

Melior Community Academy

Chandos Road, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, DN17 1HA

Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an academy that requires special measures.

- Since the opening of the academy, students have made inadequate progress particularly in English and mathematics.
- Over time, the quality of teaching is inadequate because it has not enabled students to make the progress they should. Expectations are too low and the work set does not match students' capabilities.
- The use of additional government funding to help disadvantaged students to achieve better standards has been ineffective and the progress of these students is inadequate.
- Actions taken by leaders and managers, over time, have failed to rapidly improve students' achievement. They have been too slow to tackle weak teaching and ensure students achieve well enough. As a result, the leadership's capacity to improve the academy is not secure.
- Behaviour requires improvement because students do not always focus well enough on their work in class nor do they respond to teachers' comments in their books to improve their work.
- The curriculum has failed to meet the needs of students. It has not enabled students to achieve well or prepare them adequately for the future.
- Poor skills in reading and writing are not being tackled across all year groups in the academy and this is impeding students' progress across different subjects.
- Governors and the sponsor have too readily accepted overly positive assessments of students' progress from academy leaders. This has prevented them holding the academy to account for students' achievement and the effective and efficient deployment of resources.

The academy has the following strengths

- Procedures to ensure the safety of students are good. Students say they feel safe in the academy and staff and parents agree.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by the academy.
- Students' progress is better for those in Years 7 and 8, with some teaching that is good or outstanding. The interim Principal and other new leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the academy but have not yet had sufficient time to tackle weaknesses effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons taught by 26 teachers. One observation was undertaken jointly with a leader from the academy. Inspectors observed a range of activities and provision for disabled students and those with special educational needs.
- Inspectors spoke with three groups of students about their learning in lessons and their safety in the academy. An inspector also listened to some students reading.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Education Action Board, the Chair of the Standards and Progress Committee and a representative of the academy’s sponsors. Meetings were held with academy staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors also looked at the academy’s review of its own performance, its development plan, academy policies and the minutes of the governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at students’ work in lessons and analysed samples of students’ books.
- Inspectors analysed the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). There were 30 questionnaires completed by staff which were analysed by inspectors

Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ros McMullen	Additional Inspector
Steven Beverley	Additional Inspector
David Thompson	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The academy is smaller than the average sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free academy meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all students are White British. There are very few students whose first language is believed not to be English.
- The proportion of disabled students or those with special educational needs is well above average.
- There are five alternative providers used by the academy. They are the Darley Centre, 7KS, Fluent, Young People's Education Centre and the STPA Alternative Provision Free School.
- The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The academy opened in January 2013. The academy sponsor is a charitable organisation, The School Partnership Trust Academies (SPTA). Two other academies sponsored by SPTA were inspected at the same time.
- The academy is led by an interim Principal who took up post on 12 September 2014, who will remain in post until the end of December 2014. The present Vice-Principal has been appointed to be the new substantive Principal and is to take up post from 1 January 2014.
- There have been significant staffing changes since the opening of the academy with many new leaders, managers and teachers starting at the academy on 1 September 2014. A specialist learning centre catering for children with autism is based on the academy site and is managed by the local authority. It did not form part of this inspection and will be inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good and enables students to reach higher standards and achieve well, especially in English and mathematics, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan and set work that matches the needs and abilities of students
 - have high expectations of what students can achieve
 - require students to act upon the advice given in marking to improve their progress and attitudes to learning
 - check carefully students' understanding of what they are learning by asking searching questions
 - swiftly review students' work, especially that of boys, during lessons to make sure they are engaged with the tasks set and that they are making good progress
 - improve, check and modify, when necessary, students' attitudes to learning
 - support the development of English and mathematical skills in all subjects.
- Urgently improve the impact of leadership, management and governance by acting swiftly to ensure:
 - that leaders at all levels, including governors, relentlessly focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning to eradicate that which presently requires improvement or is inadequate
 - that all subject leaders provide accurate assessment information to senior leaders and governors so that underachieving students can be identified swiftly and appropriate actions taken to improve their learning
 - that all subject leaders make sure that academy policies are carried out effectively to ensure greater consistency in the quality of marking and teaching
 - rigorous checking of the impact of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all students

