

Meadow High School

Royal Lane, Hillingdon, Middlesex, UB8 3QU

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school because:

- Teaching throughout the school, including the sixth form, is almost always good and occasionally outstanding. The quality of teaching has improved through the rigorous monitoring by senior staff.
- The rate of pupils' progress has improved steadily despite the increasing complexity of the needs of many pupils. Pupils make good progress especially in English and mathematics.
- Teachers are skilled in helping pupils overcome barriers to their learning caused by communication difficulties or other additional needs.
- Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are very well cared for. They enjoy school, feel safe and their attendance is above average. Parents and carers confirm that their children look forward to school. There are excellent relations between adults and pupils.
- The sixth form is good. It ensures pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- The headteacher and senior staff lead the school well. They robustly monitor standards and ensure that teaching continues to improve. The governing body knows the school's strengths and areas for development and challenges and supports school leaders well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough good or better teaching enables a large majority of pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Teachers do not always record in sufficient detail each small step of learning that pupils make. Because of this, they are sometimes unable to plan each individual pupil's next step with a sharp enough focus to ensure all pupils achieve their best.
- Teachers do not always show pupils how to improve their work or how to make good enough progress to achieve their targets.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, all of which were joint observations with senior staff.
- Meetings were held with teachers, senior staff, members of the management team and with governors. An inspector also conducted a telephone discussion with a senior member from the local authority.
- The 12 responses to the online parents' and carers' questionnaire, (Parent-View) were taken into consideration as were results from the school's own questionnaires for parents and carers. The 34 completed staff questionnaires were also looked at.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including self-review documents, development planning, details of the curriculum and governing body minutes. Records of pupils' progress, behaviour and well-being were scrutinised as well as monitoring reports on the quality of teaching. Attendance records were checked as well as all procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Walker

Additional Inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for secondary aged pupils with complex learning difficulties. The school also provides support to mainstream schools in Hillingdon for pupils with complex learning needs including those with a diagnosis of autism. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are White British with a minority of pupils from a variety of minority ethnic groups, reflecting the make-up of the borough. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Just under a third of pupils are in the sixth form.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding, which is given for pupils eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- There are no pupils who take examinations early and there is no alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching still further so that all groups of pupils make the best possible progress by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently record the small steps in learning which pupils make in order to sharpen their planning for each individual pupil in taking the next small step
 - making sure that pupils are given effective feedback on their work so they fully understand how to improve their work in order to reach their individual learning targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The number of pupils joining the school with severe and complex learning needs has significantly increased since the previous inspection. Pupils generally enter the school with major barriers to their progress, such as autistic spectrum disorders and communication difficulties and their attainment is low. Despite this, over time, they achieve well and this rate of progress has shown consistent improvement over a number of years.
- By the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form, almost every pupil gains some form of accreditation. Progress in the sixth form is good. Almost every pupil achieves success in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve success in vocational qualifications such as City and Guilds and BTEC. The school has an impressive record of success in art. A few pupils achieve GCSE and A-level qualifications.
- There are no significant differences in the performance of different groups. The promotion of equality of opportunity for all pupils is at the heart of everything the school does and there is no discrimination. The assessment and tracking of pupils' overall performance are very accurate and efficient and the impact of interventions and extra support is clearly monitored. The Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding has been used appropriately to increase the level of speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy for eligible pupils. The school has also directed significant resources to ensure that all other pupils who would benefit, receive this extra support. As a result, all pupils are well supported and make good progress.
- Pupils achieve well in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. The regular intensive reading and writing sessions where pupils gain a good grounding in the sounds of letters and words are effective in raising standards of literacy. Pupils enjoy using the newly refurbished library. Teachers plan effectively to incorporate reading and number into most lessons. For instance in a Year 7 drama lesson, pupils read aloud a well-loved story and then acted out the story using mathematical vocabulary such as 'under' and 'over' to make the story real.
- Pupils in the sixth form are given many opportunities to adapt their basic skills in a variety of vocational courses such as horticulture and hairdressing and in activities to develop their understanding of the world of work such as business enterprise initiatives and work experience.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has shown consistent improvement over time and since the previous inspection. This is because of well-established and rigorous monitoring procedures accompanied by well-focused supportive mentoring and further training. As a result, teaching is almost always good with occasionally outstanding lessons and this has a significant impact on the pupils' good progress. It is not yet outstanding because not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Adults use lessons well to broaden the experience of the pupils and to enable them to use their basic skills in a variety of new learning experiences. The pupils make good progress and are well prepared for college courses when they leave school.
- Teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' needs. They are particularly skilful in overcoming the pupils' speaking and listening difficulties through the use of good classroom organisation and in employing a variety of visual cues. Adults are careful to give pupils time to respond to questions and to help them reinforce their grasp of vocabulary and grammar.
- Pupils with autism are taught well. Staff ensure there is a clear structure to their lessons and through skilful questioning enable pupils to relax and achieve well. Reading and writing skills are taught effectively. Teachers plan clearly across all subjects to help pupils improve their speaking and listening skills and their literacy. The 'multi-disciplinary team' of therapists works effectively throughout the school. As a result, pupils from all different groups and those with additional

special needs achieve well.

