

Manchester Mesivta

Beechwood, Charlton Avenue, Prestwich, Greater Manchester, M25 0PH

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students do not all achieve as well as they should from their above average starting points in English or in French, geography, physical education and history.
- Not all teachers provide enough opportunities for students to think and work things out for themselves.
- Teachers do not always astutely check that enough progress is being made throughout a lesson so that they can meet the different needs of individual students, particularly those of middle ability.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed well by teachers, so that they can assist with students' independent work.
- Leaders have not always been rigorous enough in checking the quality of teaching in terms of its impact on students' learning and progress.
- Governors do not have sufficient information about the work of the school. This means they are unable to hold the senior leaders to account with sufficient rigour.
- Arrangements for the performance management of staff are not fully robust. They do not take into consideration the Teachers' Standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Students make good progress in mathematics and science and gain grades that are constantly above average. This is particularly good because students take their examinations a year earlier than most students nationally.
- Most-able students make good progress.
- Almost all students have very positive attitudes to learning, are self-motivated and are eager to stretch themselves.
- Students' behaviour is good, and they feel safe and are looked after well. The school community is harmonious and mutually supportive.
- Attendance is improving.
- The recently appointed headteacher has ensured improvements in the quality of teaching, students' achievement and attendance, and together with the governing body has placed the school on a much more secure financial footing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, including two joint observations with the headteacher. All teachers were seen other than one part-time teacher who did not teach during the inspection.
- Only the secular provision in Years 7 to 11 was inspected.
- Meetings were held with two groups of students across the age and ability range, senior and middle managers, the special educational needs coordinator, and the School Improvement Partner. The inspector spoke by telephone to the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 parent responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own parental questionnaire and the five staff responses to a questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school during break and lunchtimes, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's records of attainment and progress, the school's view of its own performance and school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body meetings, lesson monitoring documents and performance management records. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, exclusions, safeguarding and child protection records.

Inspection team

Sally Lane, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Swallow

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Manchester Mesivta is a small orthodox Jewish school.
- It provides a dual curriculum where Jewish studies are taught in the mornings and secular subjects in the afternoon, meaning that students are in school for at least nine hours a day.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium is funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all students are White British and there are no students who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well below the national average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below average, but with numbers increasing in Years 7 and 8.
- No students follow courses in other schools or colleges.
- The school enters all students for their GCSE examinations in Year 10 so that they can begin their A-level studies in Year 11.
- All students progress to Talmudical College either in the United Kingdom or Israel for two or three years.
- There is an independent sixth form attached which is funded through links with Bury College for Year 12 only. This was not inspected.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes and reductions in staffing. The new headteacher took up post in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by increasing the proportion of lessons that are good or outstanding by:
 - providing more opportunities for students to investigate and work things out for themselves rather than being over directed by teachers
 - ensuring that all teachers systematically check all students' understanding in lessons and match work more closely to take account of their varying abilities, so that they learn exceptionally well
 - improving the deployment and effectiveness of teaching assistants in lessons.
- Improve students' attainment and rate of progress in English so that they match levels achieved in mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide the correct level of challenge for all students, especially those of middle ability
 - ensuring students are given a wide variety of tasks and experiences to broaden their knowledge and to enhance their ability to write creatively, for audiences and in different styles.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - ensuring that any weaknesses in teaching are clearly identified and that professional development and support are in place to ensure improvements are rapid
 - further updating the arrangements to manage the performance of staff, to ensure that the Teachers’ Standards are used as the criteria for judging the quality of teaching, that all teachers’ targets are precise, and that professional development opportunities are more closely tailored to individuals’ needs
 - ensuring improvement plans focus on specific and quantitative measurements of success
 - regularly providing governors with detailed information about students’ progress, so that the school’s performance can be held more rigorously to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because although students enter the school with overall attainment that is above the national average, by the end of Year 10, when students take GCSEs, too few have made enough progress or achieved sufficient A* to C grades in English, particularly those of middle ability.
- Students also make no better than expected progress in history, geography, physical education and French.
- Students make significant progress in mathematics and science and achieve well above the national averages in these subjects.
- Almost all students with special educational needs make the progress expected of them, partly because the special educational needs coordinator monitors their progress carefully. However, teaching assistants are not always sufficiently well deployed to meet students' individual needs in lessons.
- The school has now recognised that it is inappropriate to enter all students for GCSE examinations in English in Year 10 regardless of their ability.
- Students, who enter the school in Year 7 with literacy skills that are below those expected for their age, receive extra support in the classroom from teaching assistants, which enables them to make expected progress.
- There are very few students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding. This means that any comparison between their attainment and progress and that of other students would be statistically unreliable.
- The most-able students learn and make better progress than their peers, particularly in English. In all lessons, they give extended answers and question astutely to extend their understanding.
- Students are articulate and able to express themselves well. They read widely and fluently, but are not always able to write as confidently in different scenarios and for different audiences, or creatively, because of a lack of opportunity to do so across different subjects.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teachers are conscientious and committed, the quality of teaching requires improvement because not enough is good or better and over time, it is evident that teaching in English and some other subjects has not been as strong as in mathematics and science.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that meet the different needs of students. In these lessons, the majority of students complete the same work and listen to the same sometimes too lengthy introductions, so not all of them make the progress they should. This is particularly the case for middle-ability students.
- Students do have independent learning skills because they take responsibility for their own learning and complete the regular homework in full. However, these independent learning skills are not always encouraged in lessons because teaching tends to be over-directive at the expense of students investigating and puzzling things out for themselves.
- The quality of support from teaching assistants varies. The majority sit with the student they are supporting, but are not always required to make a significant contribution to supporting their learning and understanding during whole-class introductions to lessons.
- The quality of marking is variable. In mathematics, students respond to teachers' helpful and pertinent comments and advice, leading to improvements in their skills. In English, marking is regular and detailed but lacks precision and so has a limited impact on students' ability to write for purpose or more creatively. It is difficult from the teachers' comments to understand what it is students specifically need to do to improve.

