

Marjorie McClure School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101697
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	307777
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Greg Sorrell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	70
6th form	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Luis Martinez
Headteacher	Denise James-Mason
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
School address	Hawkwood Lane Chislehurst BR7 5PS
Telephone number	020 8467 0174
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Age group	4-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Marjorie McClure is a community special school for 95 pupils aged 4-19. All have a statement of special educational needs relating to physical disability and some have associated learning, communication, medical, sensory, and/or behavioural difficulties. It draws pupils from eight neighbouring London authorities as well as its own. There is an identified upward trend of more pupils being admitted with sensory impairment. The school works in close partnership with three primary schools and its co-located technology college. Recent awards include Healthy Schools; Sportsmark and Artsmark Gold. The school has had specialist Schools Status for SEN Physical Development for almost one year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Marjorie McClure is an outstanding school that successfully demonstrates its ethos of ensuring pupils achieve their potential academically and in relation to their personal development. Because of their learning difficulties, the standards reached by pupils, in most cases, are exceptionally low but all pupils do very well in their studies and many make outstanding progress. The quality of teaching is excellent and benefits from the role played by its advanced skills teachers, who share their good practice with other schools. Lessons are very well planned and typically they are characterised by brisk pace with many opportunities for first hand experience. Teaching assistants, some of whom have advanced skills and qualifications, make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and achievement. The vast majority of pupils meet their challenging targets and where they do not, the school promptly acts following a review of individual progress. The pupils enjoy coming to school and parents are very happy for their children to attend, knowing they will be safe, that they enjoy their lessons and that the school keeps them well informed.

The school's monitoring and tracking of pupils' overall achievement is most effective in ensuring experiences for pupils are relevant and suitably challenging. As a result, the curriculum is outstanding. It is also enriched by access to mainstream settings, a wide range of clubs and residential experiences. All the pupils make excellent progress in their personal development due to the well integrated provision of PSHCE (personal, social, health and citizenship education), support and guidance. The pupils are very proud of their school, evidenced by strong excellent relationships at all levels, excellent behaviour and attendance. One comment from pupils typified their views... 'It's so inclusive, everyone gets a chance to be as good as they can be.' Absences are invariably due to medical reasons.

The overall quality of care, guidance and support provided for all is excellent. School procedures, including child protection, ensure their well-being is appropriately safeguarded. Careers education and transition planning prepare them for moving from one stage to the next. Pupils receive a wide range of therapies to improve their access to the curriculum and overall independence. Respect for the pupils' wishes and dignity in their personal care are strong features of daily life at school. Rare exceptions to this very strong aspect are the transport arrangements for a number of pupils, which are unsatisfactory.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding due to example set by the headteacher and her deputy. Managers have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. As a result of its specialist status, the school has consolidated its earlier strengths and gives outstanding service to its pupils and the community. Its capacity for further improvement is also outstanding.

The governing body gives excellent support on personnel, student welfare and finance issues although their role in systematically evaluating students' achievement requires further development.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Students make outstanding progress in their personal development because of the highly relevant preparation they receive for transition to the sixth form. The quality of education provided is also excellent. They are encouraged to make their own choices and to seek independence, for example, by having regular residential experiences at the school's off-site

centre. Excellent teaching results in students making outstanding academic progress in relation to their individual targets and accredited courses. For some students, courses are accessed at the secondary school on the same site where they gain good passes at GCSE level in a wide range of subjects, including, English and mathematics. A minority of students also achieve success at A level when appropriate. Other accreditation is achieved at Entry Level and through Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) modules. A few students achieve awards in sports leadership for football and dance. All make excellent progress in achieving maximum independence. In common with the school, the sixth form has excellent links with local schools and colleges and all are well prepared for leaving school. The leadership and management are provided by the same staff as the main school and are similarly outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The children make excellent progress towards the learning goals expected for their age, particularly in literacy, numeracy, physical development, communication and understanding the world around them. Assessment is rigorous and work is very well matched to the necessary small steps in learning. Children receive a high level of individual attention by caring and competent support staff. The staff know their children very well and demonstrate this by good quality planning and reporting. Where appropriate, children are taught in ability groups. The teachers and support staff are skilled in creating many opportunities for communication and development of independence. The curriculum is personalised for each child's learning needs and, together with the emphasis on children's personal development, provides a solid foundation for life in the main school. The department is very well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of governors in evaluating students' achievements.
- Review the daily transport and reception arrangements for some students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The range of ability within the whole school, including the sixth form, is exceptionally wide ranging from pre-National Curriculum levels, (p-levels) to A level. The overall attainment of learners is exceptionally low due to the special educational needs of the majority. Nevertheless, in relation to their starting points, the pupils' achievements are outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress in meeting challenging targets in their individual education plans. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils attain nationally accredited qualifications, such as courses ASDAN courses, Entry Level and GCSE examinations in all subjects according to ability.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The pupils' excellent progress in personal development reflects the school's ethos and strong commitment to ensuring all achieve their potential in terms of independence and academic studies. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The pupils respond enthusiastically to the emphasis on healthy lifestyles including the importance and enjoyment

of physical activity. Some older pupils display a striking commitment to promote inclusion beyond the school. Examples include being sports ambassadors and addressing outside audiences about disability issues and the scope for achievement. The school council ensures pupils know about democracy and one pupil plays an active role on local authority's Youth Council. Within the school, all pupils show a genuine concern and respect for peers, especially those who require mobility aids to get around.

