



Meadowhead School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107149
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 277719
Inspection dates 14 September 2005 to 15 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Jeremy Richardson HMI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Dyche Lane |
| School category | Community | | Sheffield |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 | | South Yorkshire S8 8BR |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0114 237 2723 |
| Number on roll | 1670 | Fax number | 0114 283 9855 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr Chris Rosling |
| Date of previous inspection | 9 December 2002 | Headteacher | Ms C James |

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|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by Her Majesty's Inspector and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Meadowhead school, a specialist language college with Beacon school status, is situated in the southern outskirts of Sheffield. It is a much larger than average mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The proportion of the pupils eligible for free school meals is average. One of the pupils speaks English as an additional language and the proportion of the pupils designated as having special educational needs is average. The school operates on a split site. A new building that brings the pupils together on one site is due to open in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Meadowhead is a good and improving school. The leadership and management of the school are good. Under the outstanding leadership of the head teacher, the school has continued to improve despite the difficulties caused by the buildings and the site. Her tenacity and determination have helped to gain a new building for the school. The school's managers play their part well. They have identified and successfully tackled areas of weaknesses. Systems for checking the school's performance are exemplary. Pupils reach standards that are above average. Many make good progress because of good teaching. The achievement of the boys has improved but there is still some way to go. The pupils enjoy their lessons and get on well with their teachers. Teachers provide interesting and challenging activities; lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Some, but not all of the teachers, provide good guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They respect each other and feel safe from bullying. Many enjoy participating in the wide range of sporting activities the school offers. Through the school council, they contribute to making decisions, including about the new building. The school provides a safe and supportive environment. It manages the behaviour of the pupils well but is aware that it needs to deal more consistently with fixed-term exclusions. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and is well set to make further improvements. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

This good school knows what needs to be done. In particular:

- share good practice in the use of assessment in classrooms
- improve the consistency of arrangements for dealing with fixed-term exclusions
- continue to improve the achievement of the boys.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school having achieved average results in their primary schools. In 2004, at the end of Year 9, the school's results were average. They were above average in mathematics, average in science and below average in English. Many of the pupils underachieved in English. The school's 2005 results are much better. They are above average overall. The school has tackled the weaknesses in English with some success: results have improved and are now average but the target for the subject was missed. In mathematics and science, the school reached its targets. Standards in these subjects have risen and are above average.

Standards in the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004 were above average overall and the highest in the school's history. Standards were above average in mathematics, statistics, music, physical education and Spanish. The school identified accurately the need to raise standards

in aspects of technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and geography. Results in 2005 were a little lower than the previous year, but remain above average overall. Results in ICT and geography have risen. However, the school's results have not improved as quickly as the national figures and the school missed some of its targets.

The pupils' progress has improved since 2004 and is now good. Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment but achieve above average results at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. The pupils who have special educational needs and the higher-attaining pupils make good progress. Following the 2004 results, the school rightly identified the need to raise the achievement of boys. This has started to improve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their education at Meadowhead. Their attendance has risen and is above the national average but so is the rate of unauthorised absence. Although the school does its best, pupils are sometimes late to lessons because of the split site and bad weather. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are mostly good. Many of the pupils speak warmly about their teachers and the support staff. Pupils feel safe and feel that they have a voice in the way the school is led and managed. They take their responsibilities seriously. For example, the school council has discussed the design of a restyled uniform to be introduced when pupils move to the new school in early 2007.

Tutor groups are used very well to promote pupils' personal development. The inclusive ethos of the school ensures that all pupils feel valued. The spiritual development of pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Good use is made of the local community and wider environment to promote multicultural issues and to prepare pupils for a future away from the security of school life. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities and clubs which are very well used by pupils. This leads to improved access to sport and an understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles.

The school continually evaluates and promotes the personal development of every pupil, and the significant impact of this good provision is to enhance the well-being and self-confidence of all pupils as they move through the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and results in above average progress. In the most effective lessons, teachers have very good relationships with pupils and have a ready understanding of their needs. Learning mentors also give good help to pupils. They have been particularly successful in supporting those who may otherwise fail to complete their schooling.

In the best lessons, pupils work at a relentless pace, encouraged by enthusiastic and dynamic teaching. The best learning takes place where teachers ask testing questions and give pupils time to think before answering. Well-structured lessons include a variety of tasks that challenge and motivate pupils. However, crisp starts to some lessons are hampered by the late arrival of pupils due to the split site. In some lessons, some pupils are not required to take responsibility for their learning; they rely too heavily on the teacher.

