

Southern Cross School

Barlow Hall Road, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M21 7JJ for key stages 2 & 3

Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M15 5AL for key stage 4

Crossacres Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M22 5DR for key stage 4

Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher and senior leaders have created a calm and purposeful school spread over three sites. There is a strong focus on learning and the development of pupils' personal and social skills.
- Behaviour is good. The school provides pupils with high-quality therapeutic provision. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' well-being.
- Staff use an effective range of strategies that help pupils to succeed and to make the right choices regarding their learning and behaviour. Staff use assessments effectively to measure improvements in pupils' learning and behaviour.
- Leaders and staff successfully develop pupils' self-esteem through a well-structured personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum.
- Pupils take pride in their work and in their school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. Pupils trust their teachers to help them to do the best that they can.
- Staff know and understand pupils' needs well. Teachers' planning of learning is effectively matched to the different abilities of pupils and, therefore, most pupils make good progress. However, in some classes, teachers do not use additional support staff effectively enough.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are taught well. They make good progress and are well supported when they move into key stage 3.
- By the end of key stage 4, pupils achieve a good range of academic and vocational qualifications, which helps them prepare for post-16 education and training. Most move on to college courses at the end of Year 11.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well planned and well taught. It has a positive effect on pupils' learning and progress right across the school.
- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work effectively with senior leaders to monitor the quality of education, and pupils' behaviour and safety, across all three sites.
- Leaders and governors ensure that there is a vigilant culture of effective safeguarding throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and they value the support given by the staff.
- Although outcomes are good, leaders and governors do not routinely analyse the wealth of information that they have available to them to ensure that pupils make more rapid progress across the three sites.
- Pupils' attendance improves when they start at the school. However, the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school remains too high.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers use other adults in the classroom to promote more rapid learning and progress for pupils.
- Ensure that leaders and governors analyse the wealth of information available to them to improve outcomes further for pupils across the three sites.
- Improve attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, the school community has expanded. Leaders have added new provision for key stage 2 pupils. Leaders plan the key stage 2 curriculum well to meet the needs of pupils. They ensure that teaching is good and that pupils make good progress across their subjects.
- Leaders provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum across key stages 3 and 4. Each key stage has an appropriate curriculum, which offers pupils a range of learning opportunities. At key stage 4, pupils benefit from the extra courses available through the federation of schools and have access to academic and vocational learning opportunities.
- Leaders cater for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development well through the PSHE curriculum. Every day starts with a PSHE lesson with a different key focus. Pupils were able to speak clearly about the need for respect and tolerance. They model these values effectively around the school and they behave very well.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of additional enhancement opportunities. For example, they participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Furthermore, leaders cater well for pupils' needs during social times by offering a range of activities designed to strengthen their social skills.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of education that the school provides. They have identified areas in need of strengthening and they have effective monitoring and checking systems in place to ensure that their actions have the necessary impact.
- Leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils alike. They are determined to continue to improve all aspects of the school's work. They have access to a wide range of information which they use to secure further improvement. Nevertheless, leaders and governors do not analyse this information rigorously enough to identify where pupils could make more rapid progress in their learning.
- Staff morale is high. The overwhelming majority of staff who replied to Ofsted's online survey indicated that they are proud to work at the school.
- Leaders use ongoing staff training effectively. Staff appreciate the many opportunities that they have available to them to secure improvements to pupils' learning and progress. Training is used to ensure that teachers and other adults are ambitious for their pupils.
- Leaders spend the additional pupil premium funding well to support pupils' well-being and development. For example, leaders employ two therapists and a child and adult mental health service (CAMHS) worker. These professionals work in all three sites across the school. Pupils gain support which enables them to build resilience and engage more effectively in their learning. As a result, pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up funding effectively to strengthen teaching in literacy and numeracy. They use tailored support packages to accelerate successfully the development of pupils' skills in these areas. Leaders also use the physical education (PE) and sports premium funding well to widen pupils' experience of and engagement

in sport.

Governance of the school

- The federation has a single governing body responsible for Southern Cross School and Meade Hill School. Governors receive reports from each head of centre. This enables them to monitor and challenge effectively the work at each site separately.
- Governors work effectively with leaders to improve the quality of education that the school provides. That said, governors do not routinely ensure that leaders analyse the information that they have about pupils' learning and progress precisely enough to ensure that more pupils excel.
- Governors ensure that there are suitably qualified people on the governing body by undertaking a skills audit and recruiting new governors to fill any gaps in experience. New governors have relevant skills, experiences and expertise to challenge leaders.
- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities to safeguard pupils well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school and across all sites. Safeguarding systems are thorough, and records are detailed. Recruitment procedures are robust.
- Staff and governors all receive regular training in keeping pupils safe. Leaders ensure that this training draws on all current guidance.
- Staff work with families to help to keep pupils safe. For example, the school runs a workshop on e-safety for parents and carers.
- Leaders work closely with the local authority to ensure that referrals are correctly followed up and pupils are kept safe.
- Inspectors saw no evidence of bullying and pupils reported that if they have any disagreements with one another they talk to staff who deal with issues swiftly.
- The federation of schools has staff who are safeguarding champions. They receive additional training in specific aspects of safeguarding, and then share this knowledge with all staff, and the champions are points of reference for any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders ensure that there is a consistent approach to planning, teaching and assessment across the school's three sites. Consequently, pupils across the school, and across key stages, make good progress in their learning.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils prevail. Pupils also have positive attitudes to learning. All pupils take pride in their work and look after their books well.
- Leaders have established an effective approach to assessment that checks pupils' progress regularly. Staff use this assessment information to plan activities that match

most pupils' academic, social and emotional needs successfully. Consequently, pupils of differing abilities make good progress in their learning.

