

INSPECTION REPORT

MEADE HILL

Crumpsall, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105614

Acting Headteacher: Nell Banfield

Lead inspector: Michael McDowell
Dates of inspection: 8th - 10th March 2004

Inspection number: 258942
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special
School category: Foundation special
Age range of pupils: 11 - 16 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 36

School address: Middleton Road
Crumpsall
Manchester
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Appropriate authority: Local Education Authority
Name of chair of interim executive management body: Alexander Weinberg

Date of previous inspection: 9th February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Meade Hill is a community special school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are presently 36 pupils on roll all of whom are boys. Pupils are drawn chiefly from the northern part of the local education authority area. Most come from families that are experiencing significant economic disadvantage. All of the pupils are British and all but three, who are from mixed white and black African or Caribbean families, are white. The home language of all pupils is English. One pupil is from a Traveller family. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is well below average for their age because of their special educational needs, which have prevented them benefiting, as they should, from their earlier educational experiences. The school has changed in character since it was last inspected in 1998. There is now no provision made for pupils aged 7 to 11 and girls are very rarely placed at the school. Following a period in which the school experienced significant difficulties in meeting its pupils' needs, managing behaviour, and retaining staff, there has been a change of leadership. The local education authority has sought to strengthen the provision it makes for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties by forming a federation of schools of which Meade Hill is a part.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1405	Michael McDowell	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, art, design and technology and physical education
13746	David Russell	Lay inspector	
27409	Sue Hunt	Team inspector	English, geography, history, French and religious education
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector	Mathematics, citizenship, music, and personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is unsatisfactory and it provides unsatisfactory value for money. Because it is failing to provide an adequate standard of education, special measures are required. Standards are well below average in most subjects and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in relation to their capabilities. The quality of education provided is poor. Pupils are often unwilling to be taught, and accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are unsatisfactory and attendance is poor. Good leadership is provided by the very recently appointed acting headteacher but leadership and management overall are unsatisfactory, as is governance.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The quality of education is poor because the curriculum is unsatisfactory and does not fully meet pupils' needs. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, as is accommodation, which is unsuited to the education of secondary age pupils.
- Attendance is poor, attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory and exclusions are high.
- The leadership of the acting head teacher is good.
- In physical education, subject leadership is sufficiently dynamic to ensure that good learning opportunities are provided.
- Leadership and management overall are unsatisfactory.
- Governance is unsatisfactory.

The school has declined significantly since its last inspection. Pupils now make less progress than they did, and the use of assessment to inform planning remains weak. Plans to help ensure continuity in pupils' learning are not fully effective because of high rates of staff turnover and teacher and pupil absence. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 does not fully meet statutory requirements. However, careers guidance, which was missing, is now given and homework has recently been introduced, although little is completed. There has been some improvement in provision for the safety and welfare of pupils. Some of the areas in which the governing body did not comply with statutory requirements have been resolved but others have not, and governance is less effective than it was. Many areas that once were sound or good are now unsatisfactory.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement, except for those in Year 7, who are educated at a separate site, is unsatisfactory. Specific measurable targets are not set within areas of the curriculum, although some related mainly to attitudes and behaviour are set for some pupils. There is no coherent system for collecting data to illustrate pupils' progress towards these targets. Except in Year 7, pupils achieve less than they should. Achievement in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, information and communication technology, and music is unsatisfactory. Achievement in physical education is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to judge achievement in history or geography for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Achievement in religious education, (RE), is poor because it is not taught. Pupils are taught a modern foreign language only in Year 8. Achievement by Year 9 is, therefore, poor.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory and their attendance is poor.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is poor. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. This is chiefly because in a significant number of lessons observed, no learning took place and in many more there was minimal learning. The opportunities of pupils who wished to benefit from the lesson were curtailed by the attitude of others. Where teachers are required to teach subjects in which they are not specially trained, the quality of teaching suffers. Assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do is unsatisfactory and the use made of assessment is poor. Learning is unsatisfactory. Pupils are often unwilling to be taught and are always overly dependent on the support of the adults in the classroom. The curriculum is unsatisfactory. It has many gaps. RE is not taught, and discontinuities in staffing, lack of specialist subject knowledge, and insufficient suitable accommodation and equipment, severely limit what is planned and taught. The special educational needs of the pupils are not fully met. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment, particularly through sport, are satisfactory.

The school takes satisfactory measures to ensure child protection, and the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. The monitoring of pupils' performance and personal development is unsatisfactory. This weakness reflects on the quality of guidance and support, which is unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to develop its partnership with parents but these are unsatisfactory. Links with the community, especially through sport, are satisfactory. The links with other special schools through the Federation arrangements have the potential to be beneficial but have not yet made a real, positive impact.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, overall. Governors have not ensured that statutory requirements are met. They have not ensured that the curriculum meets statutory requirements, that a corporate act of worship takes place daily, and that the special educational needs of pupils are monitored and met. The leadership of the newly appointed acting headteacher is good. She has lifted staff morale and started to put right long-standing weaknesses. She has raised expectations of pupil behaviour and introduced a structured approach to the management of behaviour. However, weaknesses remain and leadership within several curriculum areas is ineffective. The school does not manage the performance of its staff, use data to monitor and compare pupils' achievement with that of pupils in similar schools, nor does it have a strategy to recruit and retain staff. Financial management is weak. Management is unsatisfactory. The focus of governance was initially set too firmly on the promised benefits that the Federation will provide and not enough on the present educational experience of the pupils. Too much is still left to the acting head teacher and effective timely action has not been taken to ensure that the school provides an acceptable quality of education and meets the special educational needs of its pupils. Governance is unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Only two parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and three made their views known through answers to the questionnaire. The school gives clear information to parents and tries to involve them but with little success. Pupils showed little loyalty to the school in their behaviour, and those who were asked, gave negative views about it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise expectations about what can be achieved and improve pupils' achievement by setting appropriate individual learning targets.
- Improve the quality of education, including provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, by improving the teaching, by ensuring that the curriculum fully meets pupils' needs and the requirements of the National Curriculum Regulations, and that suitable accommodation and resources are provided to teach science, art and practical subjects.
- Improve attitudes and behaviour and reduce exclusions by making clear to pupils, by means such as setting individual targets, how they should improve their personal qualities.
- Improve leadership and management so that there is a strong focus on raising standards and keeping all aspects of the school's work under review.
- Improve governance by ensuring that governors come to terms with the school's weaknesses, support and challenge the headteacher and senior management team, and put budgeting and financial management on a sound footing.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

Governors should ensure:

- That there is religious education.
- That provision to meet the special educational needs of all pupils is thoroughly monitored.
- That a daily act of corporate worship is provided.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is unsatisfactory except for pupils in the Year 7 class. This class is taught on a separate site and achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole school performance targets were not set last year and those set for 2004 suggest low achievement. Achievement has declined since the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve much less than they should in their lessons because their learning skills are poor and what they can do is limited by their weak communication and literacy skills.
- Pupils do not have individual targets that they might strive to meet and against which their progress might be measured.
- Pupils achieve best where teaching is secure and what is to be learned is made clear and understood.

