

Malet Lambert School Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118069
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull City of
Inspection number	379535
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Philip Jarrett HMI

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Barker
Headteacher	Jane Disbrey
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Fifty five lessons were observed, taught by 54 different teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school and subject improvement plans, monitoring records, analyses of students' performance, and samples of students' work. Questionnaires from staff and students were scrutinised as well as 240 completed by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Malet Lambert School Language College is a large, oversubscribed community school. Most students are of White British background. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled students and students with special educational needs is also below average, including those assessed as School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs.

A major building programme was taking place at the time of the inspection. The school is in a 'soft' federation with a school in Mirfield judged by Ofsted to be outstanding. The school has received a number of awards including the International Schools Award, the National Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People. The school meets the current floor standards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- Malet Lambert School Language College is a good and improving school. Effective leadership has brought about improvements overall in achievement and teaching since the previous inspection. It is not yet outstanding because some variability in the quality of teaching remains and this limits achievement in a small number of subjects.
- Students make good progress from average starting points on entry to the school. Attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 4. All groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- Teaching has improved as a result of a series of well-designed strategies to develop consistency and support weaker performance. Parents, carers and students express positive views about teaching and progress. The very best teaching is innovative, informed by good subject knowledge and challenging for all groups of students. Characteristics of weaker teaching include: too little feedback in marking on next steps for students; lessons that do not always meet the needs of different groups of students, including the more able; a limited range of questioning to monitor progress in lessons; and too few opportunities for independent learning.
- Staff have created a positive ethos for learning. As a result, students form good relationships, behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Students feel safe. A small minority of parents and carers expressed the view that lessons were sometimes affected by poor behaviour but this was not confirmed by other evidence collected during the inspection. Students behaved very sensibly despite disruption created by the on-going building work.
- The headteacher provides well-focused and thoughtful leadership. She receives strong support from all staff. There is good team work and a clear sense of common purpose throughout the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by improving:
 - the quality of feedback to students through teachers' questioning, marking and short-term curricular targets
 - action taken by teachers to meet the needs of different groups of students in lessons, including high-attaining students
 - opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills in lessons.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Overall, attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 4. This reflects a steady upward trend in recent years and current school assessments suggest that this is likely to continue in 2012. Some variability in achievement across subjects remains, although gaps are being narrowed. The school has identified weaker performance in a number of subjects and has taken effective action. As a result, achievement in mathematics has improved and challenging targets are increasingly being met in areas such as science and modern foreign languages. Analysis of the performance of different groups and subsequent action is closing gaps in achievement, for example as seen in the better performance of higher attaining students. Parents and carers believe that students make good progress and the inspection confirms that view.

Learning and progress in lessons are good overall, including for disabled students and those with special educational needs. Students' attitudes are positive and they are keen to do well. When given opportunities, they collaborate well in small groups. Students often persevere well when faced with difficult work and demonstrate sustained interest in ongoing projects that grab their interest, for example in art and design. Students are able to apply literacy skills, including reading, across the curriculum, for example planning and producing good-quality extended writing in a range of subjects. Some students lack confidence in expressing their ideas orally and rely too much on the teachers' guidance, especially where independent learning has not been encouraged.

Quality of teaching

Teaching has improved as a result of well-planned interventions and training, although some variability remains. In the best lessons, high expectations of behaviour and learning lead to good and, at times, outstanding progress. Planning is very thorough and based on a good understanding of individual students. At best, this knowledge is used well to provide challenge and support for all groups of students. At other times, the knowledge that teachers have of students' needs is not used well enough to intervene appropriately in their learning. Stimulating and innovative resources are used especially well in humanities lessons to motivate and support students. Across the school, there is a consistent emphasis on assessment criteria, with good opportunities in the best lessons for effective self- and peer assessment. Learning objectives are mostly specific and helpful. Relationships are typically strong leading to an atmosphere of mutual respect. Able students were challenged particularly well in some lessons observed in subjects, including design technology and

information and communication technology (ICT), through timely and well organised opportunities for independent learning. Lessons in English, humanities, science and other subjects contribute to a better understanding of current moral and social issues.

