

Mapledown School

Claremont Road, Cricklewood, London, NW2 1TR

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Students achieve well during their time at the school. They make good progress from their low starting points and are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives and education.
- The sixth form is good. Students work hard and make good progress as a result of effective teaching.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers plan their lessons well; classrooms and all available resources are well organised so that each student has the best chance of learning as much as possible.
- Students behave extremely well. The school provides them with a very safe environment in which to learn. There is an overarching atmosphere of dignity and respect for all.
- School leaders, including the governing body, have developed effective programmes for monitoring teaching and students' achievement. These actions provide them with good information about its strengths and the areas which need to be improved.
- Governors use the information they gain from regular monitoring visits and meetings, to hold school leaders to account and to challenge everyone to do their very best.
- Well-thought-through learning activities provide students with many opportunities for developing useful life skills and for gaining insights into different lifestyles and cultures.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a very few lessons teachers' plans do not always make clear what each student is expected to learn in that lesson.
- When monitoring lessons, senior leaders do not always check that teachers' planning contains precise information about each student's learning needs and levels.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors spent almost five hours in classrooms observing 13 lessons taught by 13 different teachers. They were joined in six of these lessons by members of the school's leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, with senior leaders and with teachers. Inspectors took the opportunity to talk with students at lunchtimes and at break times.
- The views of the 24 parents who provided their views via the online Parent View survey were taken into account, as were the views of the 51 members of staff who completed their questionnaires.
- A number of the school's own documents were scrutinised including policies and minutes of governors' meetings. Inspectors carefully reviewed how the school evaluates its own performance and how it makes plans for improvement. Inspectors looked at students' work and files.
- Inspectors met a small group of students to talk about their school and to watch a slideshow which illustrated their achievements.

Inspection team

Bob Pugh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Liz Bull

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for students who live in the London Borough of Barnet who have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. A large proportion of students have an autistic spectrum condition. All have a statement of special educational needs.
- Over 40% of students are entitled to receive the pupil premium, which provides additional support for those in the care of the local authority, those with families in the services or those who are known to be entitled to free school meals. This is much higher than the national average.
- A much higher proportion of students than the national average come from backgrounds where English is not the first language spoken at home.
- Classes are organised into three learning zones with students allocated to a class according to the type of needs they have.
- Older students have the opportunity to attend some lessons at a further education college.
- The school has obtained recognition for its work over many years by gaining numerous national and local awards. The headteacher is a national leader in education.
- Holiday and after-school clubs provide students with further opportunities to participate in leisure and recreation activities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standard of teaching to outstanding levels in all classes by ensuring that:
 - teachers' plans always contain precise information about the precise learning objective for each individual student in the lesson
 - school leaders check carefully that all lesson plans contain precise information about every student's learning needs and levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All students make good progress and achieve well during the time they are at this school. There are minor variations in the rates of progress made by different groups at the school. Many students who have profound and multiple learning difficulties make particularly strong progress as a result of highly effective teaching in their classes.
- Many students make rapid gains in developing good communication skills, including those who are new to learning English. By the time they are ready to leave, many are able to use signing confidently to make choices or to express a view.
- Rates of progress made by all students compare well with those made by students with similar needs in other schools, and sometimes they do much better. Students who are entitled to receive the pupil premium achieve as well as others and sometimes they do better than their peers.
- By the time they are ready to leave, students have acquired a range of useful life skills which will help them make the best of the opportunities available to them in the future.
- Students in the sixth form are grouped within the learning zones for 14 to 19 year olds. Their successes are recognised as they gain accreditation from the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) awards. They make the best uses of the equipment and resources at a further education college to do even better in design and technology, art and some other subjects.
- Older students are particularly proud of their achievements when on work experience placements, for example at a local office, where they acted responsibly when they were relied on to get mail ready for posting. Students who take some lessons at a further education college do well.
- Students concentrate well in lessons as they work towards their own individual targets. In a well-planned lesson for students who have an autistic spectrum condition, one student was seen to be getting great pleasure from reading a chosen book. He was very well supported by a teaching assistant who helped him to understand the story by pointing to words and pictures.
- Many students who have severe physical difficulties make good gains so that they can become more independent. They enjoy hydrotherapy sessions in the school's pool and gain strength and confidence as a result of good teaching.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Lessons are particularly well planned and organised in almost all cases. Teachers have high expectations that students will work hard and they ensure that very effective support is available from their assistants so that everyone can do their very best. They know their students very well. This means that they can carefully plan personal learning targets to stretch students as they develop key skills.
- In one lesson it was noted that everyone remained with the whole group throughout the lesson and all students did the same work, despite a wide variety of abilities among students in the class. Very occasionally, teachers do not provide precise information about what each student should achieve in the lesson. This means that students themselves and those working with them do not always know exactly what they have to do to reach the target set for them.
- In more effective lessons, teachers adopt a range of strategies for communicating their expectations clearly. They encourage students to use sign and to follow personal timetables containing picture symbols which set out what needs to be done and when. Well-prepared individual work stations are successfully used as calm areas for learning, by those who need that level of structure.

