

Meridian High School

Fairchildes Avenue, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 0AH

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders have an overly positive view of the quality of education in the school. They do not have high enough expectations of pupils or staff.
- Governors do not have sufficiently precise information they need to hold leaders to account effectively.
- The quality of teaching is not yet good because teachers do not consider pupils' different abilities when they plan. Pupils are not sufficiently challenged in lessons and this hampers their progress, particularly that of the most able pupils.
- In 2018, in almost all subjects, pupils at the end of Year 11 did not attain as well as other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Pupils currently in the school continue to make less progress than other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as they should, despite the additional funding the school receives for this group.
- Behaviour is not yet good. In some lessons, low-level disruption interrupts learning. There is inconsistency in teachers' use of the school's behaviour policy.
- Attendance is below average. The proportion of pupils persistently absent from school is very high.

The school has the following strengths

- An interim executive board (IEB) was established in September 2018. This has strengthened governance.
- The teaching of English is good. Teachers consider pupils' abilities when they plan, and provide helpful feedback. Pupils make stronger progress in English than they do in other subjects.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are provided with a wide range of high-quality and effective support.
- Leaders use the additional funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively.
- The advice and guidance that pupils receive mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring high expectations of all staff and pupils
 - ensuring that all staff follow and apply whole-school policies consistently
 - sharpening the analysis of the impact of whole-school strategies
 - taking urgent steps to improve outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is used effectively to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are challenged appropriately in lessons.
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attendance by:
 - reducing low-level disruption in lessons
 - reducing persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' expectations of pupils and what they are capable of are too low. Leaders do not ensure that teachers' planning gives due consideration to pupils' abilities. Consequently, there is insufficient challenge in lessons, particularly for the most able, and this is affecting their progress.
- Leaders do not have high enough expectations of staff and they do not check that staff are using school policies appropriately. The school's assessment and feedback policies are used inconsistently and their impact is not monitored effectively.
- Although leaders check the quality of teaching in the school, their evaluation is overly generous. Leaders have invested in teachers' continuing professional development, and there is some evidence that this is having an impact. However, significant weaknesses remain. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school requires improvement.
- Pupils' outcomes in 2018 were weak across almost all subjects. They were particularly weak for disadvantaged pupils and the most able. Although the picture is improving in some subjects, it is not improving rapidly enough for outcomes to be good.
- Leaders do not ensure that the pupil premium funding is used effectively. Although leaders have plans in place to improve outcomes, these are not working quickly enough. Disadvantaged pupils continue to make weaker progress than other pupils nationally.
- Leaders have overseen some improvement in behaviour recently but there is still too much low-level disruption for behaviour to be good. Moreover, not all pupils take pride in their work and too many are persistently absent from school.
- Pupils study a wide range of subjects in key stage 3. The pupils who spoke to inspectors, and parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's parent questionnaire Parent View, expressed disappointment that there is no provision for computing or information and communication technology in key stage 4.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well planned across the curriculum. Pupils are offered a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include sports clubs that promote healthy lifestyles, and visits to places of interest, including the Natural History Museum. Pupils who visited the Houses of Parliament enhanced their understanding of democracy and how government works. Pupils who had worked with the Anne Frank Trust said that this experience had given them the knowledge, skills and confidence to challenge prejudice and discrimination. These opportunities serve to deepen pupils' appreciation of life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding to improve pupils' literacy with the aid of a reading programme which is being used across the school. However, leaders have not analysed fully the impact this is having on pupils' literacy.
- Leaders use the additional funding for pupils with SEND effectively. Since September 2018, leaders have developed and improved provision. Pupils with SEND, including those within the additional resource base, the Spectrum Centre, are now making

stronger progress.

- Since September 2018, there have been significant changes to staffing. These include the recruitment of several senior and middle leaders, who are beginning to have a positive impact on the work of the school. Additionally, new systems have been introduced to improve the quality of education, although their impact has not been measured fully by leaders or reported to governors with sufficient precision.