Pupils feel safe and confident and know what is expected from them within the school's calm and supportive atmosphere. Behaviour and attendance are outstanding because pupils' enjoy school so much and love to be there. Absences are invariably for medical reasons. Pupils report that they feel free from bullying or unpleasantness and that they really look forward to coming to school. Lines from the school song sum up their attitudes, 'Work hard, play hard, sometimes through the pain and it's friendships that keep us going on.' Parents unanimously endorse this view. Older pupils greatly enjoy the residential provision based at Wood Lodge where they develop independence skills such as shopping meal preparation. The oldest pupils also gain valuable life-skills through work experience.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teachers know their pupils very well and this enables them to plan appropriate lessons. Typically, lessons have a brisk pace with extensive opportunities for practical experience, for example, creating multimedia presentations of a recent trip to the coast. Pupils, with varying levels of support, add their own voices and images to recount their experiences. In this way, teachers enable the pupils to develop their literacy and ICT skills. The impact of advanced skills teachers is evident in the achievement of pupils and staff who also enhance their skills. Despite this, some support staff do not always wear appropriate footwear during physical activity. On rare occasions, teachers talk for too long, which reduces time for practical activity. Relationships are very strong between learners and all staff. Teaching assistants are well deployed and assist teachers in assessing and recording each small step in pupils' progress. Good use is made of group work that enables pupils and students to learn at appropriate levels. For example, in a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson, pupils worked tuck shop finances. Learning opportunities ranged from handing real items of stock to evaluate stock levels to using a spreadsheet to calculate overall takings.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum and additional activities are outstanding due to emphasis on designing lessons to meet individual needs. All pupils have equal access to learning because relevant experiences and support are provided where necessary. For example, pupils' access mainstream education to follow GCSE courses. The curriculum is rigorously monitored for its effectiveness and the use of cross-curricular learning has improved greatly since the last inspection. There are very good programmes for post-16 students that include work related learning. Currently work experience is not offered at Key Stage 4, although the school is considering some pupils who

may benefit from such activities. Programmes in the Foundation Stage have been carefully adapted to meet each pupil's early learning needs. The provision for pupils' development in PHSCE underpins much of the school's work and has a significant impact on all learners' personal development. In addition to the National Curriculum, a wide range of imaginative enrichment activities are provided. For example, Fitness Friday, 'Wheelie Week', financial management and self-advocacy offer highly relevant experiences. Regular visits to the community, local schools and colleges and residential experiences ensure all learners are well provided for irrespective of need.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides excellent care, guidance and support for its community. As part of its specialist status remit, its services are also highly valued by its partners and others in the community. Therapies have a significant impact on the pupils' abilities to access the curriculum and sessions are well managed to ensure time out of lessons is minimised. Relationships with other agencies are very effective and mesh well with academic subjects, for example, physiotherapists and occupational therapists liaise closely with the PE department. There is also excellent provision for the pupils' emotional and medical needs, including personal care. Significant preparation is undertaken to ensure smooth transition between classes and when leaving school for further education. Annual reviews of statements of special educational needs keep parents well informed. Academic support and guidance is good. School based academic reports are very detailed although some written by external teachers are not of the same quality. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive, comments included, 'cannot speak highly enough of the whole school team...it's a privilege for my child to attend the school...outstanding doesn't come close.'

Due to its large catchment area, many pupils experience long journeys to and from school. Transport arrangements usually work well, although there are regular instances where pupils arrive at school early and have to remain in minibuses for a significant time. This does not provide them with a good start to the day. Attempts by the school's management to resolve this situation has thus far been unsuccessful.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and a clear vision for the school's development. She is most ably supported by her deputy headteacher and together they lead by example. Other managers show the same commitment to provide the best inclusive education for all pupils. For example, rigorous monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievements in subjects leads to effective modification of the curriculum to maximise achievement. The school also surveys all partners and parents about how well it performs. The school meets its challenging targets in relation to achievement and partnerships. The communication between home and school is very well organised and parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their child's education. Staff morale is high because they feel valued and are given significant responsibilities and support to enable them to work effectively. Relationships with other agencies are well

managed and all partners, including the local authority, make good use of the school's expertise in their specialist field. Governors provide excellent support for the school in relation to curriculum, personnel, premises and finance although their role in evaluating pupils' achievement is less evident. Financial matters are well managed and appropriately audited.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Marjorie McClure School, Chislehurst, BR7 5PS

Thank you for helping me to get to know your school this week and for giving me such a warm welcome. I am pleased to say that you go to an outstanding school! The quality of teaching and all other support you receive are outstanding and these all help to enable you to achieve as well as you can.

The headteacher leads the staff very well and they all work very hard for you. The teachers and teaching assistants make sure that your lessons help you to learn in lots of different ways. They provide you with lots of choices and help you to make excellent progress in learning as well as becoming as independent as possible. I really enjoyed meeting the school council and was most impressed by your confidence. You also do some fantastic work in the community to help others understand just how much you can achieve in the classroom and in sporting and arts performances. You get on well with the staff and your behaviour is excellent. I was impressed by the way you look after each other in the playground. I could see you were happy when you arrived at school and were tired when it was home time.

You have an excellent range of things to do and I know you like all the clubs and trips you go on. You have lots of lessons, including swimming, games and movement lessons to keep you strong, fit and healthy. Your school meals are especially healthy and it's clear - tasty too! You obviously enjoy your lessons, especially using computers! Wood Lodge is very well used and helps to prepare for leaving school. The links that you have with other schools and colleges, especially Coopers, are really effective in giving you the opportunity to mix with other young people and take even more exams.

In order to improve the school even more, I'm asking the headteacher to do a couple of things. One is to see that the governors are more closely involved in just how well you do in lessons at school, Coopers and at college. The other is to improve the bus arrangements when you arrive at school so you don't have to wait so long before school begins. I wish you lots of luck in the future and hope everyone wears their best kit on Sports Day!

Yours sincerely

Greg Sorrell

Lead Inspector