

Alderman White School and Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122851
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	368245
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Smith HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	867
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Launchbury
Headteacher	Kevin Dean (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	3 June 2009
School address	Chilwell Lane Bramcote Nottingham NG9 3DU
Telephone number	0115 917 0424
Fax number	0115 917 0494
Email address	white@whpfederation.org

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They visited 40 lessons and observed 40 teachers. They held meetings with staff, students, and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, interrogated the school's assessment records and looked at the minutes of the meetings of the governing body, the minutes of meetings with the School Improvement Partner, subject evaluations and school action plans and evaluations. They also scrutinised 122 parent and carer questionnaires, 65 staff questionnaires and 140 student questionnaires

Information about the school

Alderman White is an average sized school which is part of the White Hills Park Federation that serve the Bramcote and Beeston areas of Nottingham. Sixth form provision is organised within the federation and the numbers of post-16 students are rising. The sixth form are taught on a separate site. The number of students in each year group is variable because of local reorganisation of provision. When numbers have stabilised the school will be smaller than average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is average as is the proportion of students whose first language is not English. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is low. There is a headteacher for the whole federation as well as the head of school who has the overview of the day-to day-running of the school.

The school is a specialist languages college and has received a number of national awards including the FA Charter Standard, the Quality in School Support and has been identified as one of the most improved schools by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grade passes, including in both English and mathematics, has been above the current government floor target for the last three years.

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	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	3
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- Effective leaders and members of the governing body have worked very well to bring together the different schools so that the federation is successful while individual schools retain their identity.
- The school is effective in raising achievement and is rightly proud of its award as being recognised as one the most-improved schools. The GCSE results in modern foreign languages, the school's specialist area, are well-above average and support for the local community in learning a foreign language is excellent.
- In the sixth form, good leadership has enabled it to become established with far greater numbers staying on. Results are improving. Records and module results to date indicate that students make good progress. However at times, targets are not sufficiently challenging.
- A very large majority of students who answered the questionnaires say they feel safe in the school and this was supported by responses from parents and carers.
- Responses from the students' questionnaires showed that a very large majority felt that behaviour is good in the school and in lessons.
- Responses from the parent and carer questionnaires indicated that a large majority felt behaviour was good.
- However, approximately half felt that lessons were disrupted by bad behaviour. Those who added written comments say that this was often when classes were not taken by the usual teacher.
- Students commented that when lessons were disrupted it was usually because students were chatting to each other or some were calling out. They commented that while this was annoying it did not greatly detract from their learning.
- Leaders, at all levels and across the federation, have been successful in improving the quality of teaching. In the large majority of lessons teaching is

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good. The proportion of outstanding teaching has increased just as the satisfactory teaching has reduced to a small minority of lessons.

- Lessons typically include opportunities for students to work in groups or individually, generate enthusiasm and a desire to learn with good support for lower-attaining students.
- Lessons generally meet the needs of students well but when teaching is less successful it is because work fails to challenge all students, often but not always, the middle-ability groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate and further improve achievement by ensuring:
 - a greater proportion of sixth form students make good progress against their challenging targets
 - lessons, for all ages, consistently challenge students of all abilities, particularly those in the middle-ability band within classes.
- Eliminate concerns about weaker behaviour in some lessons by:
 - working closely with students, parents and carers to identify the frequency, causes and extent of any disruption
 - implementing procedures to minimise their impact upon learning.

Main report

Alderman White provides good opportunities for students to develop into mature young adults. The school's drive for improvement has meant they have been successful in raising their achievement. The ambition from senior leaders and the governing body is very clear and well understood by all staff. In 2010 attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 was average. The school's accurate records indicate that this is due to rise significantly again this year. This demonstrates good progress from students' starting points as they generally enter the school with attainment which is just below average. The focus upon improving mathematics and English, including targeted individual support, has been successful. The proportion who gained the top grades of A and A* in GCSE examinations rose to above average in 2010. Higher attaining students make far better progress than students of similar abilities across the country. Results in modern foreign languages are very high with the large majority of students who have been at the school for all five years gaining a GCSE pass at grade A* to C.

