



Meade Hill School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105614
LEA Manchester
Inspection number 284069
Inspection dates 8 March 2006 to 9 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Eric Craven HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Type of school | Special | School address | Middleton Road |
| School category | Community special | | Crumpsall |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 | | Manchester, Lancashire M8 4NB |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0161 795 8445 |
| Number on roll | 46 | Fax number | 0161 795 6241 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr A Weinberg |
| Date of previous inspection | 9 February 1998 | Headteacher | Mr Tim Bennett |

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Meade Hill is a community special school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 who have emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. There are 46 pupils on roll including two girls. The pupils come mainly from North and East Manchester, although more recently pupils from other parts of Manchester have been referred to the school. The great majority of pupils are of white British heritage with four pupils from black Caribbean and mixed-race heritage. The home language of all pupils is English. Two pupils are currently 'looked after' by the local authority. Some 75% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school is part of a federation of three special schools providing for pupils with similar needs. The Year 11 pupils are educated at another site in the Castlefield area of Manchester, which is used by all three of the federation's schools. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are relatively new having been appointed since January 2005. When Meade Hill School was inspected in March 2004, it was judged to require special measures. It has subsequently received four monitoring visits from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that Meade Hill School no longer requires special measures.

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory but with good features in the promotion of the pupils' personal development and in the care, guidance and support it provides. The inspectors agree with the school's overall assessment of itself that it is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils.

The school has made good progress since the inspection in March 2004 when it was placed in special measures. Although standards are generally below national expectations, the rate of progress made by the pupils has increased and is now satisfactory and in some cases good. The quality of teaching and learning has improved steadily. The behaviour of the pupils has improved markedly since the last inspection and is now good. The staff and pupils have very good relationships and the pupils enjoy coming to the school and report feeling safe. The curriculum is satisfactory and is meeting the pupils' needs effectively. The individualised curriculum some pupils receive is a good feature of the school's work. The Year 11 pupils are not taught religious education and the teaching of a modern foreign language and geography is underdeveloped. Assessment has improved, although it remains variable and underdeveloped in some foundation subjects. Although the school has made varied and strenuous efforts to improve attendance it remains unsatisfactory.

The relatively new senior management team are developing their skills and are well supported by senior staff from the federation. They have an accurate view of the school and have promoted some significant improvements in the short time they have been in post. They recognise the need to develop a vision for the school through a longer-term school improvement plan. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the levels of attendance.
- Develop the foundation subjects where these have been newly introduced and where assessment is less well used.
- Extend the school improvement plan so that it provides a longer term vision for the school.
- Ensure that all pupils receive religious education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The rate of progress made by the pupils has increased since the school was placed in special measures, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Those pupils who attend regularly are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning overall. Greatly improved behaviour throughout the school has enabled the pupils to learn

much more readily. The school's records show that some of the pupils have begun to make very good progress in mathematics and good progress in English and science. Impressive improvements are being made by pupils receiving intensive reading support. The pupils have both academic and behavioural targets which are regularly reviewed and revised. Many of the pupils know their targets and some know the levels at which they are working. These targets have added challenge and purpose to the pupils' learning.

As a result of their chequered educational histories and, in some cases, their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, many of the pupils do not reach the nationally expected standards. Nevertheless, in the end of Year 9 tests in 2005, six pupils did achieve the nationally expected Level 5 or above in mathematics; three in English and three in science. There are increasingly higher levels being achieved in the end-of-Key Stage 3 tests than in previous years and there are fewer pupils being absent from the tests. At the end of Year 11 in 2005, two pupils achieved Level 2 and one achieved Level 1 in Entry Level certificates in English. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) courses have recently been introduced and 6 of the 10 pupils in the current Year 10 are expected to achieve a grade C or above, with four having the potential to achieve grade A.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of the pupils are good. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is fostered well and the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.

Those pupils who attend regularly enjoy school and there are very good relationships between staff and pupils. The pupils' attitudes to learning are now generally positive. The Year 11 pupils spoke particularly highly of how they enjoy the vocational opportunities on offer to them. The pupils' behaviour is good. There are good supervision arrangements and staff apply the behaviour management system consistently and fairly. Anti-bullying procedures are well understood by the pupils.

A wide range of extracurricular activities is available at lunchtime and every pupil is involved. They are encouraged to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. School councillors are in the process of setting up a tuck shop to sell healthy snacks and the pupils choose their own lunch. The pupils have raised funds for the school and plans are underway for them to link with pupils from Township school in Capetown, South Africa.

Attendance is poor overall. This academic year it is only 62%. Nevertheless, the school monitors attendance well and has made extensive efforts to improve it. This low figure is partly caused by a small group of persistent non-attenders, whereas the attendance of many other pupils has improved over time. The school and federation are working earnestly to engage other agencies and the local authority to determine more appropriate provision for those pupils whose needs the school can no longer meet, some of whom do not attend, although they remain on the school's roll.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the past, the poor behaviour of many pupils significantly impeded teaching and learning and in the March 2004 inspection the quality of education was judged to be poor. This is no longer the case and teachers are now able to focus their efforts on teaching rather than managing behaviour. The quality of teaching and learning has improved steadily over the last 18 months and is now satisfactory overall with a number of good elements. The best lessons demonstrate planning which accounts for individual pupils' needs; good one to one support; good questioning skills designed to encourage the pupils to think for themselves; and planned work for teaching assistants, which is carried out well. In these lessons, the pupils responded positively and showed good concentration; a confidence to ask questions and make suggestions; and an understanding of the progress they were making. In the great majority of lessons, the relationships between staff and pupils were very good. The main reason why some lessons were judged to be satisfactory and not good was the slow pace to the lessons, often because staff were not as well prepared as they might have been.

