

Melrose School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102697
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	355237
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2011
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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Holmes
Headteacher	Steve Childs
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. Teaching and learning were observed in nine lessons and eight teachers were seen. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, staff and students. The work of the school was observed and the inspector scrutinised the school improvement plan, the leadership team and governing body minutes, a range of other documentation, including that for safeguarding, and four questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of the management structures and strategies at all levels in ensuring high-quality provision for all students.
- The systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning to ensure that all students achieve as well as they can.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in providing a balance between academic, vocational and work-related courses.
- The impact of care, guidance and support on the outcomes for students given their changing needs.
- The effectiveness of behaviour management strategies and systems to promote attendance and punctuality, and in improving students' performance.

Information about the school

Melrose provides education for students with a statement of special educational needs, or those being assessed for a statement, related to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). Many have additional communication difficulties and the complexity of need has increased significantly since the previous inspection. Many students join the school at other than the normal times. The overwhelming majority are boys. Most are from White British backgrounds with small minorities of White and Black Caribbean and Black African and Black Caribbean origins. None speaks English as an additional language, although a very few are from homes where English is not the main language. The present headteacher was appointed in April 2008 and since that time there have been significant changes in staffing, particularly at senior management level. The school holds the Sportsmark award and Healthy Schools status and is part of the Jack Petchey Award programme.

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

Melrose School provides a good education for its students. Since the appointment of the present headteacher, it has improved significantly and continues to do so. The care, guidance and support provided by all staff are excellent so that in the small groups, students make outstanding progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem and in learning to manage their own behaviour. All make at least good progress in developing skills in all subjects, and for some of the present students, progress in this aspect of their learning is excellent. The school has strong systems for behaviour management which are operated consistently by all staff and supported very effectively by the Student Mentoring Team. As a result, behaviour around the school and in classrooms is good and, for the overwhelming majority, greatly improved from when they first started. Students contribute extremely well to the school and the wider community, and indicate that the school's safeguarding procedures provide a safe and secure environment. The school has very good systems in place which are effective in promoting attendance and encouraging punctuality so that attendance is average. This represents excellent improvement compared with students' very low attendance at their previous schools. The school's links with parents and carers are excellent based on very regular meetings with them and home visits when necessary.

The school has invested considerable time and effort in developing its provision since the previous inspection. It has given a clear focus to the development of students' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The newly reorganised curriculum now fully matches students' needs, but it is too new to have made a full impact on improving their achievements. Students value highly the wide range of opportunities for physical activities and they explained how they have changed their lifestyle and become much more health conscious. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff establish exemplary relationships with the students and these are the basis of the excellent guidance and support for students' personal development. The staff know each student well and use this knowledge effectively to address students' personal needs, particularly those related to behaviour. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not use the information about students' needs in the subject to best effect to adapt their teaching so that each individual pupil makes the maximum progress.

The headteacher leads by example with vigour, enthusiasm and determination and provides a clear vision for the development of the school. In communicating this to staff, he is extremely well supported by the senior leadership team. Together, they have established a stable staffing base, mapped out a clear path for improvement based on accurate self-evaluation and developed effective teamwork across the teaching, support and administrative staff. Since the previous inspection, the governing body has undergone considerable changes in personnel to refine its skills and has made significant changes to its systems and procedures. It is now more influential in determining the strategic

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direction of the school but does not always provide a sharp enough focus on challenging senior leaders. The school's work in partnership with other professionals to meet students' needs and promote their well-being is excellent and a highly significant factor in helping students and their families. The improvements which the school has effected on students' achievements, their behaviour and attitudes to learning during a period of change and the effectiveness of its self-evaluation show that the capacity for further sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in all lessons, teachers use information about the subject needs of individual students to best effect to maximise the progress they make.
- Use the skills of the governing body to give a sharper focus to challenge senior leaders and to drive improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

All students gain nationally recognised qualifications which are very well matched to their needs and aspirations. By the time they leave, attainment is broadly average. Given their below-average starting points on entry, this represents at least good progress and achievement. For some of the present cohort, the GCSE grades they are on line to attain represent excellent achievement. There are no differences in the progress made by students with different needs or between different ethnic and gender groups. Pupils quickly settle into life at Melrose and start to enjoy their lessons due mainly to the excellent relationships with staff and the care and support they provide. They support one another very well and generally listen carefully when others are leading a discussion. In an excellent mathematics lesson for Year 10 students, the teacher used a very wide range of teaching styles to match the subject needs of each student so that their learning was of the highest quality. However, this exemplary practice is not consistent in all lessons.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is based on the high expectations established by all staff and the role models they present to students. Students develop an excellent awareness of the need for a healthy lifestyle and this is recognised through the Healthy Schools award. They explained how they learn to keep fit both through timetabled physical education lessons and by participating in the extremely wide range of out-of-school activities. All feel safe and many explained how much this increases their enjoyment of school.