Governance of the school

- Significant changes have been made to the governance of the school since the beginning of this academic year. An IEB was established in September 2018 and, more recently, a new chair of governors was appointed. While there are indications that these changes have strengthened the school's governance, they have not yet had a tangible impact on the quality of education or pupils' outcomes.
- Governors have not been provided with a full and accurate evaluation of the school's work. This has prevented governors from holding leaders to account effectively because they are not able to challenge school leaders, including the headteacher, with sufficient rigour.
- Governors check how leaders are using the additional funding they receive, including the pupil premium. They are aware that outcomes for this group of pupils are well below those of their peers nationally. During the previous academic year, governors were similarly concerned about how well the additional funding for pupils with SEND was being used. They responded positively by increasing levels of accountability and strengthening provision. As a result, outcomes for this group of pupils are now improving.
- Governors are effective in leading and promoting a culture of safeguarding in the school. There is a safeguarding lead governor in place and governors have completed safer recruitment training.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders understand fully their duty to keep pupils safe and are thorough in this area of work. They ensure that all staff appointed to work at the school are suitable to work with children. All staff receive appropriate training and this is refreshed regularly.
- Staff are alert and know the warning signs that may suggest that a child is at risk of harm. They refer concerns appropriately and with speed.
- Leaders work well with other agencies, showing a deep concern for pupils' well-being. They are tenacious in their work to ensure that appropriate support is in place for all pupils who need it.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the local risks that could affect pupils. They make good use of opportunities in assemblies and during half-termly 'REACH' days to address relevant issues, such as mental health and online safety.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Those who spoke to inspectors said that they know who to

go to if they have a concern. Moreover, they are confident that they will be supported and well looked after by staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Teachers do not make good use of assessment information when they plan their teaching. They underestimate what pupils are capable of achieving, so work is often too easy. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, who are not suitably challenged and so make weak progress.
- Teachers' questioning often lacks challenge, so pupils are not required to think deeply. This limits how much they know and understand.
- In some subjects, in particular geography and history, there is very little work in pupils' books. Frequently, work is either missing or incomplete. This is partly because a significant minority of pupils are persistently absent from school. Moreover, there are inconsistencies in ensuring that pupils catch up on the work that they have missed, leading to gaps in their knowledge. The school's feedback policy is not applied consistently.
- Teachers do not routinely check that pupils have understood their work before they move on to a new topic. This again leads to gaps in knowledge and prevents pupils from making stronger progress.
- Teaching is most effective in English. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject to engage pupils' interest. Lessons are well planned and provide pupils with appropriate challenge. Pupils are given helpful feedback. This good teaching is reflected in the stronger outcomes in 2018, and in the progress that pupils currently in the school are making in English.
- In other subjects, teaching is more variable in quality, although strong practice is also found in mathematics and Spanish.
- Teaching is generally stronger in key stage 3 than key stage 4, although expectations are too low in both key stages, particularly for the most able.
- Support for pupils with SEND has improved since September 2018. Teachers are aware of the pupils' specific needs and provide appropriate support and intervention to help them learn.
- Homework is set regularly but pupils' responses to it are inconsistent. Some pupils do not complete their homework and teachers do not routinely pick up on this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are given opportunities to develop their self-confidence through classroom discussions and through other activities, including the student council. Moreover, pupils in Years 8 and 10 are given opportunities to visit different universities, thereby helping

to raise their aspirations.

