

Melland High School

Gorton Education Village, 50 Wembley Road, Gorton, Manchester, M18 7DT

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Inspirational leadership and high quality management keep the academy at the top of its game. Staff are proud they are part of the team and everyone is pulling in the same direction. There is not a trace of complacency.
- The way the academy checks how well it is doing is exemplary. It is meticulous in finding out exactly what difference it makes to students' learning.
- The teaching is very creative and stimulates students' enthusiasm admirably.
- Teachers plan thoroughly and with individual students' needs in mind. The objectives of the lesson are invariably shared extremely well with students. In a few instances they are not always revisited during the lesson to help students understand how they are getting on.
- The leadership and management of teaching are very impressive, with every opportunity taken to share best practice to improve teaching further.
- The progress the students make is outstanding because of splendid teaching and exhilarating and relevant activities that motivate them well. Measures of their progress show they are doing as well as and often better than students with similar needs in schools elsewhere in the country.
- Students have excellent attitudes in their lessons and in most they bristle with enthusiasm and are keen to learn. They are habitually polite, courteous and good-natured. Any rare behaviour difficulties are dealt with expertly and unobtrusively.
- Students say they feel safe and parents agree. There are robust systems to ensure students' safety, including safe recruitment of staff. Students are taught well how to keep as safe as possible.
- Governors have a splendid understanding of how well the different groups of students achieve and about the quality of teaching. They are very skilled at questioning the academy's work to ensure staff remain on their toes. The Board of Trustees also checks well on the quality of the academy's work.
- The work of the academy in supporting other academies in the Trust and other schools in Manchester is highly regarded. There is plenty of evidence to show this makes a very positive difference. The academy is using its special education needs expertise admirably.
- The sixth form is outstanding. It is led and managed excellently. High quality teaching leads to impressive achievements and invariably students leave the academy with suitable external awards to move into further education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, taught by 12 teachers and two other staff employed by the academy to help provide sport and multi-media education. Four of the observations were jointly undertaken with senior members of staff.
- Meetings were held with students, the Chair and three other members of the governing body, members of staff and three of the academy’s partners who are engaged to provide support and additional teaching at the academy. The inspectors also briefly attended a previously arranged meeting of all the Bright Futures Educational Trust’s academies.
- The very small number of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) meant that the results were not available to inspectors. However, inspectors took account of the academy’s 2012 survey of parents’ views, the 2011 survey of students’ views and an email received from a parent. The 36 staff questionnaire returns were also analysed.
- The work of the academy was observed and a number of documents were looked at, including the academy’s monitoring records, minutes of governors’ meetings and information relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined data about students’ progress, the academy’s improvement plan and records of the checks the academy makes on how well it is doing.

Inspection team

Eric Craven, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Melland High School converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2012. When its predecessor school, also known as Melland High School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- The academy is part of the Bright Futures Educational Trust. The principal is a National Leader in Education and the academy is designated as a National Support School. It is a National Specialist College for cognition and learning. It is a placement school for the National Professional Qualification for Headship and is a provider of Initial Teacher Training. The academy leads on special educational needs within the Trust and is commissioned by Manchester local authority to provide support for other Manchester schools.
- The academy provides for students with severe and profound learning difficulties. Some have additional difficulties such as autism, emotional and behavioural problems, and sensory impairment. Around a fifth also has high dependency health care needs. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Around a half are of White British heritage with the largest other group being of Pakistani heritage. There are about twice as many boys as girls. Nine of the students are currently in the care of the local authority. The students come from the central and east areas of the city of Manchester.
- The government provides extra funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or who are children of families in the services, through the pupil premium. The proportion of students eligible to be supported by the pupil premium is well above average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- As well as sharing learning objectives with students at the start of lessons teachers should consistently revisit these during lessons to help students fully understand how well they are doing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students customarily reach and in some cases exceed the challenging targets the academy sets for their rates of progress. In comparison to similar schools they surpass other students' rates of progress in reading, writing, speaking and listening and in information and communication technology.
- There has been marked improvement in the students' rates of progress in mathematics over the last year or so, which is attributable to teachers' use of more finely graded assessments of students. This has led to a clearer understanding of any gaps in their learning, which teachers have been able to plug.
- The academy's excellent analyses of data show that different groups of students progress as well as one another, including those with the most pronounced needs. Students known to be eligible for free school meals and others eligible for pupil-premium funding have accelerated their progress as a result of the academy's well-considered use of this resource. As a group, these students are now progressing marginally better than those not in receipt of pupil-premium funding; on average by about a third of a National Curriculum assessment point in mathematics and by a whole point in English. Gaps between their respective rates of achievement have been closed.
- Students' reading has improved as a result of a determined thrust to increase the amount of reading students get to do and the support they get to do it. Students who have the ability to read are putting this to good use in their lessons.
- Students develop excellent personal and social skills, including how to communicate well. These skills serve them well as they move through the academy and beyond. All students leaving the sixth form in 2012 moved to further education colleges. Those leaving this year are due to take the same route. Students achieve a range of qualifications appropriate to their abilities in academic subjects, sports, arts, personal and social development and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is never less than good and is most often outstanding. Over the last year the proportion that is outstanding has increased further. This is a result of the academy recognising that the achievements of the students in tutor group lessons could be better still. A well-focused improvement programme has improved teaching in these lessons in particular.
- The characteristics of the high quality teaching include:
 - excellent planning that matches work closely to students' needs
 - getting students to learn independently whenever possible to stretch their thinking and skills
 - activities that are motivating, such as a topic about the teacher's dog Magnus going missing
 - verbal rewards and merit points that when given mean a lot to the students
 - the work of teaching assistants who are very much part of the teaching team
 - the use of outstanding resources that generate students' excitement and curiosity
 - teachers' very good use of questions to help them assess students' understanding.
- Teachers know their students very well and encourage them to do as much as they can for themselves. In a mathematics lesson where teaching was judged outstanding, for example, the teacher helped a student understand his mistake when he was measuring in inches rather than centimetres. The student later used his knowledge to help another student. He was also curious to find out how many centimetres are in an inch and so worked it out for himself.
- Similarly, outstanding teaching in a sixth-form music lesson removed any barriers that prevented some significantly physically disabled students fully accessing the lesson. The lesson subsequently resonated so much with the students that they were still singing as they left the