- Lessons are generally well planned and taught enthusiastically and they proceed at a brisk pace which helps the pupils to maintain their interest and concentration. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' success. They effectively check pupils' understanding during lessons and adjust the activities to take account of their pupils' interest and understanding. Teachers are generally scrupulous in assessing the progress each pupil makes. On occasion however, teachers do not effectively record each small step in learning. This makes their future planning for individual pupils less focused and slows down progress. As a result, pupils do not always securely know how well they are doing or how to improve their work further.
- Teachers organise their classrooms effectively. Support assistants are well briefed and help individuals and small groups of pupils to make good progress. The pupils enjoy the high levels of individual support they receive. Adults are skilled in asking questions to stretch and reinforce pupils' learning, and as a result they feel confident to ask for help and to try new things.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils invariably display excellent attitudes to their learning. They greatly enjoy their activities and have very good relations with adults. As a result, classrooms are happy, quiet and industrious places of learning and this has a significant impact on the pupils' progress.
- Behaviour outside the classrooms is impeccable. Pupils are confident and polite and extremely thoughtful and courteous towards others. They tolerate and accept each member of the school and this helps to maintain a socially cohesive whole. The pupils' warmth and curiosity towards others, their high levels of self control and their good understanding of acceptable behaviour demonstrate their excellent development in spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Bullying and racially motivated incidents are almost unknown. There have been very significant reductions in recorded incidents over time and these are now negligible. Pupils report that they feel entirely safe and free from unpleasantness and parents and carers overwhelmingly confirm this. The school has robust procedures in place to deal with all forms of bullying or exploitation including cyber bullying and e-safety. The school has a harmonious and welcoming atmosphere. Pupils love coming to school and their attendance is above average. As one parent or carer reported, 'He is so happy at school, he jumps out of bed with excitement when it's time to get ready.'
- This calm and positive atmosphere is as a result of excellent behaviour management procedures. Staff are very well trained in de-escalation techniques and there is complete consistency in the day-to-day management of pupils. Adults know the children very well. They offer exemplary support and on occasions where a pupil becomes confused or upset and exhibits challenging behaviour, he or she is calmed patiently and sympathetically. Disruption to lessons is minimal.

The leadership and management are good

- The experience and expertise of the headteacher have enabled him to build a senior team which provides strong and consistent leadership throughout the school. There are high expectations of both staff and pupils.
- Leaders maintain a very close eye on the performance of pupils through good tracking procedures. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement since where any falling off of performance is detected, a clear and effective range of interventions can be employed, including the specific skills of the 'multi-disciplinary team'. This is effective in ensuring pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening, reading, writing and number skills.

- There are well-established procedures for managing teachers' performance, linked closely to the national Teachers' Standards and to salary progression. Rigorous monitoring is supported effectively by further focused training and mentoring of individual teachers if necessary. This secures consistent improvement and has ensured that teaching is usually good and occasionally outstanding.
 - As a result of close monitoring, senior staff have a good grasp of strengths and weaknesses. Leaders self-evaluate provision honestly and accurately and this leads to well-organised and detailed development planning. Leaders are well aware for instance of occasional weaknesses in teaching and are actively working to remedy these. The sixth form provision is well organised and managed.
 - There has been a track record of consistent improvement since the previous inspection, well supported by the active and informed governing body and by the local authority, which maintains light touch support but is ready to provide expert support should the school ask for it. As such, the school has a good capacity to maintain improvement.
 - The curriculum has been carefully reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of each pupil. There is a suitable emphasis on communication, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum and substantial work to support the pupils' personal development and their independence and life skills. Pupils have many opportunities to join school clubs and to go on visits out of school. This enhances their communication and teaches them that learning takes place in variety of situations. This makes a good contribution to their behaviour and self-control in different situations and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Older pupils have choice in vocational subjects and they are encouraged to aim as high as possible in gaining qualifications, for instance in A-level art. This prepares them well for their continuing education on college courses.
 - There are positive links with parents and carers, all of whom would recommend the school to other parents and carers, and with a range of health and social care professionals who support the pupils. The school enjoys a good reputation among local schools for the outreach support it provides.
 - Safeguarding arrangements are very effective and meet all statutory requirements.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The management committee is well informed about pupils' progress, including school performance data and how they compare with similar schools'. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and salary arrangements for staff, and are involved in the decision making process in rewarding staff for good performance and in managing any underperformance. They maintain clear supervision of the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding and its impact on pupils' progress and well-being. Members self-evaluate their own effectiveness rigorously and take part in regular relevant training events such as those for understanding data and child protection. They are well informed and up to date, regarding the recruitment of staff and safeguarding arrangements for children.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102462
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	425483

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	207
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Burton
Headteacher	Ross Macdonald
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 November 2010
Telephone number	01895 443310
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