Commentary

1. The school did not set targets in 2003 for the overall performance of its pupils at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. The reason for this remains unclear but the lack of tracking data about the performance of pupils in each subject may have made it impossible to base any target on clear information about pupils' progress. In the National Curriculum Tests for pupils in Year 9 in 2003, only one pupil reached the average level for their age in English. Pupils in Year 11 did not take GCSE examinations but 14 Entry Level Certificates in English, information and communication technology, or mathematics were obtained. In schools of this type throughout the country, results are better than these.
2. Whole school targets have been set for this year. However, these are not very challenging. At the end of Year 9, the school does not foresee any of its pupils reaching the average standard for their age in English, mathematics or information and communication technology (ICT). It is thought that only one might reach this standard in science. At the end of Year 11, it is hoped that four pupils will attain a grade in GCSE mathematics, but in English, science, and ICT, no GCSE entries are contemplated. In comparable schools, nationally, about half of eligible pupils gain at least one GCSE pass A* - G grade and about 15 per cent gain five or more GCSE passes in the same grade range. Performance is too low.
3. Observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' records, suggest that pupils in Year 9 are not on course to achieve the National Curriculum levels set in the school targets. Similarly, pupils in Year 11 do not seem to be on course to gain grades in the GCSE examinations. In PE and ICT, pupils are entered for, and they gain, unit awards from Year 8 onwards. The standard required to achieve the awards is below pupils' capabilities but, nevertheless, achieving some accreditation keeps the pupils motivated. Overall, both within lessons and over time, pupils' achievement has declined since the last inspection when it was judged to be sound and occasionally good.
4. A major barrier to pupils' achievement is their poor learning skills. In most classes, pupils need to be cajoled into doing any work at all. They are not willing learners and seem not to value what is offered. They do not enter classrooms, properly equipped for their tasks. They do not bring their own pens or books, presumably because experience has shown that they cannot be trusted to do so. They do not listen carefully to instructions. Rarely do they look at their teachers directly, preferring to distract themselves and others and fiddle with equipment. Many pupils are

very dependent on the teacher or the learning support assistant. It is frequently necessary for assistants to repeat the teacher's instructions before the pupils make an effort to comply.

5. Where there is work that demands concentration, reading, recording, or sequencing, adult help is sought more often than not. Pupils with good reading skills do not use this strength to work independently. Most pupils have literacy skills below the average for their age but their most significant weakness is their inability to listen well and to communicate their own ideas. Within the classrooms, pupils frequently say a lot but much of this is not relevant to the lesson. A good attempt to address this difficulty was observed in the work done by a visiting professional. He skilfully engaged the pupils in a game that required them to associate ideas, extend their vocabulary, and speak their answers clearly and aloud. Much more needs to be done, however, if the pupils are to speak and listen to a standard that will allow education to take place.
6. In the better lessons, what is to be learned is shared with the pupils in the introduction. However, assessments of what pupils understand, know, and can do, particularly in literacy and numeracy, have not yet led to the setting of individual targets. Pupils do not, therefore, have a clear idea of what it is they will have to achieve if they are to improve. The benefits of setting such targets are seen in the Year 7 class where it is the custom to make these clear. In this class, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
7. In other years, estimates are made in most subjects of the pupils' levels against the National Curriculum criteria. Low as these estimates are, in reality they are optimistic because of the pupils' weak basic skills. Pupils are unsure about what they have achieved and what they should do next. This is de-motivating. As a result of the lack of target- setting, it is difficult to ensure that learning is continuous and progressive and because pupils write, or otherwise record, comparatively little, examination of their work yields little information about their progress. Achievement, in these circumstances, tends to stagnate.
8. In a minority of lessons, pupils make progress and achieve worthwhile results. This is the case in much of what is done with Year 7 and also in PE. A clear system of target setting, matched to rigorous expectations of behaviour, enables pupils in Year 7 to get much more from their lessons than is the case for most older pupils. In PE lessons, pupils in Years 8 to 11 come to lessons ready to present the same challenging attitudes that they do in other subjects. Because teaching is skilful, and is founded on very good subject knowledge as well as high expectations, these challenges tend to peter out. As a result, time in PE lessons can be more profitably used and pupils make real gains. Some achieve, in certain aspects of games, at about the average level for their age.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes, values, and other personal qualities of pupils and students are **unsatisfactory**. Their behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also **unsatisfactory**. Attendance is **poor**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Although, under the current school management, there is a strong commitment to meeting pupils' needs, this is not yet having much positive impact on their attitudes.
- Behaviour is unsatisfactory, both in lessons and around the school. It has deteriorated since the last inspection.
- Too many pupils are not able to benefit from education because of the disruptive actions of others.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is insufficiently well promoted.

Commentary

9. Every opportunity is taken to reward any evidence of consistent effort or improvement. The communal celebration of individual success is now presented as an important part of each school week but the impact of these efforts is not as positive as was intended. The prospects of reward encourage a small minority to comply, but loss of reward has little demonstrable deterrent effect on many. There is an established pastoral system, managed by a senior member of the support staff. The staff have great commitment to this area of work. They believe that the development of good relationships with pupils through working with their families and supporting them will ultimately encourage more positive attitudes to school. The evidence of pupil behaviour does not support this view. The school has not developed effective means for promoting discipline and good behaviour. It is not, therefore, meeting the special needs of those who experience significant emotional, behavioural and social difficulties.
10. Against a legacy of pupils' poor attitudes, the school is working hard to try to encourage pupils to value their schooling. A breakfast club operates each morning. It is quite well attended and gives those pupils who arrive early, sometimes after lengthy journeys, a chance to meet friends and to have something nourishing to eat. Each day begins with a formal whole-school gathering, as does the end of morning session.
11. Pupils do not come to school expecting to work. In most lessons, some pupils behave poorly and many do not try to understand and complete the work they are given. They resent having to write and quickly become frustrated, defacing and throwing their books on the floor and the like. They are not helpful to one another and do not accept personal responsibility. Within the school day, many pupils fail to get to their lessons on time, and often leave early without permission. Their movement about the school is often disorderly. They have to be shepherded into classrooms. The fabric of the building and the school's resources are not respected. Pupils are not trusted to access any rooms unaccompanied. All this is evidence of the deterioration in standards since the last inspection. There is little evidence of racially motivated oppressive behaviour and if this occurs it is dealt with well. There is no evidence of sexist behaviour.
12. The school's provision has yet to significantly lessen the incidence of serious misbehaviour and establish high expectations of pupils' conduct. It does not give vulnerable and difficult pupils good opportunities to form positive relationships and the chance to experience success as a learner. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are low as a result.
13. Although the school tries to encourage pupils to understand the feelings of others, to respect their values and beliefs and reflect upon their own values, it is not successful. Attempts to do this are made in assemblies and through the ambience that the school is currently seeking to create. So far, this is having minimal impact on pupils. They do not feel respected and cared for and so are not responding well. There are few opportunities provided for social gathering and for taking social responsibility that would enable pupils to develop a positive sense of community and the feeling that they should contribute to the well being of others when they can.
14. Pupils are encouraged to make the right choice. They do have a sense of what is right and what is wrong. After any serious incident, they are required to think carefully about their actions and about what they might have done differently. Recently, the school has introduced a 'buddy' system. In an attempt to inculcate good habits of behaviour and learning, pupils new to the school who are in Year 7 are educated at another site so that they are not influenced by others' poor behaviour. Pupils are exposed to few opportunities to consider their own culture and that of others.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	24.0%	School data	13.0%
National data (EBD)	12.8%	National data (EBD)	7.4%

