

The Misbourne

Misbourne Drive, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, HP16 0BN

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good and rising rapidly. The majority of students make the progress expected of them. The proportion making better progress than this in English is now close to national figures while in mathematics it is above.
- Attainment in art, drama, French, Spanish, humanities and photography is high.
- Students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium achieve as well as other students in the school. This reflects the good support and guidance they receive.
- The sixth form is good. Students' attainment at both AS and A2 levels is improving. Sixth formers make good progress in their work-related courses.
- The school prepares students well for future success through a wide range of subjects and courses. All go on to further education, training or employment when they leave.
- Teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding because leadership of this is exemplary. This is having a positive impact on the attainment and progress of all students.
- The behaviour of students and their attitudes to learning in classes are extremely good. Relationships between students and with adults are very positive.
- Students say they feel extremely safe in school and are very well cared for by the school. Parents strongly support this view.
- Attendance is now above the national average and is continuing to improve. Exclusions are falling rapidly.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, know what the school does well and where it can do even better. They are ambitious for its future. They are rigorous in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching. This is leading to a sustained improving trend in achievement.
- Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. It is underpinned by the school's strong respect for all individuals as valued members of the community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all students make rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always consistently set work at the right level of challenge for all their students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 42 lessons, of which 12 were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to lessons and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the members of the governing body, the headteacher, leaders and managers, and groups of staff.
- Meetings were also held with representatives of the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust.
- Inspectors held meetings with four groups of students, representing all age groups. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, its improvement plan and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- Inspectors considered the 97 responses to the online Parent View survey. The 64 responses to the staff questionnaires were also considered. Additional comments were received from parents and carers, and consideration was given to the views expressed by families in response to the school's own surveys completed by almost all of the parents of the Year 7 students attending The Misbourne and 151 responses to the school's own parental questionnaire.

Inspection team

Rob Ridout, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Worthington	Additional Inspector
John Mallone	Additional Inspector
Dr Rashida Sharif	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- Almost all of the students are from White British, Irish or Other White or Mixed White backgrounds. However, the school is a diverse community and includes a growing number of students who are from other minority ethnic backgrounds. Numbers currently make up about one tenth of the whole school population.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding to support particular groups of students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average.
- Approximately 30 students in Years 10 and 11 attend off-site provision at Wycombe Grange, Blue Print in Aylesbury or at 'Connexions Energise'.
- The school has had arts and technology status since 2006. It also holds the Healthy Schools award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that all teachers:
 - expect students to respond to their marking and advice on how to improve work, for example by attempting a new challenge or practising skills
 - consistently plan work of the right level of difficulty to match the individual needs of students, so that all are appropriately challenged or supported
 - promote students' independent learning by making sure that they fully understand what they will be learning during a lesson and how they will be assessed.
- Further improve teaching and learning within the school by ensuring that all teaching is to the standards of the very best, particularly in relation to making sure that work is always set at the right level of challenge, so that all students make rapid and sustained progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is broadly in line with national averages. Over the last three years, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A* to C including English and mathematics has risen from 54% in 2010 to above average at 64%. In 2013, the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics has increased and is above national figures. Current school information indicates that this upward trend is set to continue.
- In 2012, the overall progress of students from their starting points was lower than expected against national figures. Swift and effective action was taken by the school to address the issues that contributed to this and significant improvements rapidly secured the quality of teaching and learning. The improved progress rates in the 2013 results are evidence to the success of these strategies. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work confirm that students are clearly continuing to make good progress across the majority of subjects.
- The students' target-setting process ensures that they are set aspirational targets for all subjects. Students clearly understand these and are able to articulate a good understanding of their meaning and what they should be doing to secure them. This is helping to accelerate the progress of most students and is contributing positively to the students' learning. As a result, an ever-increasing number of students are achieving greater success in a growing number of subjects.
- The school's specialism has a particularly strong impact on attainment and progress in art, drama and photography as well as in the vocational information and communication technology programmes. Attainment in these areas is high overall and many students make particularly rapid progress. Attainment in French, Spanish and the humanities subjects is also high.
- There is no significant difference in achievement between students from the different ethnic backgrounds and all achieve equally well. This reflects the school's success in creating a tolerant culture that supports good learning.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make at least the progress expected of them. This is because of the good support they receive and the improving care and guidance the school is providing them. This demonstrates the school's increasing effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity.
- Students who speak English as an additional language and those who join the school at other than the usual times also achieve well.
- In 2012, students known to be eligible for free school meals achieved almost two GCSE grades lower than all other students in English and just over three grades lower in mathematics. Due to the effective use of this funding to provide additional support and better teaching resources, the attainment gap is closing in English and closing rapidly in mathematics. The 2013 results show that the gap for students known to be eligible for free school meals was less than one quarter of a grade difference when compared to all other students in both subjects. This improving trend appears to be continuing in the school.
- The progress of students who attend on a part-time basis is checked regularly and rigorously. Information provided by the school shows that these students have improved attitudes towards learning, attend more often and make good progress.
- The school uses Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to provide extra, targeted support for lower attaining students in reading, communication and writing. The school's records show that these students make good progress and achieve well as a result.
- Attainment in the sixth form has been rising over recent years. Data provided by the school confirm that 2013 results at AS and A level are strong and an improvement on 2012. Students in the sixth form have been achieving better, year on year, from their starting points and, because of better guidance, an increasing number of students are now staying on to complete courses successfully.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good over time. Inspectors observed a significant proportion of teaching that was good and some that was outstanding. However, a small proportion of teaching still requires improvement.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers used data well to inform their planning so that they meet the learning needs of their students through individual, paired and group work. They encourage students to develop their ideas and through discussion find solutions to problems and explain their reasoning in depth.
- Most teachers used questioning well to challenge students, explore their understanding more fully and ensure they consolidate previous learning as well as grasping more recently encountered concepts. For example, in a good mathematics lesson the teacher regularly reviewed students' knowledge with different groups as the lesson progressed and it was clear that each had grasped key learning points before the lesson moved on for them.
- Outstanding teaching is characterised by excellent behaviour for learning and full student participation. This was demonstrated clearly in a drama lesson observed during the inspection where students of all abilities quickly acquired new knowledge and developed their skills and understanding well as a result of the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and a strong focus on matching work precisely to the needs of students. There was a real energy in the lesson and students make excellent progress in their learning.
- Where teaching is less effective, students are not always sufficiently challenged because the tasks set are not at the right level of difficulty, and do not encourage them to practise new skills or apply themselves to new challenges. This results in the pace of learning being slow and therefore hinders students' progress. In such lessons, students are not given the chance to make a significant contribution to the lesson themselves or encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Frequent marking, including the opportunity for students to evaluate their work or that of others and respond to teachers' comments and feedback, was evident in many books. However, the best practices of checking the responses of students are not yet fully embedded across the school. There is often good use of oral feedback in lessons which clearly helps students to understand how they might improve their work and achieve success.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning and progress of students in English, mathematics and science. In the best lessons, classroom assistants worked closely with the teacher, and showed a good understanding of the needs of the individuals and groups of students they were seen working with to support good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students have positive attitudes to learning. They are generally well mannered, polite and courteous towards each other and to staff and are most welcoming to visitors.
- Inspectors observed good behaviours in lessons and around the school generally. A large proportion of parents responding to the online Parent View survey and the school's own surveys indicate that they too believe their children to be happy, safe and well cared for at The Misbourne. Students confirmed this view and talked about the significant improvements they had seen in behaviour in the last few years. They reported that instances of bullying are rare and dealt with robustly by their teachers.
- Students say they feel safe in school because teachers and other adults look after them well. They understand the risks associated with using the internet and the dangers linked to alcohol and drugs. They learn and know how to keep safe.
- Attendance has improved for all groups of students and is now higher than the national average for secondary schools.
- Rates of exclusion are declining and instances of permanent exclusions are now rare. This is the