Assessment is good. Most pupils have work marked with helpful comments on how well they are doing. In the best lessons, they are guided on how to improve. However, this is not always the case. In some lessons, including GCSE dance, pupils assess their own performance well and discuss ways to improve. There are good systems for the diagnosis of, and provision for, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. It provides opportunities for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and the higher-attaining pupils, to make progress and develop well. Provision in mathematics, languages and physical education is a continuing strength. Provision for science, ICT, and some aspects of design and technology, has improved considerably since the last inspection. An appropriate range of courses in years 10 and 11 is well tailored to pupils' needs and aspirations. The good quality and wide range of language courses and opportunities reflect the school's specialist status. There are good and regular arrangements for checking and developing the curriculum. The school is good at guiding and helping pupils make decisions about their future. The range of sporting and cultural activities is wide, and popular with pupils. Nevertheless, and despite the school's best efforts, the split site presents significant intractable issues which undermine the overall effectiveness of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care provided by the school is of a very high standard and many aspects of its work embrace the key areas of the national drive to ensure that 'every child matters'. The school has established effective systems and procedures for child protection. The staff are very proactive in dealing with any incidents and give prompt attention to any examples of bullying and poor behaviour. However, the present systems of monitoring, evaluating and managing fixed-term pupil exclusions at the school are inadequate because they are inconsistent. Form tutors, heads of year and other support staff make a good contribution to the school's very positive care and pastoral provision.

The school provides particularly good support to vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties, through the wide use of internal and external support staff and through the extensive monitoring systems and procedures. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress through regular newsletters and open evenings.

There are good systems for assessing pupils' attainment, monitoring their academic progress and setting them targets. Information from these systems is used well to target groups of pupils for extra support.

Older pupils have access to a wide range of advice and support on future careers and further education. Extensive contacts with the local community, industry and commerce add to the effectiveness of this provision.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, and the head teacher provides outstanding leadership. Her clear vision has united the whole staff in a common drive to raise standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning, and her shrewd judgements have contributed to the recruitment and retention of a strong management team. She expects the best and is a good role model. She is tenacious and determined, for example, in helping to secure ambitious improvements to the school's accommodation. There is a good balance of skills and expertise among the school's senior leaders. They have made a positive contribution to improvements, for example, in geography and ICT and in the achievement of boys. Some of the school's middle managers provide outstanding leadership, including in mathematics, languages and physical education.

Although there are some weaknesses in systems for monitoring exclusions, the school has exemplary arrangements for checking how well it is doing. These include a well-organised system for collecting and analysing information from a variety of sources, including parents and pupils. Reports to governors summarise this information well. As a result, the governing body has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school on which to base its plans for improvement. Governors play their part well as critical friends of the school. The school improvement plan sets clear priorities and is underpinned by effective action plans. The system for managing the performance of the teachers is robust. The school tackles areas of weakness with the right balance of challenge and support, and a number of good new appointments have strengthened the teaching and management team.

Plans for the move to the new building are well advanced and include changes to staffing and the curriculum. The present overcrowded, split-site accommodation greatly hampers the school's drive forward, but the school does continue to improve. This shows that leadership has sustained momentum and morale, not sacrificing the present for the future.

The school has made great strides in implementing recent government initiatives about teachers' workload, for example, in the good relations developed among pupils and some of the support staff when the latter are on duty at the end of the school day. The school manages its finances well and provides good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | NA | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 | NA |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 2 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | Yes |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | Yes |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do.

- Your school is a good school.
- The headteacher and her senior team are doing a good job in improving the school and in getting ready to move into the new building.
- The distance between the two buildings means you are sometimes late for lessons even though teachers encourage you to be punctual. You also get very wet when it has been raining.
- You enjoy coming to school and achieve much because you are taught well.
- When teachers use many different activities that you find interesting, it helps you to learn.
- You behave well around the school and in lessons.
- You told us you feel safe because the school deals well with any bullying.
- The vast majority of you and your parents are happy with the school and what it offers. Many of you take part in a wide range of extra activities.

Your school needs to:

- make sure all the teachers tell you how to improve your work
- improve the consistency of the arrangements for dealing with fixed-term exclusions
- continue to help boys improve their achievement.