

Meadow High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102462
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	355197
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Stuart Charlton

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Burton
Headteacher	Ross Macdonald
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty nine lessons were observed and all teachers were visited. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner, staff and students. The work of the school was observed and inspectors scrutinised the school improvement plan, the minutes of the leadership team and governing body meetings, a range of other documentation and 76 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the management systems and structures in communicating and promoting the school vision and driving improvement to ensure quality provision for all students.
- How the systems to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and set challenging targets and track progress ensure that all students achieve as well as they can.
- How effectively the curriculum meets the increasing complexity of students' needs.
- How good are the outcomes for students in relation to their personal development and the effectiveness of the school's monitoring of these.

Information about the school

Meadow High School caters for students who have complex learning difficulties and/or autism. All have a statement of special educational needs. Since the last inspection the complexity of need has increased considerably, noticeably in Years 7 to 11. The school also provides support to mainstream schools in Hillingdon for students with complex needs and those on the autistic spectrum. The majority of pupils are of White British or Mixed White heritage. There are small minorities from Asian and Black British-Caribbean heritages. Recent changes to the senior management team have resulted in the appointment of a second deputy headteacher and structural changes to roles and responsibilities. The school attained Specialist Schools status for Cognition and Learning in September 2008. It holds Healthy Schools status, the Sportsmark and International School awards.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Meadow High School provides a good education for its students. The care, guidance and support which all staff provide are outstanding, ensuring that students gain the personal and social skills which prepare them extremely well for their future lives. Since the appointment of the present headteacher there have been significant changes in staffing to address the increasing complexity of students' needs. These changes have ensured that teaching and learning are good and most students make good progress. However, in a small number of lessons teachers' planning does not identify students' specific needs clearly enough and in these lessons they can achieve more.

Safeguarding procedures are good, and students say that they feel safe and secure. Relationships are excellent and are a crucial factor in the school's success. Students thoroughly enjoy school and say that lessons are fun. The school has robust procedures to ensure good attendance and punctuality. Behaviour is excellent and the vast majority of parents speak highly of the school and the positive effect it has on their children. Significant changes have been made to the curriculum for students in Years 7 to 11 to tailor it to meet their changing needs. Overall, it is now good and the school responds extremely quickly as the complexity of need changes. The wide range of vocational and work-related learning in the sixth form linked to work experience opportunities for all students ensure that by the time they leave these students are extremely well prepared for the world of work. In the main school, the clear focus on addressing students' communication needs and the development of their numeracy and information and communication technology skills ensure that all students who leave at age 16 continue into further education.

Parents and carers are actively involved in their children's learning. The school's work with parents and carers to help them to understand and meet their children's needs is of very high quality and the overwhelming majority hold the school in high regard.

The headteacher provides a very clear vision about how he wants the school to develop. He is well supported by his senior leadership team and they have worked effectively with staff to ensure that there is a shared vision across the school. Staff development is given high priority and their input is valued and acted upon so that all strive to improve the school even further. Since the last inspection, rigorous systems to set targets and track progress have been developed so that these give high quality information. The school has rightly identified that this information is not used well enough to compare its performance with the national picture so that it is

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certain it is doing as well as it possibly can. The school has developed particular strengths in teaching communication skills, reflecting its specialist status for cognition and learning. Through its work with local mainstream primary and secondary schools it shares its expertise in this area very effectively. The changes in teaching and learning and the curriculum to address the increasing complexity of need and the shared clarity of the school's vision about how it should improve mean that the school is well placed to improve in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in all lessons teachers clearly identify the needs of students and how these will be met.
- Make the best use of monitoring information about students' progress to compare performance with the national picture so that it is certain it is doing as well as it can.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most students, regardless of their background, make good progress in lessons and over time. Good communication by staff, supported, where necessary, by the use of pictorial and signing strategies, results in motivated students willing and eager to learn. Excellent learning was seen in a Year 11 English lesson where the consistent use of a wide range of communication techniques enabled students to make rapid progress in developing their communication skills and in extending their understanding of the differences between 'fact and fiction'. There are very effective systems to determine the attainment of students when they enter the school and set challenging targets. Links with other schools to compare students' progress in a wider context have been initiated but are not yet fully embedded.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are very sensitive to each other's needs and use times of quiet reflection in an extremely positive way. Through the school council, students are closely involved in helping to contribute towards the school community; a good example of this is the way in which older students 'buddy' younger ones. Older students make an important contribution to helping the elderly in the area and the Christmas and summer productions are important events in the community calendar. Students gain a clear appreciation of the wider world and all are very willing to express their views on a range of issues. In discussion, they showed an excellent understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle, emphasising the importance of the very wide opportunities for physical development and the healthy lunches and breaktime snacks. This reflects the school's Healthy Schools status and Sportsmark award.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching was seen across the school, where staff made very effective use of a wide range of specialist communication techniques, including signing, pictorial systems and oral language, depending on students' needs. Teachers and support staff work together very well and have a seamless approach to behaviour management. Staff have very good subject knowledge which they use well to engage and motivate students. Planning is mostly thorough but in a few lessons is focused on content delivery rather than clearly identifying the needs of each individual and how these will be met in the lesson.