Most students have erratic attendance patterns when they first arrive at the school. However, because the first-day absence procedures are operated with rigour, attendance rates improve rapidly. Students make an extremely positive contribution to their community through decorating rooms at the local Brightwell Children's Home, volunteer activities as part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, work with the Wimbledon Theatre Trust and as part of the Trout in the Classroom Project where students raised trout and released them into a local river once they had matured. The literacy, numeracy and ICT qualifications students achieve, together with the gains in their personal skills, prepare them very well for life when they leave the school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The very supportive relationships established by staff with their students are strengthened through individual mentoring and tutorial sessions. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and in their planning they always identify the needs of each individual. However, in a few lessons, this does not extend to adapting their teaching approaches to maximise the development of each students' subject skills. Generally, teachers use resources, particularly interactive whiteboard technology, very well to interest and engage students. In most lessons, the activities are very well matched to students' levels of understanding, especially in art, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology.

Since the previous inspection, the school has overhauled its curriculum to give a very good balance between academic, vocational and work-related opportunities. The development of highly effective partnerships with colleges and training providers has been particularly effective in this context. The focus on developing student's self-esteem and confidence is the cornerstone of the school's work, with a particular focus on communication strategies and building positive relationships, which promotes the excellent development of students' personal skills. These curriculum changes have been relatively recent, but have enabled students to gain access to a much wider range of qualifications than in the past.

Staff make sure that all students, including those who join the school at different times during the year, settle quickly and happily into life in the various aspects of the school's

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provision. Transition arrangements for those moving into the school and for those who move to further education or work are excellent and contribute very well to reducing students' anxieties. The highly consistent and successful approach taken by all staff to behaviour management ensures students make rapid improvements in their attitudes to school. Staff spend a great deal of time listening to students, giving them advice and promoting their well-being to overcome difficulties in their personal circumstances. They are given excellent guidance about careers and opportunities available when they leave the school.

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 has brought a clear sense of purpose to Melrose which is driving the development of the provision. The close working partnership within the senior leadership team has enabled them to communicate ambition and ensure that effective systems have been implemented to monitor and evaluate provision at a whole-school level. The systems which have been implemented to determine attainment on entry, set challenging targets and monitor students' progress are rigorous and robust. These provide high-quality information which gives a clear overview of the school's performance. Staff are clear about what they need to do to improve and approach key developments enthusiastically, for example the introduction of vocational and work-related programmes in Key Stage 4. The changes in personnel on the governing body have enabled it to include a wider range of skills, particularly in terms of educational expertise. Streamlining its operational systems and structures has enabled it to be much more effective in challenging the school's leadership and in ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

An extremely strong feature of the provision is the partnerships which have been established with other professionals, particularly those in social services, the health and mental health fields and the police, which are especially effective in reducing students' feelings of isolation and enhancing their self-esteem. The school's excellent partnership with parents and carers ensures that they are fully involved in their children's education. All staff, but particularly those in the Student Mentoring and Pastoral Team, go out of their way to ensure that parents and carers have full and regular information about all aspects of each student's performance. At the end of each school day, staff hold a review meeting which details how each student has done during the day. Where necessary, staff make phone calls to parents and carers, not just about things which may not have proceeded according to plan, but celebrating activities which have gone well. Through its work, the school successfully challenges discrimination and ensures that all students, including those

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whose circumstances may make them vulnerable because of their personal circumstances, have the opportunities they need to succeed in their lives after school.

Safeguarding and child protection are high priority on everyone's agenda and fully meet national requirements and guidelines. Risk assessments are thorough, reflecting the highly effective systems to manage behaviour. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. Effective links at local and regional level are enhanced by work in a national context.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Views of parents and carers

Only four parents and carers returned a questionnaire which is well below the average for schools of this type. The inspector made use of the school's own questionnaire data to give a more comprehensive picture of the views of parents and carers. The vast majority are extremely pleased with what the school does for their children. Comments such as, 'The school has been there for my son and for me. My son has improved so much since he has been at the school.' reflect their satisfaction and fully support the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Melrose 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 inspector received 4 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 37 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	3	75	1	25	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	4	100	0	0	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)	2	50	2	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	75	1	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	3	75	1	25	0	0	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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Melrose School, Mitcham, CR4 3BE

Thank you for all the help you gave me when I inspected Melrose. I judged that the school gives you a good education and that the way in which staff support you is exemplary. I particularly enjoyed being able to talk to many of you. You explained clearly to me that staff treat you like adults and help and support you not just in the school but in your home lives as well. I could see that these aspects make a highly effective contribution to giving you a 'second chance' in education. By helping you to overcome your dislike of school, and in learning to manage your own behaviour, the school helps you to regain your confidence and self-esteem so that you can successfully move to further education, work or training. The small group sizes are a great help and, as one of you said, 'lessons are fun, it doesn't feel like a school'. You all make a highly effective contribution to the local community through working at the Brightwell Children's Home and raising trout to release in the local river.

I have asked teachers to ensure that in every lesson they use information about the subject needs of each of you to maximise the progress you make. The governing body now has a great many skills which I want them to use more effectively to make Melrose even better by providing more challenge to senior leaders. I know you will play your part in this by doing your best at all times, particularly in managing your behaviour.

Yours sincerely,

Stuart Charlton

Lead inspector

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