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	33	67	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	8	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

15. Attendance levels are poor. Pupils' punctuality is unsatisfactory. In spite of the efforts of the education welfare officer and of the school, to work closely with parents to promote good attendance, the school consistently fails to meet agreed attendance targets. Attendance remains a key issue at the school. Over the last seven years, attendance has been consistently poor with an overall average of 62 per cent, dipping in 1998/99 to an all-time low of 48 per cent. The school now meets statutory requirements for recording attendance accurately. Levels of exclusion remain high, although they are slightly less than they were at the beginning of the school year. In the past, many exclusions were not recorded as such and levels were probably even higher than records show. Exclusion is now appropriately used as a final sanction when pupils refuse to co-operate.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **poor**. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, the curriculum is unsatisfactory, and the school has unsatisfactory accommodation and resources.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **unsatisfactory** overall. Assessment is unsatisfactory and its use is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection and pupils are less willing to learn.
- Teachers are frequently required to teach subjects for which they are unqualified.
- High turn over of staff and high rates of teacher absence undermine relationships with pupils and continuity of learning.
- Management of behaviour is insecure.
- The quality of teaching is good for pupils in Year 7 and in PE.
- Teachers and learning support assistants are strongly committed to acting in the interests of the pupils.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory, and it is not used effectively to inform and motivate pupils and set them targets.

Commentary

16. Following the last inspection in February 1998, it was reported that, overall, the quality of teaching and learning was good for pupils of all ages. This is no longer the case. While teachers, including those who are on short term or temporary contracts, prepare their lessons soundly, pupils, in too many cases, do not come to classrooms in a co-operative frame of mind and they are unwilling to be taught. This means that much time is spent on establishing and maintaining sufficient order to allow the lesson to proceed. Frequently, pupils lack independent learning skills and are overly reliant on the support, encouragement, and control of the learning support assistants in addressing and completing the tasks they are given. Teachers' instructions are frequently ignored and the strategies available to staff for managing behaviour have insufficient impact. In many lessons, the learning opportunities of those who are willing to learn are compromised.
17. In a significant number of instances, teachers prepared and taught lessons that matched the capabilities of their pupils well. They maintained a calm and positive demeanour throughout, but, nevertheless, pupils refused to engage in their tasks and to take the opportunity provided for them to learn. This disengagement of pupils from learning was the most common reason for lessons being judged unsatisfactory. To a very great extent, it is a problem that individual teachers cannot solve alone. It arises from the failure of the school to meet pupils' special educational needs effectively over a significant period of time.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	1 (3 %)	7 (24 %)	14 (48 %)	7 (24 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

18. Teachers who have remained at the school find themselves covering or leading in subjects for which they have no specific training. It is no coincidence that in those where teachers are leading and teaching a subject in which they are well qualified, for example, physical education, standards and achievement are highest.
19. Turnover of teaching staff is high and the effect of this is compounded by a high level of teacher absence. Turnover among support staff is less and, frequently, pupils know learning support assistants better than they know their teachers. It is a characteristic of pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties that it takes a considerable time for them to establish positive relationships with others, including those who teach them. During this process, pupils will often "try out" their new teachers, challenge them and seek to undermine their authority. The school should have clear expectations of its pupils and a robust system for managing behaviour that takes account of the fact that new teachers are most likely to be challenged. At present, it does not have these.
20. The recently appointed acting head teacher has rightly made her priority the establishing of an effective system for managing behaviour and raising expectations of what constitutes acceptable conduct. She has attempted to engage the pupils in setting out fair rules and listing their rights and obligations within the school. There is a reward system based on points that pupils gain for effort and performance in each lesson. These are sound measures that are effective in shaping the conduct and attitudes of a minority of pupils. However, they have little impact on many pupils for whom emotional control is fragile and who are not yet able to make a present effort in the hope of future gain. Teachers and support staff duly award points at the end of each lesson but this process is not given the prominence it requires if it is to become significant. For some pupils, the lesson is too long a time in which to maintain control. It might be better in these cases if points were awarded for each third of a lesson. On some occasions, there is an element of negotiation and although pupils know that they deserve no points, they get some, nevertheless. This undermines the usefulness of the system. A further serious limitation of the system is the fact that, except for those in Year 7, pupils do not all have written, agreed, short term behavioural

targets. In Year 7, these targets are prominently displayed and are regularly referred to. They are a means of clearly informing the pupils about what it is that they are expected to do in order to improve. The present arrangements for managing behaviour have too little impact and do not preserve teachers' right to teach and pupils' right to learn.

21. Teaching of the Year 7 group was well planned and of good quality. This class is situated in another centre and its accommodation is a little better than that in the main part of the school. Pupils' capabilities are accurately assessed and clear targets for academic and social improvement are set. In PE lessons, because of very good subject knowledge, clear lesson objectives and persistent successful challenge of unsatisfactory behaviour, teachers enable their pupils to develop their skills and derive enjoyment from games.
22. Both teachers and support assistants are strongly committed to the interests of their pupils. They are aware of their pupils' characteristics and of the difficulties that they have experienced in their lives. They have great empathy with them. They try very hard to build up positive relationships and they are fair when they listen to pupils' points of view. Teachers' voices are never raised and, on the part of the adults, the atmosphere within classrooms is never intimidatory.
23. While teachers make use of tests and schedules to assess what their pupils know, understand and can do, they do not make the best use of the information they gain. There is insufficient analysis of pupils' learning strengths and weaknesses in general and of their specific difficulties in literacy or numeracy in particular. Learning targets are not yet set. All of this is unsatisfactory. The headteacher does, however, have well advanced proposals to introduce individual education plans that might well serve this need. As things are, however, assessment is not sufficiently used to ensure that all pupils know what they must do in order to improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum, accommodation, resources, and staffing are **unsatisfactory**. However, there is some enrichment of the curriculum through sporting activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Statutory requirements are not being met, and there is insufficient time given to the teaching of core subjects. The curriculum has declined since the last inspection.
- The requirements of pupils with additional special needs, in addition to emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, are not being met.
- There is a satisfactory careers programme.
- Pupils benefit from the extra sports programme.
- There are insufficient qualified and permanent staff, and resources and accommodation do not meet the needs of secondary aged pupils.