- As a result of high-quality teaching in English and drama, many students learn to perform confidently while others demonstrate real understanding of the story under consideration and empathy with the characters on stage. In a highly enjoyable drama lesson, students rehearsed enthusiastically for their production of Romeo and Juliet while their classmates in the audience applauded and cheered them on.
- Teachers regularly check how much progress each individual has made and they give students succinct feedback about how successful they have been. In an excellent English lesson for sixth form students who have profound learning difficulties, the teacher and her assistants used signing and gesture to communicate very effectively with each student. It was clear from their responses, that students understood what was required of them, anticipated what would happen next and they watched other students, showing interest in what they were doing in the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students have overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards learning. They settle very quickly at the beginning of lessons and work hard throughout. They are polite to each other and there is a great sense of mutual respect among students and staff.
- At lunchtime and in the remarkably well-equipped playground, students have learned to wait and to take turns. They are friendly and they show some curiosity about each other's work and about the presence of visitors.
- Because staff are so well trained and calm and resourceful, those students who find it difficult to cope in lessons have opportunities to leave safely, with proper support. Work is often taken out of the room with the student on these occasions so that learning can continue. On a number of occasions, students who had left returned to the lesson after a short time and settled back to their work, thanks to excellent guidance from their teachers and assistants.
- Students learn to be alert to dangers when using the internet as a result of good teaching in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. Older students are given regular opportunities to improve their understanding of common dangers in real-life situations. For example, some students take part in good travel training programmes; with appropriate support from a member of staff, they learn to use public transport to get to college.
- The school site is very secure. Great thought has been given to the creation of a safe and stimulating playground. Students make full use of the nature trails, they work in the allotments and animal care areas, as well as enjoying the equipment for climbing and swinging. Many have provided their own ideas for improving the outdoor environment; they are eager to get outside during breaks from lessons.
- Well-thought-through behaviour management plans are in place for those students who need them. These are reviewed regularly by staff and parents, and where possible, by the students themselves. Incident reporting is rigorous and comprehensive. Students who are able to do so say that they feel safe at school. Bullying of any kind is very rarely heard of.
- Parents are right to be very confident that their children are safe and well cared for when they are at school.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers are ambitious for their school. They regularly review the progress and achievement of all students and they have good information about how well each one is doing.
- Information gained from monitoring lessons, from performance management for teachers and other staff and from regular surveys of the opinions of all involved with the school is used to good effect overall by leaders and managers to raise standards. However, leaders do not always check that information about students' learning needs and levels are routinely included in lesson plans, so that all who are supporting in the lesson have the best information about how much

each student has previously achieved.

- Senior leaders, including governors, skilfully identify strong performance and they robustly address areas that are weaker. They reward and promote highly effective teachers when opportunities are presented. Learning support assistants who wish to take on further training are well supported to achieve their goals.
- Professional development opportunities are highly thought of by teachers and other staff. They speak with great enthusiasm about how attendance on courses, or help and support from experienced colleagues has helped them to improve teaching or management of behaviour. The school gained an award for being a 'great small place to work' in recent years.
- Every teacher takes responsibility for developing one subject in the school's rich curriculum. They plan stimulating and memorable experiences for students, such as participation in drama and performance or sporting challenges, alongside daily practice sessions and activities to improve key life and social skills
- Leaders and managers ensure that students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed, by planning good programmes for learning about other lifestyles and cultures. Every student has an equal opportunity to use all the school's resources to do well.
- By encouraging young people from other countries to visit and spend time with their students, school leaders have boosted their students' knowledge and understanding of the world. At the same time they have 'shared a little of London' with others.
- All statutory requirements for keeping students safe are well met. Good training is available for staff and governors to help them meet these responsibilities.
- The local authority provides light touch support to this school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors visit regularly, spend time in lessons and they question staff and school leaders as well as meeting students and parents to gain their views. They have an accurate understanding of how much is being achieved and how strong teaching contributes to good progress. Governors ensure that strong teaching and support work are recognised and properly rewarded through well-organised performance management programmes.
 - The school's finances are in good order. Governors have an accurate understanding of the impact of the pupil premium on those entitled to receive it.

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	101397
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	425587
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
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	67
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kath Delaney-Wetherill
Headteacher	Steve Carroll
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 December 2008
Telephone number	020 8455 4111
Fax number	020 8455 4895
Email address	office@mapledown.barnet.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

