

Malbank School and Sixth Form College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111419
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	378299
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Straw

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1,259
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Watts
Headteacher	Jeannette Walker
Date of previous school inspection	03 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 41 lessons taught by 39 teachers. They held meetings with members of staff, members of the governing body and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at senior leaders' monitoring, improvement planning, self-evaluation and tracking of students' progress. They also took account of questionnaire responses from 174 parents and carers, 150 students and 78 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Students' attainment and progress at Key Stage 4, particularly in mathematics.
- Strategies for improving the progress of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the school and the sixth form and how well the curriculum meets individual needs.
- Students' attainment and progress in the sixth form.

Information about the school

Malbank school and sixth form college is a larger than the average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs are lower than the national average. The school has a performing arts specialism. The school has gained numerous awards among which are Arts Mark (gold), the Inclusion Quality Mark, Get Set Olympic award, Youth Charter for Sport and most improved school award, 2011 and Investors in Carers.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a good and rapidly improving school with a good sixth form. Malbank puts students at the heart of everything it does. The school is characterised by outstanding leadership and management which in the last few years has brought about significant improvement to all aspects of the school's work. The school is held in high regard by most parents and carers. Comments such as, 'Malbank is a listening school and is working hard to continuously improve and engage all members of the community.' and 'The children are consulted and respected and given innumerable life enriching experiences.' are typical of the positive views expressed to inspectors.

Students achieve well. Their success in gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE level (including English and mathematics) has increased steadily and is consistently above the national average. In English, students' attainment is high. Attainment in mathematics is above the national average but is not as consistently successful as in English. The school has recognised that this issue needs to be addressed and has already formulated an action plan to further raise attainment in mathematics. When students enter the school in Year 7 their attainment is just above average. They leave the school in Year 11 with attainment which is significantly above average in many subject areas including English, the arts, physical education, communication studies and chemistry.

An excellent curriculum, tailored to the needs of individual students and providing a wide range of academic and vocational courses, has made a significant contribution to overcoming past underachievement. Highly effective systems of target-setting and monitoring progress ensure that underperformance is swiftly identified and tackled. Personalised intervention strategies are effective in promoting the achievement of particular groups of higher- and lower-ability students.

The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the quality of pace and challenge across the school. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable are extremely well supported. The school ethos provides a happy and secure environment where students feel extremely safe. Students appreciate the many initiatives to help them to be healthy and fit. They are proud to be the nominated school on the North West 2012 Olympic committee.

Students are proud of their school. Behaviour is good and the students' contribution to the school and wider community is excellent. Because of their high rate of attendance, high level of attainment in English and many other subjects and their interest in the world around them, their preparation for the future is excellent.

Outstanding leadership and management is the key to the school's success. The headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders have a shared vision for continuous improvement. Staff morale is high and all those who work in the school feel their contribution is valued. Teaching, learning, the curriculum and the quality of care, guidance and support have all improved since the last inspection and attainment is now well above average. An excellent range of partnerships enhance learning for students within the school and in the wider community. Because of what has been achieved so far, and the high quality systems of self-evaluation and planning, the capacity to improve is excellent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and achievement in mathematics by:
 - implementing the school's action plan for mathematics ensuring all students learn actively through activities which are purposeful and which require them to explain, think and justify their methods.

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning to that of the best by:
 - matching work more precisely to individual needs
 - increasing the level of challenge and pace in some lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students work hard in the majority of lessons and apply themselves diligently. When given the opportunity they work well in pairs or groups. Boys progress as well as girls and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also progress well as a consequence of the sensitive support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. In many subjects, GCSE results are consistently high with significant numbers of students reaching the highest grades of A* and A. Students are successfully motivated by the high frequency of assessment that is carried out in all subjects and year groups. They appreciate the regular feedback on their academic progress and attitudes to learning. This enables them to understand the steps they are making in their progress and is a spur to making an extra effort to reach their challenging targets.

Students behave well around the school and in lessons showing courtesy and respect to their peers, teachers and visitors. They feel extremely safe in school and have a keen understanding of various hazards including the dangers of inappropriate internet use. They willingly accept responsibility and make an outstanding contribution to both the life of the school and the local community in roles such as junior sports leaders and by visiting primary schools to organise games and activities for younger pupils. Students regularly visit a local retirement community and join in activities there with the community arts coordinator. The rate of attendance is high

because the overwhelming majority of students enjoy school. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The performing arts specialism makes a positive contribution to their enjoyment and fascination with the world around them. Whole-school enrichment days related to the Olympics have further broadened horizons.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning is good and there are examples of outstanding practice in both key stages. Teachers know their subjects well, manage students effectively and are generally able to enthuse and inspire. In the better lessons methods and activities are planned to meet the learning needs of all students, challenge is relentless and questioning requires students to think deeply about the subject matter. An example of this was in an excellent Year 11 English lesson in which students were gaining confidence as well as enjoyment in deconstructing unseen poetry. The school is aware of the need to share this exemplary practice across all subjects. Students enjoy lessons with pace and challenge but these opportunities are not consistently available across all classes. In a minority of lessons, some of which are in mathematics, the pace of learning is slower because work is less well matched to students' needs and the level of challenge is lower so that students are not thinking, explaining and justifying their ideas. Assessment is a strength. Students receive detailed oral and written feedback and frequent assessment is an integral part of most lessons.

