

# The Meadows Sports College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132231
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	341319
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Thompson HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	123
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andy Davies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gordon Phillips
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Dudley Road East Oldbury B69 3BU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5697080
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' work, tracking of pupils' progress, important policies and the school enhancement plan. They read 37 questionnaires completed by parents as well those completed by staff and students attending the school.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effective use of assessment in lessons to ensure the best possible progress for all students
- the effectiveness of provision and how it helps students to become more independent both socially and in using daily life skills
- the role of the leadership team in making improvements to the school that will help improve outcomes for all students
- the effectiveness of the governing body in holding the school to account for using resources to help improve outcomes for students within secure financial management arrangements.

## Information about the school

The Meadows Sports College is a full service extended school. It provides education for students across the local authority with severe and complex special educational needs; many also have additional physical, medical and communication difficulties, including autism. The school has an additional therapeutic centre based on the school site for students aged between 11 and 16 who have complex emotional needs. This centre is subject to re-organisation and will no longer be under the governance of this school after April 2010. The location of the centre will move off the Meadows site by September of the same year. The Forge Centre, a specialist college for young adults aged 19 - 25, is no longer based at the school. All students in the main school and centre have statements of special educational needs or are currently being assessed. A third of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with about a fifth from homes where English is an additional language. Approximately five percent of students are in the care of the local authority. There are slightly fewer girls than boys in the main school and all students in the therapeutic centre are boys. The school has specialist status for sports and art. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in June 2008 and in 2009 achieved the Investors in People award, Sportsmark, Activemark, Healthy Schools Platinum Award and received a Highly Commended Triple S Partnership Award for Sport (Start -up, Shape-up, Sign-up). It was confirmed during the inspection that the school had achieved the FMSIS financial standard.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Students enjoy coming to school and appreciate the support and help they are given by the staff. They feel safe, have good friends and feel they are cared for and listened to by staff. Parents are also very confident that students are safe and well cared for. All students, including those in the sixth form and in the therapeutic centre, make at least satisfactory progress across the curriculum and many make better progress in physical education and, in some year groups, in art and design. The inconsistency of progress in subjects is closely linked to the quality of teaching and staff expectations. Teaching is generally satisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, lessons are well planned and there are plenty of opportunities for students to actively participate. In other lessons, staff do not always make the most of learning opportunities and in many lessons students spend too long waiting for their turn and are not reliably encouraged to communicate. Assessment is not used consistently across the school to ensure the right level of challenge is offered for all students in a group. Students' behaviour is good and many make significant strides in this area, responding to carefully planned and consistently applied support. The partnership work with other agencies is strong and, particularly in the therapeutic centre, this helps students improve their behaviour and begin to have a greater understanding of the consequence of their actions. Students develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. The specialist status for sports and art makes a strong contribution to students' fitness and well-being. Students have some good opportunities to become 'buddies' for other students and work as a team. Other opportunities for students to apply their skills in real life situations are more limited and are not sufficiently embedded across the school day.

The curriculum for younger students at the school is good. Specialist status has helped to open up many new opportunities and widen experiences on offer for all the students and their families. The curriculum on offer in the therapeutic centre is also good and is carefully designed to meet the priority needs of the students. For students aged 14 to 19, the curriculum has some good areas but is not designed well enough to help students become more independent. The school has made significant progress since the last inspection not least in ensuring secure financial systems and accountability structures within the governing body. The senior team have a clear understanding of good aspects of the school and where future improvement needs to be concentrated, including early plans for developing the curriculum for 14 to 19 year olds. The good improvements, made since the current permanent senior team has been in place, reflect a good capacity to improve.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

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- Ensure the school's new initiative 'every second counts' becomes a reality by increasing students' active involvement in learning and ensuring all students have plenty of opportunity to apply their skills in different contexts throughout the school day, independently as well as with support.
- Make sure the information about the level of students' skills and understanding is:
  - accurate so that the school knows how much progress students are making in lessons, from year to year and across the key stages
  - used more carefully in lessons to raise expectations and increase the challenge for students.
- Develop the curriculum for 14 to 19 year olds to help raise aspirations and ensure there are plenty of opportunities for students to develop higher levels of independence and apply skills they have learnt in a range of situations.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

There is a mixed picture of levels of achievement across the subjects and year groups. The variation is not consistent for any particular group or level of need. In mathematics, taking into account prior learning and the complexity of students' needs, students make satisfactory progress and for some it is good. There is a similar profile for information and communication technology and slightly fewer students make good progress in communication and English. Progress in lessons observed during the inspection was variable and directly linked to the quality of teaching and levels of expectation from staff. Students attending the therapeutic centre also make satisfactory progress in their academic skills and good progress in improving their attendance and social skills. The attendance of students in care of the local authority is poorer than for others, usually due to frequent changes in home circumstances this prevents them from making as much progress as some of the other students. The therapeutic centre has recently introduced a formal system to find out how well students are progressing in their self-esteem and confidence. This shows clear links between the length of placement at the centre and the increase in rates of progress. Attendance is average, very few students are absent from school frequently, and in the main school this only occurs when students have serious health problems.

