

Meadowhead School Academy Trust

Dyche Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S8 8BR

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The progress pupils make in the school is inconsistent and not good across a range of subjects, including mathematics and English.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Work set does not meet the needs of all groups of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Assessment is not used consistently well. Work set by teachers is not sufficiently challenging for all pupils, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9. Questioning is not consistently effective in checking pupils' understanding.
- Not all adults have high enough expectations of what pupils should produce. Consequently, pupils' presentation and attitudes to learning are not consistently good.
- Over time, leaders have not ensured that the school's curriculum leads to good outcomes for pupils. Literacy skills are not promoted well.
- Government funding for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND has not been used well to support learning, behaviour and attendance.
- Leaders have not ensured that professional development has led to consistently good teaching. Subject leaders' skills in assessing pupils' progress vary. As a result, outcomes for pupils are inconsistent and so is the quality of teaching.
- Teaching in the sixth form is not consistently good across a wide range of subjects. As a result, students' progress in the sixth form is not good.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and her senior leadership team have quickly identified the areas that need to be developed. Staff are clear about the school's priorities and are beginning to address them. There is capacity for the school to improve further.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well. They have a good understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Governors are ambitious for pupils and know the school well. They are challenging and supporting leaders to make improvements.
- Pupils are given high-quality careers advice which helps them to raise their aspirations.
- Sixth-form students are good role models for others and support younger students well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the main school and the sixth form so that it is consistently good or better, to enable all groups of pupils and learners to achieve well, by ensuring that:
 - assessment information is used skilfully to set work that is appropriately challenging for all groups of pupils and learners
 - skilful questioning is used consistently well to check pupils' learning and deepen their understanding
 - pupils and learners use teacher feedback to improve the quality of their work
 - teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and presenting are consistently high, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9
 - pupils' literacy skills are enhanced across a wide range of subjects to enable them to write well at length and read widely.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare to good, for all groups of pupils, by ensuring that:
 - pupils concentrate fully and develop good attitudes to learning
 - pupils take pride in their work, presenting it to the highest standard
 - absence and persistent absenteeism of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are reduced to average or below average
 - exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are reduced to average or below average.
- Increase the impact of leaders, managers and governors by making sure that:
 - teachers are skilled in meeting the needs of all groups of pupils
 - effective use is made of the pupil premium funding and special educational needs funding to ensure that learning and behaviour, for eligible pupils, are at least good
 - the pupil premium plan has crystal-clear success criteria to check the effect of actions taken to improve learning for disadvantaged pupils
 - subject leaders are skilled in checking the progress of all groups of pupils and learners across all key stages to make sure it is at least consistently good
 - teachers' assessments are accurate and enable leaders to tackle underachievement, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
 - the curriculum leads to pupils making good progress and achieving good literacy skills
 - professional development results in good leadership and good teaching
 - pupils are highly confident that staff effectively resolve incidents of bullying.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Consequently, the overall effectiveness of the school requires improvement.
- The new headteacher has rapidly assessed what needs to be improved in the school. She has identified the priorities for the school and has established a clear strategic improvement plan. She has adjusted senior leaders' roles to make the best use of their skills in putting the plan into action. Staff and leaders are clear about the school's shortcomings and are beginning to address them, although it is very early days.
- Additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils is not used effectively to increase their progress swiftly. Leaders' plans have not identified the varying needs of these pupils to develop effective strategies and increase rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils. The effect of actions taken to support disadvantaged pupils has not been checked thoroughly enough to ensure that these pupils are making appropriate gains in learning and attending well. Currently, plans for the use of the pupil premium funding are being revised.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is underdeveloped and there is a lack of precision in determining the needs of these pupils. Leaders have not ensured that staff are sufficiently skilled to teach these pupils well. Parents and carers responding to the Ofsted questionnaire had mixed views about how their children's needs were being met. Consequently, the additional funding for these pupils is not spent well.
- Subject leadership varies in quality. Some subject leaders have not been thorough in checking pupils' progress and the quality of teaching to ensure that both are consistently good in the main school and in the sixth form. Senior leaders have used good practice in school to support professional development and some improvements have occurred. However, it has not resulted in consistently good leadership and teaching.
- Senior leaders and subject leaders have not ensured that teachers' assessment information used to track pupils' progress is precise. Senior leaders acknowledge the information can sometimes be overly optimistic and this inhibits swift intervention for those pupils who are underachieving.
- The curriculum has not served all groups of pupils well as their progress is not good. Literacy has not been promoted well across a wide range of subjects. However, the school promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding well through assemblies and tutor time. A wide range of sporting, musical and enrichment activities are well attended. An ethics programme prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain and contributes well to pupils' understanding of radicalisation and extremism.
- A bespoke training programme and support are in place for newly qualified teachers which are promoting the development of their teaching skills successfully.
- The school is exhibiting clear capacity for improvement because of the efforts of new senior leaders, the clarity of the new headteacher in what needs to be tackled and the staff who support her work.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not held leaders to account well enough to make sure the effectiveness of the school is good. During the past year, with changes in governors, they have come to know the school well and have used external support and training to strengthen their skills. Governors have a wide range of skills, including educational expertise. They are increasingly holding leaders to account and are aspirational for pupils and students. Their work has supported improving pupils' progress in 2018.
- Governors have checked how well additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND is used. They are clear that these pupils have not been progressing well and have been challenging leaders to improve outcomes for these pupils. Governors challenged leaders to improve outcomes from 2017 and pupils' progress improved at the end of key stage 4 and 5. Governors were very proactive in seeking and appointing the new headteacher.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and fit for purpose.
- Leaders ensure that pupils, including those at off-site provision, are safe and protected from harm. There is a clear ethos across the school that sets the safeguarding of pupils as a high priority. During the past year, new leaders introduced computer systems for recording and storing information. Safeguarding records are of high quality and clearly indicate the school's commitment to keep all pupils safe.
- Child protection training for staff and governors means they are knowledgeable and up to date in terms of the most recent guidance and legislation. Staff are vigilant and know what to do, should they have any concerns about pupils' welfare. The school works appropriately with external agencies, engages with parents well and is tenacious in making sure safeguarding matters are followed up.
- Governors make sure that all adults on the school site are checked to confirm they are fit to work with pupils. The school's central register of these checks is well kept. Governors have visited off-site providers to confirm for themselves that pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. Across departments and within departments, teaching is variable and requires improvement.
- Work set is not consistently well planned to meet the varying needs of all groups of pupils. Prior information about pupils' learning is not used well to plan and ensure good progress. This slows the progress of pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.
- Teachers' expectations are not consistently high. Teachers do not assess clearly when greater challenge is needed for pupils to make faster gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Inspectors noted that work can be too easy at times, especially in

