

Inspection of a good school: Meade Hill School

Chain Road, Higher Blackley, Manchester, Lancashire M9 6GN

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 2024

Outcome

Meade Hill School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils prosper at Meade Hill school. Most pupils have had an unsettled time in their previous schools. Staff are effective in changing pupils' perception of education. Pupils receive the care and help that they need to overcome their previous difficulties. Staff support pupils well to help them to manage their feelings and emotions. Consequently, many pupils behave well. Their conduct in lessons and around the building is positive. The school has a calm environment which supports pupils' learning.

The school has high expectations and is ambitious for pupils. In many subjects, pupils achieve a recognised qualification. This helps to ensure that pupils are prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. Across a range of subjects, pupils typically achieve well from their starting points.

The school offers pupils a purposeful careers curriculum. Pupils have many opportunities to experience different work environments. They valued the chance to go to a careers fair. They also receive information from a range of professionals who are employed in a range of different occupations. This helps to inspire pupils to think about what their next steps might be.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils arrive at school with significant gaps in their learning. The school works closely with pupils when they start, to understand where these gaps exist. At the same time, staff also consider the information in pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans. They use all of this information to ensure that, typically, a curriculum is put into place to meet pupils' needs.

In many subjects, the school has a well-thought-through curriculum. It identifies the key knowledge which pupils should learn and by when. This helps teachers to know what they need to teach pupils. In these subjects, teachers use assessment strategies well to check

on pupils' understanding. As a result, the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding diminish over time.

However, in a minority of subjects, there is less clarity around the knowledge which pupils need to learn. These curriculum areas are not as well thought out as they could be. This makes it difficult for teachers to know what they should be teaching pupils and by when. It is also more difficult for teachers to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding in these specific subjects. As a result, teachers do not use assessment information as successfully as they do in other subjects. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas are therefore not as strong as they are in other subjects.

In general, the assessment information collected over time helps the school to identify any additional learning needs which pupils may have. Overall, the school is clear about where pupils' understanding is secure and where any gaps remain. This helps the school to identify specific learning for pupils which complements the targets in their EHC plans. On occasion, however, some of the targets that teachers set from pupils' EHC plans lack clarity and specificity. This makes it hard to be sure that pupils have achieved these targets.

The school's phonics programme supports pupils at the earliest stages of reading. Staff are well trained to deliver the programme. This helps pupils to become more confident and fluent in their reading. In the wider curriculum, reading has a high priority. The school chooses texts which inspire pupils and help them to have a more positive attitude towards reading. Typically, pupils enjoy the texts that they study in class.

The school has successfully identified the barriers which prevent pupils coming to school. It works successfully with a variety of agencies as well as parents and carers to put in measures to improve pupils' attendance. When pupils are absent, the school provides relevant remote education. Although pupils' attendance is low, it is improving over time.

In lessons, pupils' attitudes to learning are normally positive. In many classes, they concentrate on their learning. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations by taking pride in completing work to a high standard.

The work that the school does to support pupils' wider development is strong. The school ensures that pupils experience a wide range of trips and visits to enhance their understanding of the world around them. For example, pupils worked in their local community on a recycling project which showed them the importance of looking after the planet. Pupils have opportunities to become a member of the school council or as part of 'Pride club', which are opportunities which they often value. The school expands pupils' teamwork and communication skills through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Governors are highly committed to the school's success. They bring extensive experience to their role and carry out their duties effectively. As a result, the school is supported and held to account in equal measure. Staff are more positive about recent changes made by the school which make their workload more manageable. For example, the school has simplified some of its documentation, and this allows teachers to focus on their teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subject areas, the school has not clearly identified the knowledge and skills that it wants pupils to learn and by when. Teachers' understanding of what pupils need to learn is limited. This means that pupils do not develop their knowledge and understanding securely in these subjects. The school should complete its curriculum thinking in these subjects.
- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment information effectively to address some of the gaps and misconceptions that pupils have in their learning. Consequently, pupils do not close some of their gaps in knowledge in these subjects as effectively as they could. The school should ensure that they support teachers to develop their practice in using assessment information in these final few areas.
- On occasion, the targets that teachers set for pupils in their SEND support documents are not specific enough. In addition, the strategies which teachers identify do not always support pupils to meet their targets. This prevents some pupils from achieving the targets in their EHC plan. The school should support teachers to ensure that pupils' SEND support documents provide sufficient clarity to meet pupils' needs consistently well.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105614
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10289891
Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Carroll
Headteacher	Anna Mullan
Website	www.manchester-ebd.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Some pupils also have autism and other learning needs.
- All pupils have an EHC plan.
- The school is part of the Endeavour Federation. This is a hard federation with Southern Cross school. The governing body is responsible for both schools.
- The school is split between two sites, approximately seven miles apart.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher works closely with the headteacher in post at the school's second site at Castlefield Campus.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Year 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school make use of five alternative unregistered providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders to discuss pupils' rates of attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders to discuss pupils' wider development.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body. He also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. They scrutinised leaders' records of behaviour.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school development plan and the school's self-evaluation document.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Stuart Perkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sheldon Logue

Ofsted Inspector

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