Commentary

24. The school does not provide the pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum and a number of weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection remain. Not enough time has been allocated to most subjects, including English, mathematics, and science. This is unsatisfactory because it limits pupils' progress and, partly as a result of this, they are underachieving in all subjects taught, except PE. The amount of taught time during the school day is unsatisfactory. A lot of time is wasted at the start of the day and the first lesson does not always start promptly. Pupils spend a lot of time just sitting around waiting for lessons to begin. Sex and relationships education and drug and alcohol misuse are not taught. French is only taught to Year 8 pupils and this is unsatisfactory. Religious education, design technology and personal health and social education (PHSE) are not taught or are not fully taught. There is only limited provision for PHSE

through emotional literacy sessions. There is some long term, medium and short term planning in place in some subjects, for example, in English and history, but monitoring is not sufficient. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has become more limited and less suited to the pupils' needs.

25. The school has recently completed an audit of pupils' additional special needs, but little of substance has been put in place to provide extra support for these pupils. Very recently, the head teacher has begun to work on a one-to-one basis with pupils who have poor literacy skills. Due to a lack of target setting, limited strategies for managing behaviour, and the absence of individual behavioural plans for pupils, the main special need of the pupils is not fully met. Until this term, annual reviews were not taking place, and this is a breach of the Code of Practice. However, since the new head teacher came in January, this legal requirement is now being met. During the week of the inspection, the head teacher and staff were planning to put individual education plans in place for the pupils. They are, however, in place along with targets, for the three Year 7 pupils educated separately at the Castlefield Unit across the city.
26. Provision for careers education and guidance is satisfactory. There are careers lessons for all pupils and there is good support from the local Connexions Career Service. All Year 10 pupils go out for two weeks' work experience in the summer term. It is hoped that, in the next academic year, pupils in Years 10 and 11 will have a one day a week work placement with the "M power" scheme. Recently, a learning support assistant was appointed to organise work and college placements. She has established links with colleges and work places and has placed two pupils on vocational courses in motor mechanics at local colleges. However, there are not yet any formal monitoring systems to ensure the quality of this provision.
27. Enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory in very challenging circumstances. It comes in the form of pupils having additional access to sporting facilities across the borough. The subject leader for PE works hard to encourage the boys' full participation in football and basketball coaching after school. They have the opportunity to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities. This has a positive impact for a number of pupils but most are unaffected by these arrangements.
28. The accommodation and lack of resources have a negative impact on the curriculum. Both the exterior and interior of the school's premises are uninviting. The classrooms are small and would be far too small if the full complement of pupils was always in school. There are no specialist rooms for design technology, art, and science, and the small hall is unsuitable for PE. These factors impede the satisfactory delivery of a secondary curriculum. The library is situated in a busy thoroughfare with no quiet area for independent learning. It is unsatisfactory. The accommodation for the three Year 7 pupils at Castlefields is better suited to the pupils' needs but some difficulties arise because older pupils on the same site interfere with learning on occasions. Staffing levels have deteriorated since the last inspection. The school has experienced many difficulties in the recruitment and retention of teachers. Five teachers left during the last year and the departure of others, including teachers with the greatest experience and expertise in their subjects, is imminent. In order to be able to offer a curriculum that came anywhere near to meeting the National Curriculum requirements for pupils in Years 7 to 11, the school has employed a number of unqualified teachers. The local authority maintaining the school recognises this difficulty that applies to many small special schools, and has taken steps to develop, in its provision, the breadth of subject expertise. It has set up a federation of schools. Teachers will be appointed to serve the needs of two or three schools within the federation and this will make more specialists available. A start has been made to this process and appointments of qualified teachers to lead subjects where specialist expertise is lacking have been made. These teachers have not yet taken up their posts. Presently, English, science, design and technology, art, French, and information and communication technology are taught by temporary or unqualified teachers or by teachers who do not have the relevant subject qualification. Religious education, for which there is also no relevantly qualified teacher, is not

taught at all. All of this, inevitably, has a negative effect on the quality and level of what can be offered. It acts to limit what pupils might attain.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **satisfactory** measures to ensure the safety, welfare, and care of all its pupils. Monitoring of pupils' achievements and personal development is **unsatisfactory**. There is unsatisfactory involvement of pupils in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for the care, welfare, and safety of pupils are satisfactory but pupils do not always respond positively.
- Monitoring of pupils' behaviour is inadequate and individual targets for improvement are not set in most instances, so guidance cannot be effective.
- Individual planning for behavioural change is unsatisfactory.
- Careers guidance is satisfactory.
- The views of pupils are sought to only a limited extent.

Commentary

29. The school has put in place satisfactory arrangements to try to ensure the care, welfare, and safety of pupils and those who work in the school. Child protection requirements are known and clear guidance is given on procedures to follow if sign of abuse are evident. Steps are taken to supervise pupils at break and lunch times and during the times of arrival and departure. However, these steps are not always effective and pupils are sometimes contemptuous of the efforts made by adults to provide them with support and guidance. There is sometimes violent behaviour and damage to property. On occasions, adults are assaulted. For most of the time, however, most pupils respond in some measure, to the positive support that is offered. Positive interactions between pupils and teachers were not often seen. Risk assessments of pupils' behavioural traits are carried out. These assessments lead to decisions about the educational programme offered to pupils. For example, the decision to educate some pupils away from the main school site is founded on such assessments. The local education authority has audited the safety of the site.
30. Only informal systems are in place to monitor pupils' personal development. Some record is made of pupils' success in gaining "Going for Gold" awards. These are an integral part of the behaviour management strategy. The data collected falls seriously short of giving a clear indication of individual progress, identifying areas for improvement and guiding pupils.
31. There are no individual behaviour plans in place for most pupils. It is unsatisfactory that it is not made clear to each pupil what he or she must do to become a successful learner. Because behavioural improvement is scantily monitored, the school is not in a position to predict improvements. Pupils are not systematically prepared for the possibility of return to a mainstream school. None have returned in the past year. The school makes unsatisfactory provision for including pupils in learning opportunities with their peers in mainstream schools.
32. Pupils receive satisfactory careers guidance through "Connexions" and are given opportunities for work experience and to join vocational courses at a local college. Recent organisation of the provision made by the school has resulted in better co-ordination of work experience placements and increased opportunities for work-related learning.
33. Despite the fact that pupils' views are increasingly sought, the school finds that involving pupils is a difficult and frustrating area. There is no school council but pupils are asked to contribute their ideas on how to make the school a better community and to suggest aspects of school life for

which they could accept responsibility. At this stage, because of pupils' failure to engage with what is offered, their involvement in the life and work of the school is unsatisfactory.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **unsatisfactory**. Community links are **satisfactory**. The school's links with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes good efforts to liaise with parents, but this effort is not always reciprocated.
- Links with the community and other schools and colleges are developing at a reasonable pace and pupils are able to benefit from these opportunities and to develop awareness of the outside world.

Commentary

34. Provision of information to parents about the school is clear. The school prospectus and other school news are written in an accessible style but parents rarely communicate with the school and they do not involve themselves in its work. Only two parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and only three parent questionnaires were returned. The school perseveres in trying to keep parents informed of their children's progress. However, parents only make contact when the school insists that there is a need to discuss issues of concern relating to their children's behaviour or lack of attendance. The effectiveness of links with parents is, therefore, unsatisfactory.

