

Melland High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105615
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308896
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael McDowell

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
Number on roll	
School	139
6th form	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mrs J O'Kane
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Holmcroft Road Gorton Manchester Lancashire M18 7NG
Telephone number	0161 2239915
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; the extent to which the curriculum meets the needs of all students, especially those with more complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities; the range and suitability of externally accredited courses offered to students; and how effectively attendance is promoted. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation form (SEF); the school's own assessment records; relevant policies; observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons; and parents' questionnaires. Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior managers, teachers, other staff members, governors, parents and students. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its SEF, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Melland High School is a National Specialist College for Special Educational Needs specialising in Cognition and Learning. It is also a Lead School for Creative Partnerships Manchester/Salford. Its students who come from the North, Central and East of Manchester all have statements of special educational need because of their severe or profound complex and persistent learning difficulties. The majority are White British but a significant minority are from Asian or Asian British Pakistani families. Smaller numbers of students from other minority ethnic groups are also on roll. For most students from minority ethnic groups, English is not the language chiefly spoken at home. However, as many are at an early stage in developing their basic communication skills this does not have a limiting effect on their learning. The school has achieved awards under the Healthy Schools initiative (Bronze, Silver and Gold), Inclusion (Manchester Bronze, Silver and Gold standards) and Sports Mark. .

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Melland High School is outstandingly effective. It has a profound and beneficial impact on the lives of its students and their families. The happy demeanour of the students and their enthusiasm and enjoyment in lessons leave a lasting impression on the visitor.

Achievement is outstanding. All students have statements of special educational needs because of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their standards are, therefore, well below average. However, whether their starting points are comparatively high or exceptionally low, girls and boys from all groups make excellent progress. In English, mathematics, science and personal, social, health and citizenship education achievement is well beyond what is expected. Almost all students reach the challenging targets that are set for them. Many exceed these.

Students succeed so well because the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants are exceptionally skilful at making learning meaningful and thoroughly enjoyable. Teachers manage their classrooms extremely well. They carefully assess and record the progress made by their students and challenge them to build upon the knowledge and skills they have acquired. All members of staff classroom teams know what they are to do and they carry out their roles effectively. Their support greatly adds to students' learning opportunities. In particular, the work of support staff members with students who have complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including hearing and visual impairment, is of the highest quality. They show exceptional awareness and sensitivity.

The personal development of students is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and students enjoy their lessons and all the opportunities the school gives them to make friendships and to take part in sport and leisure activities. Students are very well informed about the importance of healthy lifestyles. They are aware of hazards in everyday life and of the need to act safely. They show great concern for others both in their school community and beyond it. Students from all classes are eligible for election to the school council. Council members are very conscious of their responsibilities and proud of the part they play in helping to improve the school. Their views have been taken into account in the design of the new premises for the school that are now nearing completion. There is also a joint students' council that brings together learners from Melland High School and Cedar Mount High, the mainstream school with which it will share premises in the near future. This is innovative and fosters inclusion very strongly. Attendance is good and parents report that their children very much enjoy coming to school.

Students contribute to the community very well. They work hard to care for the environment of their own school. They are also determined to do what they can for the broader community beyond the school. Students prepare very well for their economic well-being by developing their communication, literacy, numeracy and problem solving skills. They gain experience of the world of work and post-16 students run a successful team enterprise.

The curriculum is excellent. It meets external requirements and is tailored very carefully to the needs of individuals. The development of communication is emphasised. All appropriate means of communication, including sign and picture exchange systems, are used. There are excellent opportunities for learning beyond the classroom including many lunchtime clubs that cater for the broadest range of interests. Residential trips give students the opportunity to experience outdoor and adventurous activities. The range of accredited courses is very good and fully meets the requirements and aspirations of the students.

The safety and well-being of students is the highest priority of the staff, consequently, care, guidance and support are excellent. The students feel safe, at ease with the staff and comfortable with one another. The progress and personal development of students are tracked very carefully. Policies to support the protection of students are in place and are reviewed annually. To safeguard its students, the school makes the required checks on all its staff members. The school takes particularly good care to ensure the welfare of its most vulnerable students and acts to marshal support for them from other agencies when necessary. It works hard and effectively to reduce absence.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is exceptional and leads the school very well indeed. The leadership team and all staff members share her clear understanding of its role and purpose. They work particularly effectively to ensure that the school carries out its role as a specialist college, by pursuing innovation and working in close partnership with other providers. The school is fully committed to including all its students. To this end, it has built up a unique relationship with its neighbouring mainstream high school that greatly benefits their learning. Monitoring of the school's provision and performance is thorough. Consequently, the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development and of how well each student is progressing. However, the school does not compare the achievements of its students with those of similar learners across the country. This deprives it of the opportunity to explore the extent of its success and to celebrate its effectiveness in a broader context. Management is highly efficient. Those with additional management responsibilities carry these out very well. Work in partnership with parents is very good. Parents say that they are informed about their children's progress and that the school consults them about developments. The great majority rate the school very highly and say that it is highly accessible. It uses resources efficiently and very effectively. Governance is excellent. Governors are highly involved in school life and are fully involved in decision making. They are rigorous in holding the school to account. The school provides excellent value for money and the likelihood that it will continue to improve is very high.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The post-16 provision is outstanding. Students are strongly encouraged to develop their independence and to make their own decisions. They remain, nevertheless, strongly committed to the school and helpful members of its student body. Their personal development is excellent. Teaching and learning are of high quality. Students therefore achieve very well and succeed in externally accredited courses, gaining the certificates and awards for which they are put forward. These include the highly relevant Gold and Platinum Awards of the Manchester Education Business Partnership that involve the setting and meeting of challenging personal targets in attendance and punctuality. Students have excellent opportunities to gain experience of work. They attend introductory vocational courses at a local college. With the aid of Connexions and other agencies students are very well prepared for life after school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take steps to become better informed about the achievements of its students in comparison with the achievements of similar students in other schools across the country.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Melland High School, Gorton, Manchester, M18 7NG

Thank you very much for the help you gave me when I came to inspect your school. I was very impressed by how polite and friendly you were when I visited your classrooms and lunchtime clubs. I wish particularly to thank those of you who gave up their time to talk to me and tell me what they thought about being a student at Melland High School. You gave me lots of useful information.

You told me that you really enjoy coming to school because you like the lessons, the teachers, the clubs and activities and the chance to meet your friends. You shared with me your excellent understanding of healthy eating and how to keep fit by being active. You were very helpful and spoke very well. You were eager to tell me that you think Melland High School is great. After looking at your work, examining records of what you have done and talking to your headteacher, your teachers and the others who work with you I am pleased to say that I agree with you. Melland High school is outstanding.

I found that your achievement is outstanding because you are taught very well and given many interesting and exciting things to do. You are very well behaved caring girls and boys who think of others beside yourselves. You feel safe at school and are very well looked after and always given the help that you need. Your school is led and managed excellently.

In order to make your school even better I have asked your headteacher to take steps to compare what you achieve with what other girls and boys in similar schools achieve. This will help your teachers to have an even better idea of the things you are really very good at.

Thank you once again for helping me. I hope you continue to enjoy your 'fantastic' school.