

Campion School and Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137087
Local Authority	N/A
Inspection number	385573
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Mary Davis

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
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	1427
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Baylis
Headteacher	Bob Clayton
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
School address	Bugbrooke Northampton NN7 3QG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. They observed 49 lessons taught by 48 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at policies, development planning, data related to the tracking of students' progress, records of senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning, safeguarding documents, minutes of governing body meetings and students' work. Inspectors also considered responses to questionnaires from 99 parents and carers, together with those from students and staff.

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

- How effectively has underperformance been addressed in terms of progress seen in 2009 and 2010, particularly in English?
- How effectively do teachers plan to meet the needs of different groups of students, particularly those of highest ability?
- How well does the school's promotion of community cohesion foster students' understanding of life in a multicultural society?
- How effectively has recent sixth form underperformance at AS level been addressed?

Information about the school

Campion School and Language College is a larger than average school of its type, serving a predominantly rural area but it includes some students from urban areas of Northampton town. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently low but is increasing year on year. The school was last inspected in 2009 under its previous name of Champion School and became an academy in August 2011. Students follow a three-year Key Stage 4 courses in most subjects in Years 9 to 11. Amongst its recent awards are the International School Award, Inclusion Quality Mark and the Anti-Bullying Gold Award.

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

2

Main findings

Students are extremely proud of this good school. Many aspects of its work have developed rapidly and, as a result, students' achievement and personal outcomes have also improved. Students particularly value the wide range of opportunities to take leadership roles, many in the local community, enabling them to develop self-confidence. The following are typical of comments they made: 'This school is amazing - it has done so much for me', and 'Teachers are really supportive and you get opportunities to do loads of things'. Warm relationships between adults and students are evident and, as a result, the school community is cohesive and harmonious.

Levels of attainment have risen steadily over the past three years, including in languages, and the proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics has been consistently above the national average. Attainment at A level has also been above average although recent AS level results have fallen. Students behave well and attendance rates are consistently high. Students are overwhelmingly confident that the school will keep them safe, and they say that it places great emphasis on their personal safety. Their outstanding contribution to the school and wider community includes acting as sports or language leaders in local primary schools. The student councils, coordinated by a gap-year student, are particularly effective and students appreciate being able to comment on the provision, for example, the quality of teaching, and identify how it could be improved to enable them to learn more effectively.

The majority of teaching, including in the sixth form, is good and much practice seen during the inspection was outstanding. Here, strong subject knowledge engages students' interest and good planning enables them to build skills and understanding progressively throughout the lesson. There is, however, some inconsistency. Although teachers recognise in their planning the different abilities within their classes, they do not always use assessment information effectively to plan activities or resources that will meet these differing needs. As a result, they sometimes provide the highest ability students with tasks that are too easy and insufficiently challenging to move them forward. In the minority of classes, lesson activities are mundane or slow paced and lack sufficient variety to cater for all learning styles. The school is a centre of excellence for vocational courses and the language specialism has resulted in all students studying a language.

Many aspects of care, guidance and support are outstanding. Transition into school is

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managed very effectively, particularly for the small proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, leaders have recognised that the provision for this growing group of students requires further development as, over time they are not making as much progress as their peers. This is because students' needs are not being identified soon enough at the start of Year 7 or adequate support provided to meet their needs, particularly in literacy. The support staff are caring and committed and know their students well, but some do not currently have sufficient expertise in the range of special educational needs to provide effective support or to evaluate the impact of interventions.

The headteacher has shown strong leadership through a difficult phase in the school's development. He has a clear vision, which is well understood by staff, and a relentless focus on driving improvement. He is well supported by an able senior team and vibrant middle leaders who are now having an impact on raising performance. Leaders, including the governing body, have a clear understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development and actions taken, including the effective use of challenging targets, have resulted in much improved outcomes for students, particularly in English and the language specialism. Leaders show good capacity to sustain these improvements and to develop further. The school's efforts to promote community cohesion are exemplary.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share existing outstanding practice to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to identify the different needs of individuals within their classes and plan learning activities that meet their needs, particularly by providing appropriate challenge for those of highest ability
 - providing imaginative lesson activities that cater for all learning styles.
- Develop the provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure all reach their full potential by:
 - ensuring early identification of students' needs and providing appropriate support, particularly for literacy
 - ensuring that staff including teaching assistants are suitably trained to meet students' varying needs
 - interventions are effectively monitored and evaluated to maximise rates of progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The very large majority of students join the school with broadly average attainment in English and mathematics, although the proportion of higher attaining students is generally above average. Attainment in English, average in 2010, showed marked improvement in 2011 when higher attaining students also performed better than in

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the previous year. Students throughout the school are keen to learn and show considerable independence in their drive to do well. They concentrate well and are keen to ask questions and contribute ideas. They cooperate particularly well in group tasks and these activities enable them to develop teamwork and leadership skills, a key focus of the school’s work. Although students with special educational needs and/or disabilities have made less progress than their peers over time, inspectors saw examples of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities being well supported during lessons, enabling them to be fully included. The very few who speak English as an additional language make exceptional progress over time as a result of the support they receive from their subject teachers. Those students from minority ethnic backgrounds make equally good progress as their peers.