Leaders, well supported by the governing body, are integral in ensuring the federation works well to carry on improving. The federation is a strength and it is able to provide additional support from, and for, both schools. This means, for example, that subjects with fewer teachers are able to share expertise with more staff, joint professional development is accessed by larger numbers of staff and lessons are often jointly planned across the whole federation. The federation improvement group also works well so that a wider range of expertise is available to

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support individuals.

Leaders and managers at all levels have worked well to improve the quality of learning. Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection because there is now a professional expectation of helping all teachers to become more effective through sharing their best practice and trying innovative approaches. There is a culture of wanting to develop teaching skills so that all students achieve their maximum potential and this healthy climate sees teachers as constantly improving practitioners. There is an accurate understanding of how well the school is achieving and a well-formulated improvement plan to ensure it meets these high expectations. These, along with the good and improving success to date, demonstrate a good capacity to improve. The school complies with current safeguarding requirements and provides good value for money.

The school community is harmonious and students were keen to let inspectors know how they feel safe and that behaviour is generally good. The school is aware, through its forum for parents and carers, of some concern about behaviour when classes are taken by different teachers from usual. Consequently, these lessons are always started by a senior member of staff and extra vigilance is taken as part of the school's own monitoring of student behaviour. The school has good systems in place to support behaviour and to quickly intervene if any problems arise. The number of exclusions has fallen significantly and is low. The seclusion room, where students who misbehave are sent, is used appropriately and the school monitors its effect, including the proportion of students who are sent to it more than once. Rewards are used well to motivate students.

Students are aware of the different types of bullying and say they have received good support to overcome instances of bullying through the use of mobile phones or the internet. They confirm that incidents are rare and that staff respond well to support individuals if any cases arise. Students are very sociable and they enjoy being part of a multi-cultural society. The school is inclusive and ensures equality of opportunity, so that all students can achieve. A number of parents commented upon the good work the school did to support their children with disabilities and special educational needs and some others commented on how their children had been helped when enduring medical difficulties.

During the inspection, students were observed making good and sometimes outstanding progress in lessons. In many lessons, students were fully engaged and responded well to the interesting activities which included working in groups, practical work and investigations. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good with students working well in lessons and wanting to achieve well. Students commented that at times some behaviour was distracting, especially when classes were taken by staff other than the normal teacher. These distractions were generally silly behaviour, chattering or calling out.

The school has good records of how well students are progressing so any who are underachieving can be quickly identified and then given additional support. Records

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show that there are no significant differences for their progress between students from different ethnic backgrounds or those who are known to be eligible for free school meals. Students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are well supported, as are students with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those learning English as an additional language. The school identified a group of students who had a complex range of problems, mainly with aspects which were beyond the school's control. Very good support enabled most to do well and complete their education. They then achieved suitable qualifications to gain employment or to carry on to higher education. This shows how well the school meets the needs of all students and works very well to ensure they can, and do, achieve to overcome disadvantages. Attendance rates are above average.

In the sixth form, strong leadership has been successful in creating a clear sixth form identity and increased students' confidence. The proportion of students from the federation who are opting for the sixth form has increased greatly and this is enabling the school to offer a greater variety of courses. In previous years the number of students in the sixth form was very low. Students entered the sixth form with attainment which was typically below average and they made satisfactory progress, although attainment was below average. Recent module results and the school's tracking are very encouraging and show much improved progress. The very large majority of students carry on into Year 13 from Year 12.

