



Manshead CofE VA Upper School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109705
LEA BEDFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278252
Inspection dates 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Martin Cragg LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Dunstable Road
School category	Voluntary aided		LU1 4BB
Age range of pupils	12 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01582608641
Number on roll	1140	Fax number	01582679411
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Frank Shaw
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. Ian Greenley

Age group 12 to 18	Inspection dates 21 September 2005 - 22 September 2005	Inspection number 278252
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Manshead Upper School is a mixed 13-18 comprehensive school. It is a Church of England foundation with voluntary aided status. With 1100 pupils, it is of about average size. There are 288 students in the sixth form. The school has grown steadily in the last five years and is oversubscribed. The school admits pupils in Year 9 from local middle schools. It draws its pupils from a large area with rural, suburban and urban communities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and with special educational needs is below average. However, the proportion with statements of special educational need is in line with the average. A large majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds with a broad range of other ethnic backgrounds also represented. The school is located on an attractive and spacious site. It became a specialist college for science and mathematics in 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing satisfactory education overall and some aspects of its work are good. There is a strong ethos of care and a wide range of sporting, social, cultural and other activities. As a result, pupils' personal development is good. The school is a safe and secure environment where pupils' achievements are regularly celebrated. The sixth form is particularly effective. The care and support provided to all pupils whatever their specific needs is also good. The parent questionnaire used as part of the inspection produced strong support for the school. Achievement and standards in the school are broadly average although progress in English and some aspects of science is not good enough. Inspectors could not support the school's view of the quality of teaching. Although there were some outstanding lessons, in too many work was not matched well to pupils' capability. Opportunities were missed to engage the pupils in using their initiative and thinking skills and to work together to solve problems. The curriculum provided is good. The school has developed good links with local schools through its status as a specialist college for science and mathematics. The support provided to pupils as they enter the school is good. There is also good guidance and advice on the choice of subjects at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school accurately identifies the areas it needs to improve. As yet, its procedures for monitoring and evaluating its progress require more rigour. There has been improvement in the main issues identified at the last inspection. The school has sufficient capacity to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and improve the consistency of performance in science - Challenge and involve pupils actively in their learning - Make the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, especially the quality of teaching and learning, more regular and rigorous

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with attainment which is close to the national average and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 11. The school is particularly effective in enabling pupils of all abilities to have some success. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and all pupils in Year 11 in 2004 achieved at least one qualification. Almost 96% achieved five GCSE passes. Achievement in the sixth form is good and standards are above average. There is variation in performance across subjects, as the school's self-evaluation makes clear. For example, standards in mathematics in National Curriculum tests are above average and higher attaining pupils, in particular, make good progress. However, pupils' progress in science in the same tests in 2004, was not strong enough and performance overall is inconsistent from year to year. At the end

of Year 11, results in English lag behind those of other subjects. In 2005, weak performance in English had significant impact on the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C. Subjects identified as needing to improve at the time of the last inspection now achieve amongst the best results in the school. Vocational courses are also effective. The school sets appropriate targets for performance at all the key stages based on the prior attainment of pupils and predictions generated from several sources. Performance is closely monitored using a range of data and the school identifies where targets have not been met or have been exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their achievements are regularly celebrated. Their attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They are generally well motivated and interested in their lessons. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils develop a good sense of social awareness within the school's strong moral framework. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is extended through the citizenship and religious education curriculum. The school provides a safe environment for its pupils. Pupils are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle, particularly through the curriculum in personal, social and health education. The school's policy on bullying is understood by staff and pupils alike. Pupils are aware that they should report incidents of bullying where they see it happening. Support for the most vulnerable pupils is very effective and valued by parents. The student council successfully prepares pupils to participate in their communities. Pupils feel, however, that their views and suggestions are not always listened to and acted upon. Where pupils have the opportunity to take an active part in their lessons they show high levels of enthusiasm, motivation and engagement. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and there is a strong caring ethos in which everyone is valued. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities organised through the House system and the general school programme of events. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in work-related learning from Year 10. Pupils' develop enterprise skills in the comprehensive citizenship and careers guidance programmes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Students enjoy good, secure relationships with teachers, are keen to succeed and respond positively to their work. Teachers assess pupils' work satisfactorily. Teachers set targets for achievement and monitor students' progress towards these targets. However, pupils are often unsure