The school has been recognised for its anti-bullying work. As a Year 9 student said, ‘We feel safe and well mentally because the school takes our safety and bullying issues very seriously’. They all know an adult in school they could turn to for help if they were troubled and know that they would be listened to. Students appreciate their ‘CASE’ lessons and assemblies where they are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations relevant to their local area and how to identify risk. Behaviour seen around the school during the inspection was consistently good and calm with students of all ages mixing harmoniously and considerately together. They are keenly aware of and follow the school’s ‘Choose to Learn’ policy and respond well to the sanctions and support they receive, should any unacceptable behaviour occur. Students appreciate the focus the school places on aspects of personal, social and health education, and, as a result, say they know how to keep themselves healthy. They enjoy the varied sporting activities offered at lunchtime including the very popular provision of table tennis.

The wide variety of vocational courses undertaken ensures that students develop skills that make them employable. This is also the case for students with special educational needs an/or disabilities. Students’ basic skills in literacy, numeracy and in information technology are very well developed and improving. Their positive attitudes, creativity and interpersonal skills, particularly their ability to work as a member or leader of a team, together with their high attendance and excellent punctuality provide an outstanding preparation for their future economic well-being. Students have a keen sense of right and wrong and value the opportunity in lessons to reflect on moral issues. For example, in a Year 8 dance lesson, they were keen to discuss whether graffiti is art or vandalism, in relation to their study of street dance. They have a good understanding of, and show respect for, those from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and of their role as national and global citizens.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account:	2
	2

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Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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?

Teachers generally have good knowledge of the examination courses they are teaching, enabling them to guide their students to a firm understanding of how they will be tested and what constitutes a high level answer. Most teachers use questioning well to probe students' understanding and to stimulate discussion. Furthermore, in the most effective lessons, they evaluate the learning taking place frequently during the course of the lesson and ensure that students fully understand the task to be undertaken. In the minority of lessons, the pace of learning is slower because students are given too long to undertake a task or the teacher misses opportunities to evaluate how well it is being tackled, to enable students to move on. For example, in one lesson, the most able students were told to do another example if they finished early, rather than being provided with additional challenge. Most teachers, however, give excellent verbal feedback, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning and to students knowing what they need to do to improve. In the best lessons, this is reinforced by frequent opportunities for peer- and self-assessment.

The curriculum is exciting and innovative and is flexible enough to meet the needs of all students, offering a full range of courses. It provides excellent opportunities for wider personal development, especially through the language specialism and sport, for example, through the partnership with a Japanese and a London school. Such events as the Year 7 creativity week further enrich the provision. Early entry in core subjects is enabling students to achieve success and improve on their grades, and separate English groups for boys and girls enable teachers to focus on the differing interests of these groups. These initiatives have resulted in raising attainment for current students and those who completed Key Stage 4 at the end of last term. The three-year Key Stage 4 allows students to take extra qualifications and provides

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

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additional flexibility. Students value the opportunity to make choices in Year 8 and then again in Year 9 and say they have a good range of options available. English, mathematics and information and communication technology are embedded across the curriculum and there are good progression routes into the sixth form or college. Students enjoy a range of enrichment activities, including a variety of sporting activity but they currently only receive one hour of physical education per week.

Students are treated and cared for as individuals and speak warmly of the ‘motherly’ nature of the pastoral team. This highly effective team, of whom parents and carers also speak highly, has been carefully constructed to ensure that its members include non-teaching staff, with sufficient time to address students’ needs. Their support of those for whom circumstances may make them vulnerable enables their success and improves their well-being. Their work is strengthened by close liaison with families and external agencies. As one Year 9 student said, ‘The best thing about the school is that it’s not about the teachers, it’s about us, the students.’ They and their parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their praise for the information and guidance they receive to help them make wise choices at each stage of their education and this is particularly the case in ensuring all students go on to further education or employment. The school has continued to maintain a very high level of attendance from its students, because it has been quick to identify and support those at risk of becoming persistent absentees. The school can point to striking examples of where this support has resulted in improvements in attendance and full engagement in school life.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Good systems for monitoring the work of the school and accurate evaluation ensure that leaders have a precise understanding of its strengths and what needs to be done to further develop its effectiveness. Leaders are sharply focused on improving the quality of teaching. Well-targeted training from both internal and external providers has resulted in an increase in the proportion of outstanding lessons. The governing body is well informed and plays an active part in holding the school to account. The school has been very effective in establishing a community in which all students feel accepted and achieve. It has reached out to the local, national and international communities through well-considered strategies and in doing so has ensured that all students have opportunities to gain first-hand experience of a wide range of people from varied ethnic and religious backgrounds. This has been