35. The decision to join the school with two other similar special schools forming a federation has given some impetus to the process of forming links with other schools. The benefit of this federation is not only in the provision of a broader and better resourced curriculum, but in the greater flexibility that the arrangement gives in meeting pupils' individual needs. Placements can be better matched to pupils' requirements and schools can more readily acquire a balanced intake. However, there are no substantial links with mainstream schools. This lack impedes any possibility of pupils being re-integrated into mainstream schools. There is a developing connection with local colleges. Older pupils spend a large proportion of their school week following college courses, mostly of a vocational nature. The very difficult behaviour of older pupils and the poor effect that this was having on those younger than themselves were the main reasons for seeking out these links. They have proved to be beneficial in broadening pupils' social awareness and to some extent, their personal development.

36. The school links with the community mainly through the extensive opportunities for sport that are provided. A few pupils take up the chance to attend after-school coaching sessions and make use of a broad range of facilities. When they do this, they become more confident and socially adept. They are able to develop leisure interests.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **unsatisfactory**. Governance is **unsatisfactory**, and statutory requirements are not fully met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is good and this is helping to improve morale.
- Subject leadership is ineffective and lack of subject expertise skews the timetable.
- The governors do not contribute effectively to the school and management is unsatisfactory.
- The adherence to financial regulations is unsatisfactory.

- The monitoring of performance is ineffective.

Commentary

37. Overall, the quality of leadership and management praised in the last report has seriously worsened. The current headteacher has only been in post for a few weeks. In this short time, she has shown that she is totally committed to moving the school to a position of stability. She has a clear vision for the school, inspires staff, and carries them forward with her. There is a much improved emphasis on raising expectations and in the consistent application of behaviour management strategies. As a result, staff morale, which has been very seriously undermined over the recent past, is now much improved. Some significant appointments have been made including appointments to leadership posts in English and mathematics. The sensible decision has been taken to educate some pupils off-site and to relieve some of the pressure that their presence was causing. School communication systems, which were in abeyance, are now improving. Teachers now have a clearer understanding of their roles and what they must do to carry these out effectively. They are turning their attention to key aspects of the provision, especially the management of pupils' behaviour, including the use of rewards and setting targets for individuals.
38. Currently, most subject leaders are ineffective in promoting learning and higher standards in their subjects. There is unsatisfactory planning of what is to be taught and the teachers within each subject are given insufficient guidance and support. There remain key issues about staff retention and absence. The timetable has been distorted to reflect long-term staff absence and turnover.
39. The governors are not making an effective contribution to the direction of the school. They have a good understanding of its work but their energies are overly focussed on the longer-term strategy rather than the here and now. They do not ensure that statutory requirements are met in relation to the curriculum and in the area of special educational needs, and the requirement to provide a daily, corporate act of worship. They are not effective in guiding and supporting current developments at Meade Hill School. When the Federation was set up, the existing governing body was disbanded. A new body, the "executive committee", now provides governance of all three schools, in the interim, before an official federation governing body is set in place. The move to an interim executive committee has led to an unanticipated vacuum in governance at a time when it was clear that the school was in difficulties. The LEA might have anticipated this and made more rigorous efforts to ensure continuity in governance. They are aware of this criticism because of discussions held during the inspection.
40. Responsibilities for financial planning were unclear until very recently. There are recorded instances in the near past of lack of adherence to financial regulations. Budget monitoring is unsatisfactory. Prudent control has not been exercised. A huge surplus was accumulated and was then spent in an "ad hoc" way before the appointment of the present acting headteacher. Secure systems have not been put in place to ensure that money is spent wisely. Governors do not have a good understanding of the concept of best value. Because of the lack of rigour of their oversight, the governors are not helping the school to improve. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.
41. There is still little evidence that governors are reviewing the headteacher's performance rigorously. School self-evaluation and performance monitoring are underdeveloped. Comparing itself with other schools is difficult because the school lacks data about pupils' performance. However, governors know from the headteacher's reports and published results that pupils' performance is lower than it should be.
42. Overall, management of the school is failing its pupils. There are significant weaknesses in the levels of pupils' achievement and in the quality of education. The school is not getting to grips

with the key underlying weakness, which is the failure to apply appropriate strategies to manage pupils' behaviour so that they may learn.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	690,077	Balance from previous year	127, 726
Total expenditure	643,425	Balance carried forward to the next year	174,378

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Only one lesson was seen in French, so a judgement about provision is not made in this report.

English

Provision for English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils do not work to their capabilities and achievement has declined since the last inspection.
- Individual lessons are planned satisfactorily.
- The needs of the pupils and their capabilities are not thoroughly assessed and they are not well understood.
- The Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy has not been fully implemented.

Commentary

43. The subject leader is on long-term absence. The acting deputy head teacher, who is not an English specialist, has taken over temporary leadership of the subject but there has been a constant stream of temporary teaching staff. None of the teachers taking the subject has had Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy training. The lack of expert leadership in English and insufficient knowledge of potentially successful teaching techniques has had a negative effect on pupils' progress. However, an English specialist has been appointed recently and is due to start in the school in the summer term. Since September, the school has received good support from the authority's English adviser. A scheme of work, and short and medium term planning are now in place based on the literacy strategy.
44. Recent testing has shown that in each age group there is a wide range of reading abilities. A significant minority of pupils have such low literacy skills that it has been necessary, at the headteacher's initiative, to set up a "reading recovery" programme. On the other hand, an even greater number of pupils are competent, if inexperienced, readers. A few of these higher attainers are able to read with expression. This was seen in a Year 8 lesson on Shakespeare's "Macbeth". The commitment to learning that was shown in this session was, however, exceptional, and in most lessons, and over time, pupils make less progress than they should. They produce too little work. In relation to their capabilities, their achievements are unsatisfactory. This is a deterioration in standards since the last inspection.
45. Teachers make sound plans for individual lessons. Writing frames, the use of key words, and collaborative planning are being used to improve pupils' writing skills. Pupils in Year 8 and in Year 9 correctly sequenced sentences during a literacy session with the help of such well-planned methods, and were able to write their own stories about terror. One boy wrote about "The Haunted Forest", another about "The Ugly Graveyard" in a satisfactory manner. The lack of planning for the use of ICT is, however, a weakness. This reduces the ability of pupils to express themselves fluently in written form. There is a need for the purchase of software to help with the teaching of spelling and word building with the aim of improving pupils' work. The three Year 7 pupils at the Castlefield Centre have their own individual targets for reading and writing and this

results in sharper lesson planning. As a consequence, their work shows that they have made satisfactory progress from a very low base.