The curriculum is highly inclusive and coherent and is flexible to meet the needs of students. A wide range of courses for all levels of ability make an outstanding contribution to students' achievement. Performing arts status has had a positive impact on the progress and attainment of many students and has been used effectively to target students who might otherwise become disengaged. Every cohort has the opportunity to shape the optional curriculum depending on their preferences, rather than having to follow the choices of the previous cohort. In Key Stage 4 a

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

diverse range of 30 traditional subjects is complemented by specialised diplomas and vocational courses offered in collaboration with other local providers. The curriculum provides additional support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, such as the nurture group in Year 7. An exciting range of enrichment opportunities exist for students of all ages and abilities. Those in Years 10 to 13 especially enjoy the innovative 'option K' on Monday afternoons when in, mixed-age groups, students have the opportunity to choose from 30 different courses from AS law and photography to rock climbing and rock school.

There are excellent arrangements for the care of students. Pastoral support is very strong. The nurture group in Year 7 gives learners a good start at the beginning of Key Stage 3. The Inclusion Resource Centre offers one-to-one support and personalised timetables for those students facing various difficulties and supports parents and carers in helping their children. Close links with other agencies bring in expert support where necessary. Attendance is given a high priority, exclusions are low and highly effective links have been forged with feeder primary schools so that transition into secondary school is smooth. Older students praise the guidance they receive on future careers and study pathways.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective. The headteacher has a very clear vision for Malbank and this vision is shared with the staff, parents, carers and students. She sets high standards, leads by example, and staff rise to the challenge. Middle leaders work with colleagues as 'critical friends' and are involved in many whole-school development projects. Best practice is celebrated and shared. Everyone in the school is aware of the importance of putting students' learning and achievement at the heart of the school. The leadership of teaching and learning is good. The school is aware of the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and has effective plans in place to address these. Rigorous monitoring, evaluation and review are embedded within all the school's work.

The governing body are knowledgeable and provide an additional support to the school through their 'impact team', which enables them to play an important role in monitoring and evaluation. Leaders and managers at all levels are effective in tackling discrimination, promoting community cohesion and promoting equality of opportunity. The school exploits to the full a wide range of academic and professional partnerships to enrich provision in the local community. The results of this are seen in the vastly improved attainment and achievement of students of all levels of ability and in the good and outstanding outcomes in their personal development.

Safeguarding of students' is good. Effective policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed. The school takes very seriously its commitment to keeping students safe and in ensuring the welfare of staff. As a result the students feel very safe in school and the vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children are kept safe.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students enjoy the sixth form. Retention rates from Year 12 into Year 13 are high. Effective steps have been taken since the last inspection to improve sixth-form provision, following a thorough review of strengths and weaknesses. As a result outcomes are improving: many students reach at least average and, in an increasing range of subjects, above average attainment at AS and A level. Performance is more consistent across the subjects. The rigorous monitoring of teaching has brought about improvements to the quality of learning. Students praise the teaching they receive. Progress is good and there are no noticeable differences in the progress made by different groups of students. Students know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Students are pleased with the effective care, guidance and support they receive. They say that they feel safe and rates of attendance are high. They appreciate their spacious accommodation and well-resourced sixth-form area.

There is a broad range of courses on offer including accelerated one-year A level courses. The wide range of enrichment activities contributes effectively to the development of students' well-being and academic learning. Among many other activities, students enjoy working on a UNICEF project, serve on a local medical centre young persons' patient panel and take part in a number of international experiences to support their learning. A high proportion of students go on to higher education.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and there is a strong focus on improving students' personal and academic outcomes. Leaders take account of

students' views and respond to their suggestions and needs. Plans for improvement are detailed and specific and focus on further raising attainment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth Form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire, say they are happy with their child's experience at school. In particular they praise the excellent transition arrangements, the high levels of engagement of students, the strong support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the way in which the school has improved during the last few years. Inspectors endorse these views.

A small minority felt that some teachers were not dealing with unacceptable behaviour effectively. Discussions with students and evidence gathered during the inspection led inspectors to the view that procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour have been strengthened and that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. A small minority of parents and carers also felt that some lessons lacked challenge. Inspectors agree, as does the school, that teaching needs to be more consistent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Malbank School and Sixth Form 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 174 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,259 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	40	98	56	6	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	34	112	64	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	38	86	49	8	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	29	90	52	12	7	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	40	23	108	62	10	6	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	20	106	61	16	9	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	20	113	65	11	6	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	25	103	59	4	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	28	100	57	10	6	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	23	100	57	5	3	8	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	24	95	55	11	6	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	61	35	99	57	7	4	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	40	90	52	7	4	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



14 September 2011

Dear Students,

Inspection of Malbank School and Sixth Form College, Nantwich, CW5 5HD

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we visited you in school this week. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us on Monday at lunchtime; you gave us some valuable information about what you think about your school. We would now like to share our views on your school.

Malbank is a good school with a good sixth form which provides you with a good quality of education. Some aspects of your school are outstanding. You are well taught, have good attitudes to learning and are making good progress to reach well above average levels of attainment in most subjects. The exciting and varied curriculum gives you a wonderful range of subjects and enrichment opportunities and you receive excellent support, care and guidance so that you feel very safe and are able to make the best of your education. You behave well, are proud of your school and make an excellent contribution to your school and local community. Your attendance is high and you are very well prepared for the next stage of education or employment. We judge that your school is very well led and managed.

In order to help your school to improve further we have asked your staff to keep on improving teaching so that all lessons match the best. Achievement in mathematics is not as good as it is in English so we have asked the teachers to make sure you are actively engaged in learning and in explaining your ideas in mathematics lessons.

Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection. We enjoyed your company. Please keep working hard and aiming high.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw
Lead inspector

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