Years, 7, 8 and 9. Pupils' presentation and accuracy in presenting work vary across subjects and classes, as teachers' expectations are inconsistent.

- Questioning varies and is not used well enough to measure how much pupils have learned and to deepen their knowledge and understanding. There are times when pupils' short responses lack depth of understanding and some pupils are not encouraged to answer. Inspectors noted good examples of questioning where pupils were thinking deeply, responding in great detail to questions and making clear gains in knowledge and understanding.
- An analysis of current pupils' work showed pupils' written responses are, at times, too short to show a depth of understanding of what is being learned. There are few opportunities for pupils to write at length across a wide range of subjects. It also showed that pupils' spelling and punctuation are not addressed effectively by teachers to ensure high-quality written responses. Students' literacy skills are developed well in the sixth form, where there are good opportunities for writing accurately and at length.
- The skills of teaching assistants are variable. Some offer good guidance and support. However, this varies in mainstream classes, as well as in the Bridge, the school's special educational needs provision.
- Across subjects and within departments there are good examples of teachers using pupils' prior learning well to set challenging work, accurately assessing pupils' learning and consistently expecting pupils to produce high-quality work. This results in pupils rising to the challenge and making good progress over time.
- Good relationships exist between pupils and staff and lessons flow smoothly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils do not consistently take enough pride in their work to ensure good progress. There are examples of neat presentation, accurate work and detailed response to teachers' feedback that support good progress. However, there is too much variation across and within classes.
- Pupils say that bullying occurs in school and is not rare. Parents' views indicate that support for victims varies. Some are satisfied about how bullying is dealt with, while others feel it is not resolved well enough and say it recurs. The school has suitable procedures in place to deal with bullying. However, a small minority of pupils are not fully confident they are applied consistently and issues are resolved quickly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe within school and the community. They are clear about how to keep safe when using the internet. Visiting speakers, assemblies and the school's ethics course extend pupils' understanding of how to stay safe in the community and how to stay fit and healthy.