46. In the minority of lessons, where teachers are able to keep control of pupils' behaviour, satisfactory learning takes place. In the best of these, teachers use their subject knowledge to hold pupils' interest and they use questioning to effectively check what pupils know and understand. Assessment of pupils' progress is inconsistent. Only recently has testing of reading and spelling ability, using standardised measures, taken place. There is no previous information or data about their standards, so that pupils' progress over time cannot be judged. Pupils' work is usually marked, but teachers' written comments do not indicate what pupils must do to improve. In Year 7, assessment is satisfactory and leads to the setting of literacy targets for each individual pupil. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, who are following accredited courses, are assessed according to the course criteria. However, the work that they produce is sporadic and its quality appears to vary with their mood. This makes it imperative that a thorough analysis is made to detect and exemplify, for the pupils, their weaknesses so that they can start to overcome them. Assessment at present does not give pupils such a clear idea of what they must improve.
47. Because of lack of training, the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy has not been implemented. The pupils' attitudes dictate the methods used. Teachers, on the whole, are very reluctant to allow pupils to discuss matters within lessons for fear of pupil disruption. Some pupils contribute to discussions, but usually, entirely on their own terms. For example, during a "Thinking Skills" session, one Year 10 pupil defined the meaning of "time", "event", "task", and "routine" before losing self-control and giving free rein to his irritation to be verbally abusive.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

This is **unsatisfactory**.

48. An attempt is being made to keep language and literacy to the fore in all subjects. Recently, key words that are important to the technical vocabulary of each subject are being highlighted at the beginning of lessons. This is done well in Year 7, particularly in science. However, there are generally insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their language skills for reasons connected with their attitudes and with teachers' reluctance to have open discussion sessions. This is because of the potential that these present for disruption. Overall, promotion of language and literacy across the curriculum needs to be more systematic.

French

49. According to the timetable, French is only taught to Year 8 pupils. Only one lesson in French was observed during the week of the inspection and this was unsatisfactory. No planning was available to be scrutinised and only a small amount of work was completed in pupils' files.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and pupils' response to it is unsatisfactory.
- Attainment is low and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Provision has worsened since the last inspection.
- Numeracy skills are not consistently taught across the curriculum.

Commentary

50. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. The teachers are not subject specialists and most lessons are planned cursorily. Classes in Key Stage 3 have been organised so that pupils are placed in groups according to their abilities in order to help planning but this is having no benefit yet. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, trying to manage and motivate pupils, but invariably with little success. The methods used are not working. The teachers are hampered by both a lack of resources, especially for the less able younger pupils, and by a lack of training in key strategies, including the National Numeracy Strategy. Although extremely hard working, and playing a crucial role in class management, the teaching assistants lack the mathematical understanding necessary to help move pupils' knowledge along. In the lessons observed, negligible progress was made. Planning and the use of assessment to inform lesson planning are unsatisfactory. However, tasks are set that are broadly appropriate for most pupils, but many do not listen to the teachers. As a result, opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills are limited. Behaviour deteriorates as attention wanes. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning has worsened notably since the last inspection.
51. The attainment of pupils entering the school is low. It ranges from National Curriculum Levels 3/4 for a few, to working towards Level 1. Many pupils currently in Years 8, 9, 10, and 11 appear to have gained little from the teaching and learning over several months. There is little interest in mathematics. There is little evidence of progress at all levels of attainment. The progress made by pupils over time is patchy. Lower attaining pupils, for whom the GCSE is not a suitable test of their learning, are insufficiently challenged. Because of this, the lowest attainers make slower progress than they might do. Higher attaining pupils do not cover enough work to enable them to achieve the level of success of which they are capable. Accredited courses that meet pupils' needs fully and challenge them to achieve as well as they can are not in place. In most cases, the pupils should be expected to attain a higher standard in their mathematical work and should be given a suitable opportunity to have their work accredited by an examining body. Achievement is lower than it was at the last inspection.
52. The curriculum is narrow and does not meet the needs of pupils. In Year 11, some pupils are following the GCSE course in mathematics. Because of staffing problems, pupils' irregular attendance, and poor discipline, it is not certain that pupils will complete the course successfully. Emphasis is placed on applying the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division in practical situations, and on the completion of the required coursework. Pupils do not respond well to the endeavours of staff and do not do the work set. This situation has been prevalent for some time. In 2003, no pupils were entered for the GCSE course. The time devoted to mathematics in Years 10 and 11 is inadequate. Progress in developing accreditation has been unsatisfactory in the absence of a subject leader.
53. At the last inspection, pupils' progress was sound, as was the quality of teaching. Neither is now the case. In fact, provision has worsened. In spite of the best endeavours of a non-mathematician who has taken on a temporary leadership and management role, unsatisfactory attendance and behaviour mean that most pupils make very little progress over time and they are underachieving.

Mathematics across the curriculum

This is **unsatisfactory**.

54. The promotion and development of opportunities for pupils to apply and reinforce numeracy skills in lessons in other subjects are unsatisfactory. Positive development of numeracy skills is not consistent across all age groups. In Year 7, numeracy skills are better developed because of the use of individual target setting. Elsewhere, opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy are not

featured in the plans and lessons of all subjects, even in those, such as science, where such skills are very necessary.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is satisfactory and it is good in a significant proportion of lessons.
- Pupils are not sufficiently prepared to make the effort to learn and this affects the standards they achieve.
- Standards are adversely affected by pupils' poor literacy and communication skills.
- There is committed leadership but accommodation and resources are inadequate.

Commentary

55. In the five science lessons observed, teaching was always well prepared and the work set was carefully related both to the relevant Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum and to the known capabilities of the pupils. A strong emphasis is placed on investigative and practical work that could reasonably be expected to capture the interest of the pupils. The lesson objectives and key vocabulary are written up on the whiteboard. There is well-directed support for those pupils who most need it, usually to help them to concentrate and to do their tasks in the right order. The subject leader, who is not a science specialist, has developed sound plans for teaching science from Year 8 to Year 11. These are based on units of work from published texts and on work developed and successfully used in another school. In Year 7, pupils are taught at a different site but they are given stimulating learning opportunities to which they respond positively in most cases.
56. For these pupils and for others up until the end of Year 9, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject requirements are satisfactory. Lack of a subject specialist's knowledge limits the potential for achievement for pupils in Years 10 and 11. A record is kept of assessments of what each pupil knows, understands and can do and, from an early stage, pupils are encouraged to complete units of work that are externally accredited by AQA. Pupils in Year 11 are prepared for the Entry Level Certificate. A good feature of the teaching is the patient manner in which challenging behaviour is dealt with. A weakness is the lack of planning to reinforce numeracy skills through work in science. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and take every opportunity to encourage them and praise and reward them if they make an effort. Unfortunately, pupils do not always respond well and learning time is lost when they are uncooperative.
57. Despite the efforts made by teachers to prepare interesting and relevant work, pupils too frequently choose to waste the learning opportunities with which they are provided. They are poor listeners and resist making eye contact with the teacher. They do not follow clear instructions and distract themselves and others by fiddling with equipment. The arrangement of furniture in the very small science room contributes to part of this problem. Some are seated with their backs to the whiteboard and what is most directly in their line of vision is the face of a fellow pupil rather than that of the teacher or the whiteboard. Teachers and support staff together make valiant efforts to keep pupils on their tasks, and make use of humour and their good relationships to get them to work, but in a forty minute lesson they do very little. This, inevitably, has a negative impact on the standards they attain which are well below the average for their ages and below what might reasonably be expected, given their capabilities and special educational needs. Their achievement is unsatisfactory. This is a decline since the last inspection.
58. The communication and literacy skills of most pupils are poor. Even in those cases in which pupils are able readers, their listening skills are poor. They refuse to listen, resist instruction, and

fail to remember simple facts for even the briefest of times. They do not, as a rule, communicate in coherent sentences. One pupil in Year 10 was defeated by the task of expressing a fact that he knew, namely that to melt a metal, heat must be applied. Eventually, after a struggle to find words, he grunted "hot". The written work of most is inaccurate with poorly formed handwriting, weak spelling and little regard to presentation. There are pupils who are acknowledged to have specific literacy difficulties but this is not the case for the majority. The pupils' poor literacy and communication skill places a strict limit on what they might achieve in science. Improved communication and literacy will need to be given a greater priority within the subject and across the curriculum if pupils are to be enabled to reach their potential.