of what they need to do to improve their performance. Pupils who have particular difficulties are supported well both in and out of lessons. In the best lessons, teachers set learning tasks that build skilfully on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they will learn, why it is important and how it relates to the next step they will take. They are expected to use their thinking and reasoning skills and have the opportunity to work collaboratively with others to solve problems. When provided with these challenges, pupils demonstrate their initiative and their learning is improved. In too many lessons however, work is not matched well to pupils' different levels of prior attainment. Teachers miss opportunities to involve the pupils actively in their learning. Pupils often are passive, with some not required to speak or answer a question at any stage. Therefore the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, in contrast to the school's own assessment that it is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. It has greater range and flexibility than at the time of the last inspection. A particular strength is the good opportunity for pupils to study vocational courses at Key Stage 4. The school has strong links with the local further education college. Vocational courses are also available to pupils within the school's curriculum. All pupils in this key stage have the opportunity to follow a broad core of subjects with further choice from a good range of options. Pupils choose whichever course is most suitable for them. Students in the sixth form have a wide choice of subjects, which includes vocational provision and subjects found less commonly nationally. General studies and religious education provide breadth to students' programmes. There is good access to careers guidance including external speakers. A wide range of sporting, social and cultural events and activities are offered. These enhance effectively the enjoyment of school life for many students. The school is at an early stage of implementing its specialist status as a science and mathematics college. It has established effective links with local middle schools and has ambitious plans for further developments connected with the increased use and impact of ICT across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. Pupils are well cared for through the system of learning and pastoral managers. This supports their personal and academic development. Procedures to identify pupils who may be at risk are effective. These pupils receive intensive support in a caring environment which ensures that they continue to progress in their learning. Teachers keep accurate records of pupils' progress. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is very effective. Systems to monitor the progress of these pupils are very well developed. Year 9 pupils receive very good support from tutors on entry to the school and this is highly regarded by parents. Pupils receive comprehensive advice about their subject choices before entry into Year 10. Careers guidance is good and the school

works very effectively with the Connexions service. Pupils benefit from links with employers, for example the army, who provide opportunities to develop pupils' problem solving skills. Pupils in the sixth form receive good information and guidance about higher education, training and employment opportunities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared by staff and the governing body. The school promotes personal development alongside academic success for all groups of pupils. The senior leadership team have clear roles which match their particular expertise and experience. Effective action has been taken to bring about improvement in the areas highlighted in the last inspection. There are good partnerships with key agencies and local schools. Some parents feel that the school does not take enough account of their views and those of their children. The school's procedures for planning its development accurately identify the key areas for further improvement. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching does not produce recorded information in a form which can be measured. Many of the criteria used to measure progress describe what has been done rather than what has been achieved. As a result, although the school's evaluation and judgement of its work in some areas is accurate, it is too generous at present in others. Middle management is satisfactory across the school. Performance has improved significantly in some subjects since the last inspection but the trend has reversed in others. The quality of leadership and management is uneven. Recent training for heads of department has increased their awareness and confidence in the monitoring of teaching and stimulated enthusiasm for sharing effective teaching methods. The school takes effective steps to recruit specialist teachers and deploys them well. Governance is good. Governors are well informed and promote the ethos of the school. The governing body is well organised. The school's progress in key areas is reviewed regularly through detailed scrutiny in sub committees. Financial management is good.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your politeness, co-operation and assistance during our visit. We appreciated your comments and opinions. You are a credit to the school. The inspection found that there were many things that the school does well. Almost all of you are happy to come to school, enjoy learning and take advantage of the wide range of activities and events provided. Your parents generally believe that the school is successful. There is a friendly, positive atmosphere between you and your teachers. Your behaviour is good and you attend regularly. The school provides you with a good range of courses, including vocational courses either at college or in school. The information and advice you are given before you choose courses is good. Performance in examinations is broadly the same as the national average though in some subjects, students have been very successful in recent years. There are good opportunities for you to be involved in arranging activities through the House system. The sixth form, in particular is a strength of the school. There are some aspects of the school's work that need to improve. Although the student council gives you a voice in the school, many of you did not feel that your suggestions were acted upon. You also felt that you did not always hear what the council had discussed and agreed. At the moment results need to improve in English and in some aspects of science. We also believe that you would achieve better if you were regularly encouraged to be more active in lessons by your teachers. Too often you are expected to listen and to provide only short answers to teachers' questions. We want your teachers to make you think, discuss, debate and justify your thoughts and to work together to solve problems. This is what we saw in the best lessons. Also the school must be more thorough in measuring how good the teaching you receive is on a regular basis. We are confident that the school can continue to improve. We wish you well in the future.