Teaching has improved strongly and is good. The support across the federation has been key to this improvement along with support from advanced skills teachers and support from the specialist area of languages. Students explained that the lessons observed were typical of those which they generally get. Relationships between adults and students and between students themselves are productive. In the large majority of lessons where teaching is good or better, teachers are very effective at matching the work to the needs of nearly all students. For example, in a mathematics class higher-attaining students were given additional expressions to expand once they had mastered the ones for the majority of the class. These expressions were more complex rather than just consisting of more awkward numbers. Support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and low-attaining students is good so that they make good progress. This often includes good support from teaching assistants. Lessons are well planned and include appropriate work for different levels. They also include good opportunities to enhance literacy within lessons, and to a lesser extent numeracy. At times, work does not always meet the needs of all ability levels within a class and in these cases it is often the middle-ability children who are not stretched.

During the inspection, learning was good because most lessons included diverse, interesting, activities for students to undertake. Teachers are patient and make good use of praise to secure students' motivation and progress. Learning in some lessons is outstanding. These lessons are characterised by teachers who are able to excite students with the subject being taught and through the highly memorable class work, students' own interest and determination to succeed. This drives up the standard of students' work and creativity. In the small number of lessons where

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progress is satisfactory, work is less demanding; teachers expect less and do not give students the feedback to help them to improve. Marking is often good and gives very clear overview of how well students are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, at times, it does not show students where their work has not met expected standards and guide them on how to improve.

The school has ensured that literacy is promoted well across the curriculum and this is especially noticeable in the demanding written tasks that students often undertake. Specialist vocabulary is introduced and students are encouraged to give thoughtful and extensive answers to many of the questions they are asked in their classes. During tutor time, students often develop their literacy and numeracy skills as part of a whole school focus, while others consider the social and emotional elements of their learning. This is also key in developing spiritual awareness. Students take part a rich variety of cultural and social activities and have a clear understanding of moral issues. Lessons often include essential elements to make sure students have a good understanding of growing up in a varied and multi-cultural Britain and beyond. The language specialism does much to enhance community awareness.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alderman White School and Language College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 867 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	46	38	64	52	10	8	2	2
Q2 My child feels safe at school	46	38	69	57	6	5	1	1
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	42	34	62	51	12	10	3	2
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	38	31	75	61	8	7	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	45	37	66	54	10	8	1	1
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	41	34	71	58	7	6	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	23	19	61	50	30	25	5	4
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	11	9	49	40	45	37	13	11
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	44	36	57	47	13	11	2	2
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	24	68	56	24	20	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	35	29	60	49	19	16	7	6
Q12 The school is well led and managed	49	40	57	47	13	11	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.

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.

24 June 2011

Dear Students



Inspection of Alderman White School and Language College, Nottingham, NG9 3DU

When I visited your school recently with my colleagues, we met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation. During the inspection we were impressed with your good behaviour, manners and how well you contribute to the life of the school and local community. Thank you also for answering our many questions so we could get a better understanding of what it is typically like in the school. As one of you said, 'Teachers here don't have to act different because they are good all the time.' We were concerned about the different opinions on behaviour between you and your parents and carers. You told us that occasionally lessons were distracting when other students were chattering or calling out. We have asked the school to work with you all to get a good understanding of how much of a problem this is and then the school can set about ensuring it improves. I know the headteacher is keen to hear your views so please help him. You enjoy school and this is one of many reasons why we judge your school to be good. Your responses to staff and your keenness to do well are key elements as to why you make good progress. Well done!

Results in your GCSE examinations, have risen sharply. We observed over 40 lessons and judged that teaching is good. Lessons were best when you had plenty of opportunities to work independently and that all of you in the class were stretched. There are good relationships with staff, and most of your lessons are challenging and interesting with a rich variety of activities. We have asked the school to make sure that continues to improve. This is particularly the case in the sixth form now that far more of you are staying on. We have recommended that sixth form students have more challenging targets and that lessons always make sure all of you are challenged.

Staff care for you well. You have a very good understanding of your local community. Your headteacher and other senior leaders have very clearly identified what needs to be done and they are very determined to carry on improving the school and the work within the federation. They are supported by some good subject and pastoral leaders, teachers, governors and other staff. We wish you well at this good school of which you are justifiably proud.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector

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