59. The subject leader has worked very hard to produce a programme for science that meets pupils' needs and the curriculum requirements. Her leadership is good. Within the limits imposed by the accommodation and resources available, she has enabled all pupils to carry out practical work and not confined her teaching to learning from texts. She has a clear view of what must be done to improve provision. This includes improvement in teacher's subject knowledge and the provision of suitable accommodation and resources. The science room is too small and is ill equipped. It lacks even the basic equipment needed to teach science at secondary level. The subject is poorly resourced. These matters were raised at the last inspection and they have not been improved. The poor accommodation and resources have a negative impact on the achievement of pupils. Provision in these areas has remained static since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

There was too little evidence to form an overall judgement about provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Because of unavoidable staff absence, scheduled lessons did not take place. Teaching and learning were observed in only one lesson and were satisfactory.

60. Leadership is effective in enabling pupils of all ages to become familiar with computers and a broad range of peripheral equipment and its uses. The subject leader has worked hard to develop a suitable programme for pupils across the age range that reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum and takes account of the particular learning needs of the pupils. Planning shows that work for individuals is matched to their known capabilities. Pupils are reported to enjoy their work in ICT. This was confirmed by a pupil in Year 9. He told inspectors that ICT was his favourite subject and that he was pleased with what he could do and the progress he had made. From Year 8 onwards, pupils complete units of work for external accreditation by AQA and those in Year 11 successfully take the Entry Level Certificate. In 2003, nine of eleven pupils entered gained this qualification.
61. Records of pupils' work are kept. These show that, over time, pupils in each year group increase the range of their understanding of information and communications technology, and in particular, their competence in using computers. By Year 9, pupils can reliably log-on at their computer station, work competently in a Windows environment, enter text and add selected images to a document. They have some familiarity with spreadsheets. In most cases, but not all, they are able to save their work in designated folders. Pupils have helped in the construction of an interactive web page for the school that gives site visitors an opportunity to hear their views. However, particularly because of the weaknesses in literacy that are widespread across the age range, pupils are not able to progress to a level that reflects their true capabilities. Achievement is therefore unsatisfactory. In the single lesson observed, the management of pupils was successful in as much as they worked steadily at their given tasks but these tasks were unchallenging and, at best, pupils consolidated their key board skills which are notably weak. There is an ICT room equipped with sufficient computer stations, all of which have safe Internet connection. There is a lack of relevant software, however, especially of programmes that will address and help to rectify literacy problems and promote keyboard skills. The level and quality of resources are, therefore, unsatisfactory.

ICT across the curriculum

The use of ICT to support teaching and learning in other subjects is **unsatisfactory**.

62. Computers are rarely used beneficially in lessons. In some cases, pupils leave their places and go to the computer without permission as a way of avoiding the work that they should be doing. Control technology and computer-aided design and manufacture are absent from the provision made for design and technology and little, if any, use is made of computers to develop knowledge or skills in art. The possibilities provided by ICT in science, for example, for monitoring or modelling experiments or for linking with peripheral devices such as cameras and microscopes are missed. No use was made of projectors or interactive whiteboards to make teaching more interesting.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

63. Only history is taught this term. However, no lessons could be observed owing to timetable arrangements. There was insufficient evidence on which to base a judgement of provision. Teachers' planning shows that thought has been given to making history relevant to the pupils. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Year 8 pupils have studied Medieval settlements and the Tudors and Stuarts, whilst Year 9 pupils are studying modern warfare, including the First World War, and life in the trenches. Geography is not taught this term. No planning for the subject was available, even though it has been taught in the recent past.

Religious education

Religious education is not taught. The school does not meet statutory requirements to teach religious education to all of its pupils.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National Curriculum requirements are not being met and there is no subject leader or qualified teaching staff.
- Accommodation and resources are poor.
- Work in food technology helps pupils' social development, and teaching is good.

Commentary

64. The absence of a subject leader and the lack of a full time qualified teacher for design and technology has meant that, while the subject appears on the time tables of all classes across the age range, it is not, at present, systematically taught. The school has advertised for a suitable teacher. In the interim, however, the school does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum for any of its pupils. Pupils lack the opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding by developing ideas in response to a design brief and have too little chance to plan

and produce products or evaluate them. They do not regularly work with tools or make use of information and communication technology and suitable software to control processes. As a result of this absence of provision, standards are low and pupils achieve much less than they should. There is no evidence to be found in teachers' records or pupils' past work of sound and continuing development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in design and technology. This is a marked deterioration since the last inspection when a satisfactory curriculum was provided, pupils made good progress and the provision was good.

65. The school does not have a suitable space for work with resistant materials nor does it have the equipment or resources to meet the requirements of the curriculum. The lack of development since the last inspection, when accommodation was also criticised, suggests ineffective management at subject and whole school level. A small kitchen is used to give small groups of pupils an experience of working with food and cookery. However, this space is not suitably equipped to teach food technology to pupils in Years 8 to 11. There is neither equipment nor resources to teach computer aided design and production nor to develop an understanding of control technology. Accommodation and resources have not improved since the last inspection.
66. Classes in Years 8 and 9 are given weekly lessons in cooking on a domestic scale. In the two such lessons observed, the teaching was good. Its particular strengths were that the planned outcomes of the lesson were clearly explained and that pupils were managed effectively. They enjoy the opportunity to experiment with and combine ingredients to make interesting dishes. While these lessons, which are well taught, do not strictly relate to the National Curriculum, they are beneficial, especially in helping with pupils' social development. Pupils learn to be more adventurous in their food choices and to consider healthy eating. They become proficient in skills that will aid them in developing independence.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

There was insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement about provision for art.

67. In the long-term absence of the subject leader, art is taught by teachers who are employed on a temporary basis. It proved possible to observe only one lesson, which was for pupils in Year 8. In this, the teaching was planned well and the topic of the lesson was appropriate to the pupils' capabilities and stage of learning. The teacher had good knowledge of the subject and was calm and patient in her attempts to engage the pupils. For most of the lesson, however, they were unwilling to learn and were disruptive and silly. Their learning was unsatisfactory and they achieved less than they should. Achievement overall, based on work seen, is unsatisfactory. The long term plans for teaching art are unconvincing. Little dated or annotated pupils' work was to be found and much of this was of an unsatisfactory standard. A very restricted range of media appears to have been routinely used and this reflects the paucity of resources and accommodation. The subject leader's reports and development plans have for some time drawn attention to these weaknesses in resources, as well as to the fact that professional development opportunities to extend the leader's subject knowledge have not been made available.