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recognised by the International School Award. It has also received the Inclusion Mark in recognition of its drive to ensure equality of opportunity for all students. The school is rigorous in the analysis of performance of different groups and has been quick to identify any underperformance and to take appropriate action. This is evident in its current work to ensure the better progress of the growing group of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A wide range of partnerships provides good curriculum opportunities for students and enhances the quality of the care, guidance and support they receive. Parents and carers are well informed about their children’s progress and the school provides good opportunities for them to better understand how to support their learning. The school’s surveys indicate high levels of parental satisfaction with its work and increasing numbers of parents and carers are actively participating in the life of the school, for example, by contributing to aspects of the curriculum, such as financial awareness. Responses to the questionnaire received during the inspection indicate that parents and carers are confident that the school ensures their children feel safe and students agree. Safeguarding is satisfactory although there are some inconsistencies in the recording of checks and risk assessments. Procedures for child protection and ensuring the relevant safeguarding training for all staff are, however, exemplary.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

This is a popular and vibrant sixth form, maintaining a high intake of students. The retention rate from Year 12 into Year 13 is also good and students evidently enjoy both their studies and being part of, and contributing to, the Campion community. They do this, for example, through the sixth form ‘senate’, or show their initiative in

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supporting and leading younger ones. Students enter with a good profile of GCSE passes and they achieve well at the end of their chosen courses. The school is now working to raise attainment at AS level and at the highest grades. Students attend well and are punctual to lessons and develop appropriate life skills, particularly by continuing their high level of community contribution and the development of their leadership skills. The school offers a wide range of accredited subjects and courses, meeting the diverse needs and interests of the students. Teaching is mostly good and staff use a variety of methods and resources to support learning. Students value the care and guidance they receive and form tutors play a crucial role in providing ongoing support and in preparing students for the challenges they face when they leave school. It is impressive that all students succeed in progressing into training, education or employment. An established and cohesive team manages the sixth form provision well. There is a strong focus on improving outcomes and this is reflected in the improving A2 results. The school seeks and acts upon the views of students and those of their parents and carers. The sixth form centre provides a safe and productive learning environment where resources are well managed.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
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 overwhelming response of the very small minority of parents and carers who completed the questionnaire was positive, with most saying that the school keeps their children safe and that they enjoy school. Some parents and carers expressed concerns that their children are making insufficient progress and some of these comments related to either the most able students or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In these cases, inspection findings endorse their views and inspectors have asked the school to provide appropriate challenge and support. A few parents and carers feel that they are not sufficiently informed about or enabled to support their children’s learning. This view contradicts the opinion shown by the school’s surveys which received a wider response and were overwhelmingly positive. Inspectors found that the school regularly reports on progress to parents and carers, and particularly if the student has been identified as under-performing, when the school provides frequent progress reports.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Campion School 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1427 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	40	51	52	6	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	46	46	51	52	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	30	30	54	55	10	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	28	45	45	20	20	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	27	27	55	55	9	9	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	22	22	55	56	13	13	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	24	58	59	8	8	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)	33	33	50	51	9	9	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	26	26	56	57	11	11	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	35	53	54	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	21	57	58	10	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	34	48	48	11	11	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	39	39	46	46	9	9	3	3

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 are 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.



19 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Campion School, Northampton, NN7 3QG

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited your school for its recent inspection. We were particularly impressed by your evident pride in your school, by the way older students support younger ones and the way in which you contribute to the community, particularly through the sports and language leadership schemes.

You go to a good school. Your attainment by the end of Year 11 is improving and the proportion of students who gain five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics is above the national average, as is the proportion gaining a language qualification. Attainment in the sixth form is also improving. The school provides you with an exciting curriculum, including a wide variety of vocational and language courses that is closely matched to your individual needs. You are keen to do well and to continue to improve. Your attendance is excellent. The good teaching you receive enables you to learn well and in some lessons you make outstanding progress because of the variety of activities provided for you, although this could be improved so that all teachers provide exciting tasks. Teachers enable you to develop independence, teamwork and leadership skills and the confidence you need to prepare you for your future. We have asked them to ensure that they all plan lessons that closely match your ability and that they challenge you appropriately. The good care, guidance and support that you receive enables you all to feel safe. You told us that you value the fact that you are well known and supported as individuals and we agree. We found, though, that the support for those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities could be further developed to ensure that they make better progress.

The leaders of the school work hard to make sure you continue to achieve and develop as young people. You can help by continuing to work hard and telling your teachers if your work is too easy. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis
Lead inspector

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