to plan and teach lessons that match the needs of students so that they make outstanding progress.
- Good teaching of literacy is evident over time in students' work and in their developing skills. Students are able to develop their oracy and reading during lessons. Students have opportunities to read widely and often in class and through paired reading or structured support, where appropriate. Students' numeracy skills also develop well because of the effective teaching of mathematics. For example, there were good examples of students having opportunities to read out loud in lessons, develop technical language and focus on their extended writing.
- Homework is set regularly and is of good quality. It consolidates and extends learning so helping students to achieve well.
- Teaching assistants have a positive impact on learning in lessons. They support students well in gaining knowledge and applying that in lessons, and also help create a positive learning environment to enable students to flourish.

### **The achievement of pupils is good**

- Students' attainment on entry to the school is in line with the national average and students make good progress over time. Attainment at GCSE, in almost all subjects, has been consistently and significantly above average during 2011/12 and 2012/13, and the school's analysis of the 2014 results indicates that this has continued. The work of current students shows that attainment is above average across a wide range of subjects and that students are also continuing to make good progress.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is particularly strong. From their different starting points, students' rates of progress are very good over time. Progress has been improving over the past three years in a wide range of other subjects, in particular in science, textiles, drama and ethics because of good teaching and provision.
- Students achieve well in English, mathematics and other subjects during Years 7, 8 and 9 and so develop good knowledge and understanding of key topics. This prepares them well for their next phase of education.
- The school had an early examination entry policy for 2014 which it communicated to parents. Most students had been prepared to sit examinations in November 2013. School leaders understood the detrimental effect this would have on the headline attainment figures. Even so, they carried on with this policy. Students who did not achieve well were able to resit examinations in English and mathematics so ensuring that well-established, high attainment was maintained. The school no longer has an early entry policy.
- Early entry did not limit the potential of the most able students who made outstanding progress in English and mathematics; they made better progress than most able students nationally. This is because of the highly effective teaching they receive. In other subjects, they make good progress. In these, teachers do not use all the information they have about students to accelerate their progress more rapidly.
- There is a wide gap in attainment between disadvantaged students and others on entry to the school and in Years 7 to 9. This then narrows in Years 10 and 11. In English and also in mathematics at GCSE, disadvantaged students attained one grade lower than other students nationally and also in the school in 2013. In 2014, the gap narrowed to approximately a third of a grade in both English and in mathematics for disadvantaged students in the school when compared with other students nationally, as well as compared with other students in the school.



- From their different starting points, in 2013 approximately half of disadvantaged students in the school made the progress expected of them in English and mathematics compared to three quarters of other students nationally and four fifths of other students in the school. This represented a narrowing of the gap in 2013. In 2014, around two thirds of disadvantaged students made the progress expected of them in English and mathematics, compared to four fifths of other students in the school, which again shows further improvement. The attainment and progress of disadvantaged students is improving in relation to other students nationally and to other students in the school in both English and mathematics. Leaders understand that, to be outstanding, they must close this gap completely.
- Over time, disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress. The curriculum is well matched to their needs and they receive good support which has a strong positive impact on their attainment and progress.
- Students who speak English as an additional language achieve well over time and make similar rates of progress to other students because of the good support they receive.
- Year 7 catch-up funding, which is directed at those students who are behind in their reading and literacy, is used well. This is helping these students through improving their skills in reading, oracy, writing and number.
- The few students who attend the off-site provision make good progress. This is because of good communication with providers which enables students to learn and apply their new knowledge and skills well in practical situations.

### The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form already makes a strong contribution to provision and to the school's ethos. Strong teaching means that students achieve well.
- Leadership is a strong feature of the sixth form. Leaders are highly ambitious for the sixth form provision and for securing the best life chances for students. Independent advice and guidance are comprehensive for students entering the sixth form so they feel well supported in their choices for higher education or other destinations.
- Leaders hold teachers to account well and have high aspirations and ambition for the provision. Teaching is good overall. It is characterised by: high expectations of students; good use of students supporting the learning of others; good questioning to deepen understanding and well-planned lessons which have activities well matched to students' abilities so that they make good progress. Students do not currently have enough support in file management and note making to enhance their learning and progress.
- Students follow programmes of study that are matched carefully to their needs, building on previous learning and providing clear progression. Leaders constantly review the provision to ensure that it prepares students well for education after sixth form.
- Students take part in a wide range of enrichment opportunities or work experience related to their studies. The sixth form provides good care and support for students in terms of their personal development, health and well-being. Students are very appreciative of this and are proud to be in the sixth form.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is very good and students bring positive attitudes to their lessons, which improve their learning. They are keen to do well and support each other's learning through good collaboration in lessons. They appreciate the very good support and advice that they are given. As with all students at the school, they are aware of actual and potential risks and how to keep themselves safe in these situations.
- Students who do not already have a grade C at GCSE in English and/or mathematics are supported to achieve these in the sixth form. Every student who pursued such a qualification achieved this grade in 2014.
- Retention rates are in line with national rates, which is positive given the fact that the sixth form is just becoming established.

## 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>	138545
<b>Local authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	447785

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,826
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	188
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maureen Neill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Fowler
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 237 2723
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