classroom.

- All opportunities are taken to enable students to practise their literacy, numeracy and communication skills in all subjects, which they do very well.
- Clear objectives and expected outcomes are set in lesson plans and shared with students at the beginning of lessons but are not always referred to during a lesson to help students appreciate if they are achieving enough.
- The academy's survey of parents in 2012, to which about 50% responded, showed they unanimously feel their children are taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The academy's data show that the excellent behaviour observed by the inspectors is what the behaviour of the students is typically like. There have been no permanent exclusions; there are no records of restraints having had to be made and very few incidents requiring fixed-term exclusions. The numbers of incidents recorded are reducing and the number of merits being issued to students is markedly on the rise. Students from different backgrounds get on extremely well and there are no racial incidents on record.
- All this is because staff care for students extremely well, have excellent relationships with them, model respect and courtesy and consistently apply the academy's systems for behaviour management. They are trained well and updated in how to apply these systems.
- Students say that behaviour is very good, that they feel safe and incidents of bullying are very rare. What incidents there are tend to be depicted by minor name-calling. Students have confidence in staff and say they deal with these well and they can be relied upon if they feel vulnerable in any way. Parents support this positive view of behaviour and the safety of their children.
- Attendance is above average for special schools. This reflects the academy's firm attention to ensuring students attend as much as they can. Some students' attendance is adversely affected by their medical conditions.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal is an inspirational leader who orchestrates the work of other senior staff exceptionally well. Together, they are a highly impressive team that is driving the academy forward with no trace of complacency. They have galvanised staff into a very cohesive team who are very keen to keep themselves at the top of their game. All staff returning the Ofsted questionnaire say they are proud to be on-board and know what they are trying to achieve.
- The practice of rigorously checking its effectiveness is well established in the academy at all levels. Students, along with many others, including some people external to the academy, are represented on an 'Impact Group' that monitors how well the academy is doing in achieving the objectives in its improvement plans. As a result, senior leaders and governors know precisely how effective the academy is being.
- The appraisal of teachers is meticulously applied and reaps dividends. Targets for teachers are integrally linked to students' achievements and to the academy's improvement priorities. The rewards and promotions teachers have gained correlate well with the profile of high quality teaching at the academy. The leadership and management of teaching are excellent.
- The academy uses its partners, such as the speech and language therapist, performing arts specialists and sports coaches to ensure the curriculum matches students' needs and interests. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted outstandingly well because of the excellent relationships they have with each other and staff and because of well-planned opportunities for them to learn about other people and cultures. Students thoroughly enjoy their education as a result.

- The academy's survey of parents shows they agree unanimously that the academy keeps them well informed and helps them support their children. The academy's website is comprehensive and accessible and gives a complete view of effectiveness of the academy. Regardless, the academy prioritised improving communication with parents in its improvement plans a year or so ago and has established a working party of parents. In the survey, parents unanimously agreed they would recommend the academy to other parents.
- The academy focuses splendidly on individual students to ensure they are achieving as much as they can and are well looked after. As a result there is no discrimination: all students are treated fairly and equally. Child protection and safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements.
- The academy's outreach work in supporting and guiding other schools is excellent.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors do an outstanding job. They have a very impressive understanding of how well teachers teach and how well students achieve. They are very familiar with the academy's data. They are integral to the academy and gain information not just from presentations and reports but from their involvement in the academy and the activities they observe. They seek the views of all involved, including students. They ask telling questions to further their understanding and to inform their input into developing the academy further. They fully appreciate how the performance of teachers has been managed, including any underperformance, and how pupil-premium funding has been spent, monitored and makes a positive difference to the eligible students. The Board of the Bright Futures Educational Trust also holds the academy to account very well and governors are represented on the Board.

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	138532
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	408780

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

Type of school	Academy special
School category	Non-maintained special
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	145
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Copitch
Principal	Judith O’Kane OBE
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0161 223 9915
Fax number	0161 230 6919
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