The strong curriculum provides a good balance of academic, vocational and work-related opportunities. A wide range of therapies, particularly speech and language, has been introduced to enhance the school's provision and these are helping to ensure that the range and increasing complexity of students' needs are met. Enrichment activities, such as the sports clubs, particularly football for boys and girls, visits to the theatre, museums, a local sports centre and a farm, add to students' enjoyment of school and link their learning to real-life experiences. This is further supported by the skills older students develop to enable them to become independent travellers.

Staff make sure that all students, including those who arrive at different times, settle quickly and happily into school life. Staff know students extremely well as individuals and students have high levels of confidence in the school's ability to advise them effectively in both their school work and their lives at home. Parents are partners in their children's education and the school works extremely well with them, and with a

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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wide range of outside agencies, to support students' development. The school supports vulnerable students extremely well so that they are not disadvantaged by their personal circumstances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads by example and provides an excellent focus to the work of the school. He is ably supported by his senior leaders. Their enthusiasm, commitment and determination ensure that their vision for the school's development is very effectively translated into action.

Monitoring is rigorous and has ensured a clear pattern of improvement in classroom practice so that there is effective teamwork between teachers and support staff, resulting in students' excellent personal development. The governing body has worked tirelessly to identify the skills and expertise it needs to fully hold the school to account. Recent changes in personnel and in the sub-committee structures have enabled governors to work effectively as the school's critical friend. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of its work and staff act upon its aspirations consistently at all levels so that no student is disadvantaged. Through its specialist status it shares its expertise with other schools at local, national and international levels and through these links campaigns tirelessly to eliminate discrimination. Partnerships with other schools and professionals are also used well to promote the learning and well-being of students. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and everyone is clear about what needs to be done for the school to improve further. Staff approach key developments very enthusiastically.

The school has developed its links with parents and carers so that these are now exemplary. Students' academic targets and their individual action plans are made available to parents and carers on a regular basis and these are used very effectively by most parents so that they can be partners in their children's learning at home. Safeguarding and child protection are high on everyone's agenda and fully meet national requirements and guidelines. There are excellent links at national and international level through which the school promotes community cohesion. The links with schools in Poland and Turkey are particularly effective in helping pupils to understand what life is like in other countries. However, links at local level are less well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

In recent years the proportion of students going from the main school into the sixth form has increased significantly. The quality of care, guidance and support in the sixth form is as equally impressive as it is in the main school. The academic, vocational and work-related opportunities are extensive and contribute very effectively to giving students the skills they need in their future lives. Teaching and learning are good, linked to the high quality relationships which all staff develop with the students. However, in a few lessons, staff do not clearly identify the needs of students in their day-to-day planning and how these will be met. Leadership and management are strong ensuring that the quality of the provision keeps pace as more students with the most complex needs enter the sixth form.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

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Views of parents and carers

Just under one half of parents and carers completed the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers support the school and nearly all appreciate the time and effort that all staff put in to caring for their children. As one said, 'My son has grown in this school and they have helped to make him into the person he is today. I am proud of him and of the school, he will find it difficult when he has to leave.' The inspection findings fully endorse such sentiments. The inspection findings clearly show that the very few negative comments do not accord with the excellent care, guidance and support and overall good education that all students receive at Meadow High School.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Meadow High School 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	53	32	42	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	51	34	45	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	35	46	31	41	7	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	34	40	53	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	43	36	47	2	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	37	41	54	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	36	44	58	2	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)	24	32	37	49	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	33	43	34	45	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	33	39	51	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	45	29	38	5	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	31	41	36	47	4	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	49	26	34	7	9	1	1

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



26 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Meadow High School, Hillingdon UB8 3QU

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we inspected Meadow High School. We particularly enjoyed our discussions with you. We found that Meadow High is a good school and that there is always someone to help you whether it is with your school work or life outside school. As one of you said 'they really help us to get on with life'. You emphasised how much you now enjoy coming to school and we could see that lessons are fun and teaching is good. You told us that the small group sizes are a real help and that you feel safe and secure in Meadow High School. We agree with your very positive comments and consider that you get first-rate care and support and a good education.

To make the school even better we want staff to make sure that in all lessons they show clearly how they are going to meet your needs. In addition, we want them to make better use of information to show that the school is doing as well, if not better, than other schools in the country.

I know that you will try your very best at all times to help the staff to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Charlton
Lead inspector

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