result of teachers' high expectations and the consistent management of behaviour. At the same time, the school's leadership has maintained a good balance of securing good behaviour and promoting a positive climate for learning in its community.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, together with senior leaders and the governing body, knows the school well and has a very clear vision for the future of The Misbourne. They enjoy the strong support of staff, students and parents in pursuing high aspirations and expectations for students in both their academic achievement and behaviour. The school sets itself very demanding targets.
- The school's leaders and managers have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and have correctly identified areas for continued improvement through their accurate self-evaluation and associated action plan. The school has positively addressed the issues identified at the last inspection and has made rapid progress in securing significant improvements in teaching and standards. Nevertheless, leaders are aware that there is scope to ensure that all staff consistently set work at the right level of challenge so that students make more rapid progress.
- School leaders have very successfully improved the quality of teaching through an exemplary model of coaching and mentoring programme for teachers. Through focused individual professional development, the skills of teachers, leaders and other professionals are shaped towards outstanding practices. This has resulted in the sharing of best practice between staff so that students now make good progress over time.
- The headteacher uses the information on the quality of teaching and learning appropriately to advise the governing body about pay awards. Appraisal is used effectively to support, develop and challenge teachers to provide high quality learning experiences that enable students to achieve well.
- School leaders, subject leaders, heads of year and others responsible for tracking of students' performance have developed excellent systems for monitoring the performance of groups and individual students. Teachers regularly review with students their progress and make use of the school's strategies to maximise attendance, improve behaviour and ensure achievement is at least good for an increasing majority of students.
- The curriculum provides students at all key stages with an appropriate range of subjects that meet their needs and those of the community the school serves. The school also offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including photography, music, drama and a variety of trips; sporting activities and visitors to the school enrich students' learning experiences. The trip to the Edinburgh Festival is an example of the activities that contribute positively to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- The school makes good use of alternative provision available locally. This enables students to successfully follow courses that better meet their particular needs. Their attendance, attitudes to learning and good achievements are testimony to the effectiveness of such pathways.
- The school receives valuable support from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust which acts on behalf of the local authority. It has worked closely with the school to train governors and provide advice and guidance to improve the quality of teaching and secure good achievements.
- **The governance of the school:**

Governors are strongly committed to the success of the school. The governing body provides both good support and challenge to school leaders and managers. Governors are knowledgeable about the progress and attainment of students and have made good use of the training they have received to make informed and accurate judgements about the school. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and the Chair of the Governing Body has been effective in establishing good governance protocols that have impacted positively on the quality of provision and achievement of students at both GCSE and A Level. The Chair of the Governing Body is well informed and uses her experience of pupil

premium spending to ensure that eligible students achieve their best. The governing body manages the school's finances and resources very well and has a good appreciation of its role in overseeing performance management linked to staff salary increases. Policies and procedures for safeguarding fully meet requirements.

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	110490
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	429502

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	912
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katharine Edgar
Headteacher	Robert Preston
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 March 2012
Telephone number	01494 862869
Fax number	01494 890491
Email address	admin@misbourne.bucks.sch.uk

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