Parents and carers have a very positive view of teaching in general, although a few parents commented on the impact of frequent changes to staffing in some departments. The school acknowledges some variability in the quality of teaching and has addressed this rigorously. In weaker lessons, excessive teacher talk or unimaginative approaches limit students' opportunities to work independently or use their initiative. The impact of questioning varies from lesson to lesson. In the best lessons, students are expected to explain and extend their answers. Teachers monitor progress well through a variety of well-targeted questions. At other times, teachers miss opportunities to track progress systematically through their questioning and allow students to provide simple one-word answers. Marking is regular across subjects. At times, detailed and helpful feedback is provided, with suggestions for improvement. However, this practice is inconsistent and too much marking either fails to identify the next steps in learning or provides too little challenge for high attaining students.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors judged behaviour to be good in lessons and around school, despite the reservations of some parents and carers. This was confirmed through discussions with students and their completed questionnaires. A desire to learn supports good behaviour in most lessons. The school has a detailed system in place for monitoring behaviour. Students with especially challenging behaviour are identified, monitored and supported through effective intervention. Students do not consider bullying or racist behaviour to be a problem in school and feel that, when issues arise, they are quickly dealt with. The use of exclusions has fallen substantially and is now below average. Students are generally friendly and polite, and show respect for others.

Attendance has been broadly average but shows improvement this school year. The school has implemented a number of strategies that are having a positive impact, particularly on the small number of persistent absentees. This includes the use of text messaging and individual plans for those students with poor attendance records. The pupil profile emphasises the importance of good attendance to all students. These measures underpin the current improvement, particularly the reduction in persistent absenteeism this year. Students and their parents and carers consider the school to provide a safe environment. During the current extensive building work, staff have been very careful to identify any risks to health and safety. Students behave maturely around the site.

Leadership and management

There has been a strong and effective strategy for improvement since the previous inspection. Changes have been made to the curriculum, staffing and leadership in order to drive through the necessary improvements in achievement. Previous weaknesses in teaching have been tackled well through several measures: whole school policies and training; support and individual action plans for identified teachers; the work of a cross-curricular school improvement group; and the sharing of good practice. This has contributed to rising achievement. Senior leaders and managers have worked hard to raise student aspirations and to establish a culture where excellence is the ultimate goal. As a result, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are systematic and thorough. Annual subject reviews provide detailed evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, and lead to consistent and well-focused action plans. There has been a significant emphasis on identifying what constitutes good teaching and this has benefited from opportunities for joint observations, teachers working and planning together, and external evaluation. As a result, the school has identified the correct priorities for improvement and made progress in these areas. Senior leaders acknowledge that subject leadership, while improved, still lacks consistency and that this has contributed to poorer achievement in some areas of the curriculum.

The curriculum has some innovative features designed to meet the needs of all students and to provide for a range of pathways, including some vocational courses. Some aspects, such as early entry for GCSE, are currently under review and there are moves to emphasise performance in academic subjects. A wide range of sporting and artistic activities enhances students' personal, social and cultural development. The emphasis on studying languages and the international perspective of the school also support students' cultural development.

The governing body has a detailed understanding of achievement and subject issues. It is very well informed and works closely with senior leaders to challenge and support the school. It shares senior leaders' vision for the school. The school takes a rigorous approach to safeguarding. Records are thorough and comply with requirements, and child protection has a high profile in the school. Parents and carers mostly believe that they are kept well informed. They confirm, and inspectors agree, that students with particular needs are well supported and that the school promotes the welfare and progress of all its students equally.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 April 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Malet Lambert School Language College, Hull, HU8 0JD

My colleagues and I enjoyed meeting you during the inspection on 25 and 26 April 2012. You seemed to us friendly and polite. We thought that you behaved sensibly and maturely with all the building work going on. Some of your parents and carers told us that lessons were sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour. However, most of you told us that behaviour was not a problem and that there is very little bullying in the school. The behaviour we observed in lessons was nearly always good.

Standards are above average overall at the end of Key Stage 4 and this represents good progress for you. However, you do better in some subjects than in others. We think that teaching is good overall, but with some variability across departments. We have made a number of recommendations to improve the consistency of teaching. You all know what levels you are working towards, but we have suggested that marking and questioning in lessons could help you to know what short-term steps you can take to improve your work. Lessons could also be planned a little better by some teachers so that all groups of students are challenged to make good progress and to provide more opportunities for you to work independently.

Your school is well led. It is an orderly place and most of you get on well together. You told us that you feel safe in school. You like your teachers, especially when lessons are practical and varied. Thank you again for your help during the inspection and I hope you all continue to work hard and help to make the school even better.

Yours sincerely

Philip Jarrett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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