- Pupils reflect upon and develop their respect for the views and beliefs of others. They say that the school is effective in encouraging respect so that everyone is treated equally. They acknowledge diversity as a strength of the school. Pupils say that bullying is rare.
- Support for pupils' emotional well-being is strong. This stems from leaders' determination to build resilience and instil a sense of value and worth in all. Through the half-termly REACH days, pupils are taught about the importance of healthy lifestyles. When pupils do experience difficulties, there is a team of support staff on hand to support them.
- Leaders have a strong understanding of the needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. For example, those joining in Year 7 are supplied with a full school uniform free of charge. Leaders are also proactive in supporting the local community. For example, this year, a group of pupils supported a charity providing Christmas food parcels to those in need.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including online. Pupils say that they receive valuable information in assemblies that informs them and helps them to make sensible choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance is below the national average and well below for some groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. More than one in five pupils is persistently absent from school and this is having a detrimental impact on their learning and achievement. This figure has increased since 2017/18, despite leaders' renewed attempts to improve attendance.
- The school is generally orderly, and pupils are courteous towards each other and adults. However, there is some low-level disruption in lessons. This is often linked to low expectations and insufficient challenge. As a result, pupils become disengaged and distracted.
- Although there is some boisterous behaviour between lessons and during social times, staff are quick to intervene when necessary. Pupils reported that the presence of staff helps them to feel safe.
- Despite the large school site, pupils are punctual to lessons. However, they do not arrive with the equipment they need to help them learn. Frequently, pupils write in pencil and few are equipped with rulers.
- Most pupils wear their uniform with pride. However, this is not the case for all. One reason for this is because staff do not enforce the uniform requirements consistently.
- Displays in classrooms are bright and purposeful and they are used to promote literacy. They help to create and promote an attractive working environment.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in 2018 GCSE examinations was below average in almost all subjects. English was the exception, with pupils broadly making the same progress as their peers nationally with similar starting points, and with average attainment overall.
- In 2018, disadvantaged pupils in Year 11 made less progress than pupils nationally with similar starting points. Although there are some signs of improvement, disadvantaged pupils continue to make weak progress compared to their peers nationally.
- In 2018, the most able pupils made less progress than their peers nationally in a wide range of subjects, including mathematics, science and humanities. Current most-able pupils continue to make weak progress, although some improvement is evident, particularly at key stage 3.
- Pupils with SEND are now making stronger progress than in the past. This is because leaders have strengthened the systems for supporting pupils with SEND. Teachers consider pupils' SEND when they plan, and make appropriate adjustments to help them learn.
- Outcomes for pupils with low prior attainment are improving. This is because work is pitched at an appropriate level for them.
- Although there is an improving picture in some subjects, including mathematics and science, outcomes are not yet good.
- Leaders have identified and responded to the acute need for pupils to read frequently and widely. Reading is promoted around the school. For example, all pupils in Year 7 were given a copy of a book this year selected for its interest value and strong writing. Leaders have introduced a commercially produced package to monitor pupils' reading. However, the impact this is having has not yet been measured fully by leaders.
- The school does not offer post-16 provision currently. Pupils are given good advice and guidance so that they move on to appropriate courses at local post-16 providers. This includes one-to-one careers interviews and attendance at a careers fair.
- A small group of pupils in key stage 4 attend alternative provision on a part-time basis. Their progress is monitored by leaders.

School details

Unique reference number	143846
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10058928

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	577
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Russell Bennett
Headteacher	Martin Giles
Telephone number	020 394 31328
Website	www.meridianhigh.london
Email address	info@meridianhigh.london
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Meridian High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It opened in October 2016 within the GLF Multi Academy Trust. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- An IEB was established in September 2018. The IEB reports directly to the trustees.
- There are currently no pupils in the sixth form.
- There is a special educational needs resource provision within the school for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Pupils who receive support from the provision are integrated into the school.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is significantly above that of other schools.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at the Croydon Restorative Learning Centre.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe teaching and learning across a range of subjects. Most of these observations were undertaken jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' learning over time through scrutiny of work in their books. This activity was undertaken jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 about their experiences at the school.
- Meetings were held with leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school's effectiveness and the impact of their work. Discussions were held with members of staff, including middle leaders and those at the early stages of their teaching career.
- Inspectors discussed aspects of the school's work, including safeguarding arrangements, with governors and representatives from Croydon local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including safeguarding records and procedures, information about pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour records and attendance information.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, 22 responses to the staff survey and the one response to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Niall Gallagher, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Carolyn Dickinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

Desmond Deehan

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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