Through good support, students learn the difference between right and wrong and how to behave appropriately in different situations. Students are usually polite and supportive of each other. Timers, symbols and rewards are frequently used well to help students make the right choices about how to behave. Students appreciate the structured opportunities they are given to contribute to school development. Although there are some well planned opportunities for students to make choices, particularly about subjects or courses they wish to follow, there are many missed opportunities for making choices on a day-to-day basis. This, and the lack of opportunities for practising

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daily life skills, leads to satisfactory preparation for the future. Students are developing a good awareness and understanding of different cultures and respond well to time for reflection; for example, in assemblies according to their own levels of understanding.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The school has a good system known as 'Lemons' - 'learning environment match of needs'. The system helps staff identify how to plan the environment so that all the students' needs are met. When this is applied alongside accurate knowledge of the next steps of learning within a curriculum area, students make good progress. In most lessons, the system is not used consistently and teaching is satisfactory. When teaching is good or better it is underpinned by high expectations of students and good levels of involvement in activities that are planned with great clarity of purpose. In many lessons, there are times when some activities, although enjoyable, are not helping students to

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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learn the next steps or apply previously learnt skills. In some lessons, the limited amount of resources reduces the pace of learning. The individual and paired teaching in the therapeutic provision is characterised by sensitivity to the students' previous educational experiences.

The curriculum for students aged 14 to 19 is not well developed to build on previous learning or offer a range of pathways that help students to maximise opportunities to become more independent. There are limited vocational based opportunities and life skills aspects of the curriculum are not well enough developed. The curriculum is well supported by the wide range of enrichment activities on offer. Approximately one third of students are involved in after-school activities. The staff have worked well to engage parents and other partners to make sure participation is open for all students, for example ensuring access to transport. Residential opportunities have also helped to enrich the curriculum. Last year, they were not open to all students but although they have not yet taken place this year, they have been planned and offered to all students. The staff at the school have a very caring attitude to the students and relationships are good. Any instances where students find it difficult to make the right choice about how to behave are managed well and the need for high levels of support in these instances has reduced significantly. The progress made by students in the therapeutic centre demonstrates the impact of good guidance and support from school staff and the partners from other agencies.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The collective work of the leadership team is good and helping to improve provision. This in turn is helping to improve outcomes for students. The focus on teaching and learning is well-placed and key members of staff are clearly helping to lead by example and drive improvement. Work on making sure staff have an accurate knowledge of what the students are achieving has been improved recently and this in turn is helping the school to evaluate the effectiveness of provision and value for money more accurately. The senior team are clear about the differences in achievement of individuals. Although no groups are consistently identified as achieving or participating less than others across the year groups, the school knows where there is variance in particular years. Action to improve equality of achievement has been targeted effectively and improvements are beginning. Opportunities provided through the school's specialist status are promoting

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good community cohesion; for example, work with local religious and community groups on understanding issues about disability. Work with various sports organisations and links with other schools are also helping to improve the range of opportunities available for young people in the local area. Safeguarding arrangements are good and designed specifically to meet national requirements as well as the students' additional needs. The good joint working with health professionals, social care colleagues and the police makes a significant and positive difference to the outcomes for students both in the main school and in the therapeutic provision. The governing body has taken a swift and active role in addressing inadequacies identified during the last inspection. Financial management arrangements are robust and meet the required standards.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

In the sixth form, there are some distinct differences from the rest of the school and students feel they are given more responsibility and wider opportunities. Students continue to enjoy school. The progress made by students is satisfactory and has a similar profile to the rest of the school. Teaching is also satisfactory. Lessons are well-planned to provide a good structure and variety of activities but sometimes levels of support are too high. Occasionally, the range of resources do not maximise choice or ensure active involvement of all students. The satisfactory curriculum provides a variety of options for some subjects, for example, fitness and leisure, and students enjoy choosing from those available. Regular links with local colleges also help to enhance the curriculum and there are some good examples of students being helped to prepare for



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the move to college after Year 14. The curriculum is not designed sufficiently well to provide good vocational opportunities from the ages of 14 to 19 and there are insufficient chances to practise and apply life skills in day-to-day learning. Many of the school leadership team have responsibilities within the sixth form and have accurately identified some aspects that need improving but planning for action is in the early stages.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. All parents who returned the questionnaire felt their children are kept safe at school, a view shared by inspectors. Nearly all parents felt their children were making enough progress although a few did not comment on how well prepared their child was for the future. The school is highly committed to working closely with parents and has established a number of popular family learning opportunities and events. The breadth of additional opportunities and regular helpful communication are appreciated by parents. There are a couple of individual concerns that communication has not been forthcoming about particular occurrences. The school had already acknowledged this to inspectors and is seeking ways to ensure this does not occur again.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Meadows Sports College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 123 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	76	9	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	59	15	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	62	12	32	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	49	17	46	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	51	15	41	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	46	17	46	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	46	18	49	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	46	15	41	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	54	14	38	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	49	15	41	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	46	16	43	2	5	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	17	46	16	43	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	54	15	38	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



27 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of The Meadows Sports College, Oldbury, B69 3BU

Thank you for welcoming me and my colleagues to your school. I enjoyed meeting so many of you. Here are some of the things I found out about your school.

Your school is satisfactory.

Staff look after you well and keep you safe.

There are some good teachers who expect you to learn lots.

The leaders at your school know what needs to get better.

Many of you told me about enjoying sport and dance and some of the best lessons we watched were in these subjects.

I have asked the staff at your school to make some things better for you. I have asked the principal to:

- make sure you practise skills that will help you in the future and you can help by trying to do them on your own
- check what you know already and what you have learnt in lessons
- make sure that when you are 14 there are more chances for you to learn in other places and in other ways.

Yours sincerely

Janet Thompson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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