- Pupils rarely interrupt lessons with poor attitudes to learning or poor behaviour. Teachers expect pupils to behave well and routines are well established.
- Teachers follow the school's assessment policy consistently. Evidence shows that teachers routinely give pupils advice on what they have achieved and what they need to do next.
- Most staff have high expectations for what all pupils can achieve. They use effective questioning to extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and they probe pupils' thinking, including of the more reluctant learners. This helps teachers to correct misunderstandings at an early stage and encourages good progress in learning.
- Pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary and use it accurately across a range of subjects. Reading is particularly strong in key stage 2, and pupils are able to read a range of texts fluently and with understanding.
- In some lessons, teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide effective support to pupils who need help to make progress. However, in other lessons, teachers do not use teaching assistants as effectively and pupils' progress is not as strong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Promoting emotional health and resilience is high on the school's agenda. This is evident through the priority and importance given to PSHE lessons. PSHE lessons include weekly sessions on mindfulness and well-being. There is also a welfare and well-being group that supports the work of the federation's two therapists.
- Pupils at each key stage and at each site said that they feel safe in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe from a range of everyday risks. Pupils said that they trust their teachers and feel able to talk to them if they are worried about anything. Leaders have taken steps to ensure that parents are also aware of what they can do to check that their children are safe online.
- Pupils said that their school is a tolerant community that welcomes people from all backgrounds, religions and sexual orientations. They understand why all forms of discrimination are wrong. Pupils said that teachers are quick to respond to and resolve any bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' movement around the school is orderly. Well-established routines, particularly at the start of the school day, reinforce leaders' high expectations for pupils' good behaviour and ensure that the school is a calm place in which to learn.

- Teachers' relationships with pupils allow for strong classroom management. Classrooms are environments where good learning can take place. Disruption is rare and when it does occur it is well managed so that it does not detract from the learning of others.
- High levels of staff supervision ensure that breaktimes and lunchtimes are positive social learning experiences.
- Attendance is below the national average. Nevertheless, leaders have invested resources in tackling poor attendance and, as a result, most pupils' attendance improves when they attend Southern Cross School. This represents good progress for most pupils. However, there are still too many pupils absent on a regular basis.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils join the school throughout the school year, and across all year groups, often having missed parts of their education through poor engagement or poor attendance. Despite these gaps in their learning, the majority of pupils make consistently good progress once they start at Southern Cross School.
- Leaders set ambitious targets for pupils, based on a range of assessments when they arrive at the school, and use another local school to moderate these targets. In all three key stages, the majority of pupils are on track to meet their end-of-year targets across a range of subjects.
- Time is given each day for reading, and leaders have focused resources to support pupils who arrive at school with a reading ability below age-related expectations. Results show that for these pupils the standard of reading improves rapidly from a low starting point.
- Pupils are well prepared for moving from key stage 2 into key stage 3 and benefit from the two key stages sharing the same facilities. This enables a smooth transition from Year 6 to Year 7, which helps pupils maintain high standards of work. Pupils in key stage 2 make consistently good progress.
- The transfer to key stage 4 offers pupils routes into academic and vocational pathways. Pupils are able to access the resources of the federation on two sites and are well supported in making choices about subjects to study. This forms part of the careers guidance curriculum. Consequently, outcomes for pupils by the end of Year 11 are good.
- The proportion of pupils successfully transferring into education, training or employment after Year 11 has increased over the last few years. They are well supported by the federation's careers adviser who also maintains contact with pupils who are not successful in finding education, employment or training.
- Although pupils make consistently good progress during their time at Southern Cross School, pupils do not yet make rapid progress. This is because leaders do not analyse the wide range of information that they have available to them to promote even stronger outcomes for pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	105623
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10049015

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	9 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Newman
Executive Headteacher	Alan Braven
Telephone number	0161 881 2695
Website	manchester-ebd.co.uk
Email address	admin@southerncross.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2012

Information about this school

- Since its last inspection, the school has expanded to include key stage 2 pupils.
- The school is one of two special schools that form the Manchester Federation of EBSD Schools. The school is located across three sites. Key stages 2 and 3 pupils are taught at Southern Cross School in Chorlton. Key stage 4 pupils are taught at either the Castlefield Campus or the Wythenshawe Campus. Key stage 4 pupils at the Castlefield Campus are taught alongside pupils from the other school in the federation. The work of the school is overseen by the federation's governing body.
- Each site is led by a head of centre. The federation is led by an executive headteacher based at the Castlefield Campus.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- All pupils have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and have education, health and care plans.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across all year groups, in a range of subjects. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and talked to pupils about their learning.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body and teachers. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority and an independent quality assurance professional. Inspectors had formal meetings with pupils from each key stage and informal conversations with pupils around the school throughout the inspection.
- The conduct of pupils was observed in lessons, around the school during lesson changes and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including records of pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding. Records of meetings of the governing body were scrutinised.
- Nineteen members of staff responded to the inspection questionnaire, and inspectors took account of the four responses from parents.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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