Music

Provision for music is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory teaching and learning fail to promote achievement and the development of pupils' personal qualities.

- Provision has worsened since the last inspection.

Commentary

68. Achievement is unsatisfactory because music does not have an appropriate footing within the curriculum. As a result, there is no continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Teaching is not successful in engaging the interest of pupils who are predisposed to be challenging and who show poor attitudes to the subject.
69. At the last inspection, progress was poor for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Pupils showed a poor level of interest, concentration, and ability to work. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory, as was the resourcing and the leadership and management. Overall provision has worsened and the place of music on the curriculum is now very insecure. This is because of difficulties with staffing. In the one lesson observed during this inspection, neither of the two boys involved was prepared to let the teacher teach them. They showed no interest in learning about the theoretical aspects of the subject, but set about, and quickly succeeded, in spoiling that part of the lesson.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led.
- Achievement is satisfactory because teaching is effective and founded upon very good subject knowledge and on understanding of pupils' special educational needs.
- Physical education makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' personal qualities.
- While provision is now better than it was at the last inspection, facilities within the school are limited and pupils in Year 7 do not benefit from specialised PE teaching on a regular basis.

Commentary

70. Leadership has improved since the last inspection. It is now very good. The subject leader has built upon the strengths in co-ordination of PE that were praised in the last report. He brings infectious enthusiasm to his work. Very good planning is in place to help to ensure that pupils taught at the Meade Hill site experience at least four of the areas of activity laid down in the National Curriculum programme of study. Work in games is a particular strength and the opportunities provided for outdoor and adventurous activities have been enhanced since the last inspection. This is due to the enterprise of the subject leader who has recently been appointed to the post of school sports co-ordinator with the local authority. From this post, he has found it possible to obtain opportunities for first rate coaching for the pupils and use of a wider range of facilities. The subject leader has been very enterprising in his search for sources of funding. A grant received from the Manchester Kids Charity, for example, has led to the school being able to purchase time at the Salford Water Sports Facility. Competitive sport, including a special school football league, has been introduced. Because of his role as school sports co-ordinator, the subject leader now works part time. However, high quality planning of units of work and lessons, together with clear records of what each pupil knows, understands and can do, help to ensure that continuity of learning is maintained when PE is taught by others.
71. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory in lessons; those in Years 8 and 9 are less willing to consistently accept instruction and their efforts are sometimes limited by this. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. The pupils are very challenging and difficult to motivate. A very good feature of the teaching in PE is the skilful manner in which the requirements of the activity undertaken, or the rules of the game being played, are used by teachers as an indirect and impersonal means of shaping pupils' behaviour and gaining their compliance and co-

operation. Teachers show constant awareness of their pupils' moods and they are innovative in finding relevant alternative activities when this is necessary. When a pupil opted out of a basketball game, for example, he was encouraged to referee the game instead. The pupils benefit from the expert coaching in skills that they receive. Their technical skill in team games such as basketball or in individual competitive games such as short tennis is, in many cases, on a par with that of their age group. However, pupils' emotional difficulties frequently prevent them from reaching their full potential. Teachers' management of their classes is effective because the pupils respect them for their expertise in areas of physical activity in which they would wish to excel, and because they perceive their teachers as fair. Teaching is better than at the last inspection.

72. Most pupils enjoy sport and are eager to take part in it. The privilege of representing the school in a team is dependent on the pupil having behaved sufficiently well in the time leading up to the fixture. Taking part in sport thus becomes a motivation to behave well and a reward for doing so. There have been residential trips to outdoor education facilities at which character and team-building activities take place. The School Sports Co-ordinator Scheme has enabled pupils to participate in sport, together with pupils from mainstream schools, outside the school day. Experiences such as these have led, in one or two cases, to outstanding examples of pupils' personal qualities flourishing. One pupil has recently won the Manchester Volunteers Award. There is a clear statement within the PE handbook of the ways in which the subject contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

73. At the time of the last inspection, the accommodation and school-based resources for PE were unsatisfactory. There has been no significant improvement since then but the imaginative and widespread use of other facilities within the community does much to make up for this weakness. Pupils in Year 7 are taught at another site several miles from the school. They do not have the benefit of being taught by the well-qualified staff at Meade Hill and this is a shortcoming that needs to be resolved. Overall, however, provision for physical education has improved since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social, and health education, (PHSE), is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of careers guidance and preparation for work is satisfactory.
- There is unsatisfactory development of pupils' social skills and social awareness in PSHE lessons and teaching is often ineffective.
- The PSHE programme has too little positive impact.

Commentary

74. PHSE is linked to the Careers programme and to the preparation for work experience and these aspects of the school's work are satisfactory. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have good opportunities for work-related learning through college courses and through work experience placements. Pupils successfully undertake these.

75. In other PSHE lessons, an emphasis is placed on developing personal skills and awareness of pupils' own needs and those of others. For most pupils, however, this work is ineffective. In most of the lessons seen, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. Little learning occurred because of the pupils' unwillingness to listen and contribute. In one lesson on rights and

responsibilities, the teacher persevered in spite of much provocation, eventually getting her points across to one pupil. This was done calmly and with determination, with a clear focus on positive behaviour management strategies, including the use of verbal praise and encouragement. It is to the teacher's credit, ably assisted by colleagues, that one boy successfully completed the task set. However, the lesson failed, because during it, a pupil deliberately broke a classroom window. The concentration of other pupils was affected by this, as was that of others in nearby classrooms. In a brightly planned lesson on "Thinking Skills", the benefits of the lesson were lost because one of the two pupils in the class left the room. Once more, learning overall was poor. More successful was the input from a visiting speaker who was a motivational coach. Here, pupils put aside the negative characteristics seen in so many other lessons. They were skilfully handled, with some authority, and the content of the session was very pertinent to their needs. They responded by trying hard and eventually achieved more than they expected.

76. In spite of the school attaching great importance to this area of its work, and allocating it significant time and staff resources, this subject does not have an effective impact on pupils' personal development.

Citizenship

There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about provision as only one lesson was seen and there was very little pupil work by which to evaluate standards of achievement.

77. In the lesson that was observed, the teacher worked hard to engage the pupils but they were reluctant to learn because of events outside the lesson. Teaching was well prepared and delivered, but pupils' learning was unsatisfactory. The school follows a curriculum devised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority but this is not fully resourced and ideas about how citizenship could be promoted within other subjects remain largely unexplored. The subject lacks dynamic leadership. Pupils complete too little work and what is done is of a standard that is below their capabilities. Mainly because of pupils' poor attitudes, it has proved hard to extend opportunities to them to become informed citizens. There is no school council, for example. Overall, pupils have too few opportunities to participate in the life of the school, neighbourhood, and wider society.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	6
Value for money provided by the school	5
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	5
Attendance	6
Attitudes	5
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	5
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	5
The quality of education provided by the school	6
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).