- Generally, pupils are tolerant, respectful of others and happy to be in school. The ethics course makes a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of British values, respect for others and equality matters.
- Careers advice and guidance are given to all year groups. Younger pupils engage in a 'World of Work Week' where employers support pupils' understanding of various types of work. The school has a well-organised programme of careers education and provides one week's work experience to Year 10 pupils. Visits from university staff and employers successfully promote pupils' continuity in education or employment with training. All pupils, including the small number of students attending off-site provision, receive careers advice and guidance to support their future aspirations.
- Inspectors noted that, around school, pupils socialised well together. Pupils make their way quickly to lessons so they are punctual and a quick start can be made to learning.
- There are effective systems in place to ensure the safety of the very small numbers of Year 10 and 11 pupils who attend off-site provision.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour varies according to the quality of teaching they receive. Most of the time, pupils listen well and are attentive, although they can lose concentration when the pace of learning slows.
- Over time, absence and persistent absenteeism increased to above average. High proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND are frequently or persistently absent from school.
- Last year, leaders increased the capacity of the school's attendance team and regular checks and home visits are made to ensure that pupils are safe and attend more regularly. There are signs that overall attendance has improved since September 2018 and is currently average. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are still not attending well enough, although some improvement is noted.
- Over time, the number of fixed-term exclusions from school has been broadly average, although too high for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The school has introduced a new behaviour policy over the past year and pupils are clear about what is expected of them. As a result of new measures, including an internal area to support pupils with behaviour issues, fixed-term exclusions from school have reduced significantly since September and there have been no permanent exclusions this year.
- Most pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day and do what is expected of them. Some who spoke with inspectors said that they believe behaviour to be better this term than previously.
- Parents responding to the Ofsted questionnaire have mixed views about behaviour in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the past three years, the progress made by pupils at the end of Year 11 has been inconsistent and not good. The variable quality of teaching across subjects and within subjects leads to pupils' progress being less than good and requiring improvement.
- Published information for the end of key stage 4 indicates that pupils' progress was below average in 2017 and broadly average in 2016 and 2018. The focused work of new senior leaders helped progress to improve over the past year.
- Inspectors analysed current pupils' work across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. They found pupils' progress is inconsistent across subjects and within subjects, and is not good because of variations in the quality of teaching.
- For several years, and currently, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils has been significantly below average and less than that of other pupils in school. In English, mathematics, science and a range of other subjects, differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are not diminishing. Consequently, their attainment remains behind that of others nationally.
- Those pupils with SEND do not make good progress. Leaders have not sharply identified the varying needs of these pupils to support their learning well. Provision for the well-being of these pupils is supported well. However, as in the rest of the school, the academic progress made by these pupils varies and is not good.
- As with other pupils, the most able pupils are not challenged well enough by the work set for them to reach the highest standards. Inspectors noted that work is better matched to pupils' abilities in Years 10 and 11 than it is in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Pupils eligible for the Year 7 catch-up funding are supported well. Leaders showed that these pupils make strong gains in reading because of the additional support received, and the additional government funding is used well.
- Progress is good in subjects such as sport studies, music, drama, health and social care, information technology and French. However, that is not the case particularly in English, mathematics, science overall and some other subjects where progress requires improvement.
- Inspectors found that younger pupils usually read well. For weaker readers, there are extra opportunities to read to adults in the Bridge to improve their reading. However, leaders are clear that reading needs to be promoted better by the school, as not enough pupils are reading widely.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Over time, students' progress in academic courses requires improvement. Currently, students taking these courses are not making good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not improved students' progress and the quality of teaching so they are both good in academic courses. During the past year, sixth-form leaders have checked the quality of teaching and learning more closely and have taken action to improve students' progress. However, students' progress is still not consistently good across a range of academic courses.

- The quality of teaching is not challenging students consistently to ensure that they make good progress in academic courses. Teachers' questioning is not used skilfully to deepen students' knowledge and understanding sufficiently well for them to make good progress. The quality of students' responses to teachers' feedback and assessment is not consistently thorough and this does not support good progress. Consequently, there is too much variation in students' progress across courses.
- Leaders and managers are aware that assessment information can be overgenerous. They have plans in place to ensure that it is accurate across a range of academic courses so they can support students better.
- Overall, students make good progress in vocational courses because of good teaching in these courses. Leaders ensure that students are given appropriate advice and select courses they are going to be successful in.
- Students entering the sixth form without good GCSE grades in English and/or mathematics are supported to achieve well. All these students continue in education or employment with training, with the majority going on to higher education after they leave the sixth form.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of subjects and a good range of enrichment activities for students of all levels of ability. Visiting speakers, university visits, and information about mental and sexual health broaden students' knowledge about future careers and how to stay healthy. Students make a good contribution to the school and are good role models for younger pupils. For example, they volunteer to support and help younger pupils with learning. Students are very positive about their experiences in the sixth form and retention on courses is high.
- The school provides good, impartial careers advice for all students. Year 12 students complete one week's work experience as part of their study programme. Strong links with local universities have supported students' increasing aspirations. Above-average proportions of students go on to study at university or continue in employment with training. These aspects illustrate the way the school is serving the needs of the local community well.

School details

Unique reference number	138545
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10047631

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,817
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	211
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Lynda Taylor
Headteacher	Kam Grewal-Joy
Telephone number	01142 372723
Website	www.meadowhead.sheffield.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@meadowhead.sheffield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is average. One in four pupils is disadvantaged.
- Almost all pupils are White British. Exceptionally few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- One in 11 pupils has support for SEND; this is below average.

- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is well below average.
- The school uses three off-site providers for a very small number of Year 10 and 11 pupils. They are GTA Motor Vehicle Maintenance, Syreeta's Make-Up Academy and Sheaf Training.
- There have been significant changes in leadership and governance since the previous inspection. Since September 2017, there has been a new chair and vice chair of the governing body, two new deputy headteachers and three new assistant headteachers. The headteacher was appointed from 1 September.
- A new sixth-form extension to the school building was opened in the autumn term 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons, some jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both individually and in groups, about learning and safety.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in pupils' books. Inspectors listened to small groups of pupils reading.
- An inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and four other governors. The lead inspector met with the school's improvement adviser. An inspector held a telephone conversation with one of the school's off-site providers.
- Inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development and improvement plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed the 159 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and the 99 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for school staff.

Inspection team

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