The assessment of the pupils has improved and there is more accurate tracking of progress in the core subjects of the national curriculum. However, assessment in the foundation subjects is variable with limited assessment taking place in some subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides an interesting and, in some areas, an innovative curriculum for the pupils, which is suitably matched to their needs overall. Music is taught to Key Stage 3 pupils at a local city learning centre and the Year 11 pupils receive their education at a site used by all three schools in the federation, where they enjoy an appropriate mix of academic and vocational subjects. A good feature of the school's curriculum is individualised learning programmes for many pupils. Individualised and accelerated reading, college links and the use of external vocational education providers are good examples of these effective programmes. A modern foreign language has only recently been introduced and is not yet fully developed. Geography planning and assessment are also in need of further development and religious education is not taught to Year 11 pupils. Generally, the development of the national curriculum foundation subjects is lagging behind that of the core subjects.

The curriculum is enriched by the use of visitors to the school. During the inspection, police officers from the Manchester Police Tactical Firearms Unit made an interesting and informative presentation to all of the pupils, and an external provider talked to one of the classes about anger management. The school nurse makes a good contribution to the personal, social and health education curriculum.

A suitable range of extra-curricular activities has been introduced at lunchtimes, and there are a few after-school activities being promoted for small groups and individuals.

There are increasing opportunities for the pupils to engage in activities with pupils from the other schools in the federation, including residential experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. The staff work hard to ensure that the needs of the pupils, including the most vulnerable, are met. The procedures for safeguarding are robust and clearly understood by staff and pupils alike. The school draws on the expertise of other professionals well, for example, good guidance is given on sex education and related health issues by the school nurse.

The academic performance of pupils is tracked on an individual basis. Pupils know their behaviour and academic targets. These are regularly reviewed with pupils and updated.

Sensitive and effective induction procedures exist for new pupils. The older pupils are suitably prepared for the next stage in their education through vocational opportunities and links with the Connexions service and local colleges.

The school works hard to involve parents in their children's learning and communication with parents is good. They receive weekly reports on their child's progress and the school provides transport to the termly consultation mornings for those parents who need it. Those parents contacted by inspectors have confidence in the school, recognise its improvements and value the work it is doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The relatively new headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the school. They have complementary strengths and are developing their managerial skills. They are extremely well supported by the principal and other senior staff from the federation. Together with the staff, the headteacher has successfully implemented an effective behaviour management system, the result of which allows staff to concentrate on teaching and learning rather than having constantly to manage difficult behaviour. The school is now a calm learning environment. This has been a significant step forward and the rewards for this are seen in the pupils achieving more and staff being able to extend the curriculum. The personal development of the pupils and the care and guidance provided by the staff are strengths of the school and are suitably prominent in its practices.

There are examples of self-evaluation being used effectively and of the pupils, parents and staff having been asked for their views. The headteacher has begun to write a Self-Evaluation Form but this is not yet complete. The school has focused its efforts on creating a one year action plan and exit strategy from special measures but is yet to establish a longer term school improvement plan. However, there is an intention to do this imminently. Teaching and learning have been monitored by the headteacher and senior staff from the federation. However, the headteacher does not yet have a

schedule to guide the school's monitoring and evaluation arrangements. A 'peer-coaching' model of staff development has contributed well to improvements in teaching and learning.

The governance of the school has improved. It was found to be unsatisfactory at the March 2004 inspection but is now satisfactory overall. The governors are becoming well informed about the progress of the pupils and they are developing their role effectively. The local authority has provided good support for the school overall and intends to continue to provide a high level of support for at least a year following its removal from the category of special measures.

The good progress made since the last inspection, alongside the strength of the collaborative leadership arrangements in the federation, mean that the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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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? | 3 | 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 | 3 | 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? | 3 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 | 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 | 4 | 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 | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 | 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? | 3 | 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? | 3 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 3 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 | 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 would like to say how much Mr McIlroy and I enjoyed spending two days in your school. Thank you for receiving us so well, letting us look at your lessons and work and for answering our questions. We are very pleased to tell you that your school has improved a lot since its last inspection and no longer requires special measures.

We think that Mr Bennett and Mrs Banfield have worked hard and have been successful in improving the behaviour of many of the pupils. We thought you behaved very well during our visit to the school and we saw that you have very positive relationships with the staff. You too told us that the school has improved, that you feel safe and that you have confidence that staff will help you with any worries you might have.

We found that teaching has got better now that teachers don't have to spend so much time managing behaviour problems. As a consequence of better teaching we found that many of you are making more progress than before. We were pleased to hear that some of you will be taking your GCSEs a year early and that the SATs results last year have improved a lot. We liked what we saw at the Castlefield site where the Year 11 students are mixing with students from other schools and are doing some interesting things such as catering and brick laying alongside their English and mathematics work. We have asked your school to improve the attendance of some pupils as this is a worry to us. Now that English, mathematics, science and ICT are taught regularly and your progress in these subjects is assessed we have asked Mr Bennett and the staff to concentrate on making the other subjects as good as these.

Now that the school is no longer in special measures we have asked the staff to develop a long term plan for the school so that everyone knows what work there is to be done in continuing to improve it over the next few years. Finally, we have asked that all of you are taught religious education as the students at Castlefield miss out on this part of their education at the moment.

Please carry on working hard and behaving well so that improvements like those we have already seen can continue to be made.