- In the best lessons when students are working independently, teachers check on the progress of individual students usually through effective questioning, but in other lessons, teachers do not check astutely enough the progress being made so that they can adapt activities accordingly.
- Teachers promote good relationships in most lessons and this helps to create a positive climate for learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Around the school and in lessons, students' behaviour is good. Students have a positive regard for visitors and all adults and are friendly, helpful and courteous. The overall small number of students means that they all know one another and get on well together. The school is a happy place.
- Attitudes to learning are extremely positive in all lessons, including those where the teaching is less motivating, because they are eager to learn and understand. They contribute fully and this has a strong impact on their progress in lessons. All students are well motivated, fully committed to their learning and are supportive of one another.
- Students indicate that they feel safe in school and feel confident to deal with any issues that might arise among themselves. They are aware of unsafe situations, homophobic- and cyber-bullying and report that there is almost no bullying.
- In their responses to questionnaires, including Parent View, both parents and teachers are overwhelmingly positive about students' behaviour.
- Attendance is improving this year so far, but it has been low in recent years. The school is now more focused and rigorous in ensuring regular attendance.
- There have been no permanent exclusions over the last three years, but the number of fixed-term exclusions has declined in this academic year. Systems to record any incidents require some improvement.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because despite recent improvements to the overall quality of teaching and students' achievement, teaching in some subjects, notably English, French, physical education and the humanities, is not promoting students any better than expected progress. Over time, leaders have not kept students' performance or the quality of teaching under rigorous enough review and so achievement has fallen. This is now recovering as a result of the more robust checking of students' attainment and progress and of teachers' performance.
- While there is improvement in the rigour of leaders' checks on teaching and achievement, previous shortcomings still exist in, for example, focusing too little on the impact of teaching, on the quality of students' learning and in not tracking closely enough the progress of different groups. The new headteacher and other leaders are now beginning to tackle this.
- Although there is room for even more precise targets and quantifiable measures, the plans for improvement reflect leaders' overall accurate view of the school's performance and of the most important priorities for development. The headteacher has worked swiftly and effectively to cut the budget deficit and has, with other leaders, successfully managed changes to staffing, which have promoted better students' achievement and teaching.
- Leaders and managers have also recognised that a review of early entry for GCSE examinations is required in the light of disappointing results in English, especially for middle-ability students. They have also sought and acted upon the advice of external consultants in order to make improvements to tracking students' progress. The positive changes highlighted indicate that there is a capacity to improve the school further.
- Professional development requires some improvement because not all staff feel they have

received the necessary training to help hone their skills. Changes to and the reorganisation of staffing have slowed the rate at which such training can occur and also the adoption of the Teachers' Standards as a criteria for judging the quality of teaching.

- While there is some lack of breadth in the curriculum due to the restricted time devoted to secular studies and the limited choice of subjects studied at GCSE, students have enriched experiences as a result of activities, such as art and music and visits involving overnight stays. Students' access to physical activities is somewhat restricted, leading to some underperformance in physical education.
- Students' spiritual and moral development is promoted very effectively through the morning Hebrew and biblical studies, and through opportunities to work independently and think for themselves in some subjects, especially mathematics. Good social skills and qualities are encouraged through planned experiences for students to work cooperatively and collaboratively in some lessons. There is limited evidence of students' cultural appreciation around the school in planned real-life opportunities, but they do have an awareness of a range of different cultures across the world. They have 'adopted' a Jewish school in Belarus.
- Leaders create a positive and calm atmosphere in which students develop a love of learning, a desire to achieve and a caring attitude. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met. Parents who responded to the opportunity to give their views wholeheartedly recommend the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are passionate about the school and its ethos, and endeavour to do their best to deliver the best provision for all students. They have a close relationship with the headteacher and discuss the school's issues, both formally and informally on a regular basis.
- While governors are keen to understand how well the school is doing, and are confident in challenging the school's leaders, they do not receive enough detailed information about the school's performance to do so effectively.
- Governors admit that they are not up to date in terms of expectations of their role and the last training they received was three years ago. The governing body does not compare the school's overall performance, or that of different groups of students, with the performance of other schools or with nationally published information, and so is unclear as to whether students achieve well and reach their full potential.
- The minutes of governing body meetings have no detail of the discussions held and, therefore, provide no evidence that they are holding leaders to account. Arrangements for the annual review of the headteacher's performance are appropriate.
- Governors have supported the headteacher in cutting the budget deficit by restructuring staffing.

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	134195
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	429649

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–17
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	I Shapiro
Headteacher	Binyomin Sulzbacher
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
Telephone number	0161 773 1789
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Email address	mesivta@bury.gov.uk

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