- that reading and writing skills are developed strongly in all year groups across the whole of the school's curriculum
- that pupil premium funding is used effectively to overcome barriers to developing higher standards and better achievement
- governors and the sponsor have robust systems to check the accuracy and validity of information they receive in order to hold the academy to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the academys use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Over time, leadership has been too slow to tackle weak teaching. This has resulted in students underachieving.
- The curriculum has been ineffective in meeting the needs of students. As a consequence, all groups of students have underachieved. The courses provided for the most able students are not challenging enough to result in good progress and high standards. Poor skills in writing and reading have not been tackled swiftly enough to ensure that students can achieve well.
- Over time, subject leadership has been too variable. It has not ensured that teaching is consistently good, or that policies are applied consistently. Since September 2014, there have been changes in middle leadership and some improvements in teaching have been seen. However, there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- Systems for checking students' progress have been ineffective. This has led to an overly-positive view of students' standards and progress and a lack of action to address widespread underachievement. Very recently, under the direction of the Vice-Principal, systems have changed to provide a more accurate assessment of progress and standards for students. The impact of these improved systems has yet to be ascertained.
- The academy has not used pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that the attainment and progress of disadvantaged students are improving. The funding has not been used effectively and students have fallen behind others. Since September 2014, the academy has begun to make better use of the funds and is beginning to assess how to meet the needs of each individual. However, there is much to do to ensure the academy's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- Systems for managing the performance of teachers have recently been revised and are now identifying areas for development more precisely. A professional development programme has been established and is focusing strongly on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff are very positive about engaging in the opportunities they have to improve their skills although the impact of the programme has yet to be seen.
- Leaders and managers monitor well the behaviour and attendance of those few students who attend alternative provision.
- Students receive careers education and guidance throughout Years 8 to 11. All students leaving the academy at the end of Year 11 in 2014 gained employment or went on to further education or training.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is a strength of the academy. Students learn well about British values through the curriculum and during form time where they consider many topics about life in modern Britain. Students take pride in being able to serve and support others both inside and outside the school. Assemblies consider aspects of service, bravery and heroism.
- Over time, the sponsors of the academy have not checked the work of the academy well enough to see whether students were underachieving. However, since September 2014 they have acted swiftly to provide support for the academy. They have appointed an interim Principal and a new Principal for the academy. They have put in place specialist support for new leaders and are supporting the professional development of teachers.
- The interim Principal has very quickly assessed what needs to be done to improve the academy and the achievement of students. All staff responding to the questionnaire indicated that they knew what the academy was trying to do to improve and they were proud to be part of the academy. The many recent changes introduced by the interim Principal are well supported by leaders and staff.
- A bespoke training programme and good support is in place for teachers and they are making secure progress in their development. About a fifth of teachers are newly qualified or Teach First trainees.
- It is strongly recommended that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have challenged leaders and managers to find out about the working of the academy and the allocation of resources including the pupil premium. However, they have not been diligent enough in ensuring that the information and data they have received accurately reflects the impact on the achievement of students. This has inhibited their ability to take effective decisions to improve achievement. Governors have supported the leadership in its efforts to eradicate inadequate teaching and are clear about systems for performance management of teachers and the link to pay progression. Recently governors and sponsors have acted to appoint a quality assurance professional to ensure they are more rigorous in checking the validity of information.
 - The academy's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students requires improvement.
- Students' attitudes to learning can vary depending on the quality of teaching and whether they are interested in what they are asked to do. Occasionally, students do not focus well enough on their work and interruptions to learning can occur. Teachers manage this well. Too few students respond to their teachers' comments from marking and this slows their learning.
- Students take pride in their appearance and wear their uniform well. They are keen to make a contribution to the academy through the many leadership roles they can take up. They feel involved in helping to make decisions in the academy through the school council and support others through peer mentoring.
- Around the academy, students are polite and courteous to adults and treat each other with respect. They know what is expected of them and say that behaviour is improving.
- For a few students who exhibit challenging behaviour the school rightly uses exclusion. The recent introduction of an internal community exclusion room (ICE room) has helped in improving behaviour.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Attendance is average and the academy has good systems to follow up attendance issues to ensure students are safe. Those students in alternative provision are well cared for due to the diligent approach adopted by the school.
- Effective systems are in place to check the attendance and safety of those few students in alternative provision.
- All of the students spoken with by inspectors said they felt safe in the academy. Leaders provide good information through its curriculum and assemblies on how to stay safe. In particular, students know how to stay safe when using the internet. They are well informed through links with the local police force about how to keep themselves safe within the local community.
- There are very few occasional instances of bullying in the academy. Students are clear about what constitutes bullying including all aspects of prejudice based bullying. They are confident that when bullying occurs the school deals with it very effectively.
- Arrangements to support students whose circumstances make them vulnerable are good with good links to outside agencies to support these students. Child protection procedures are very thorough.
- Staff and parents are overwhelmingly confident that students are safe at the academy.

The quality of teaching**is inadequate**

- Weak teaching over time has led to students' underachieving and making inadequate progress particularly in English and mathematics. Little progress has been made by disadvantaged students and those with disabilities and special educational needs due to the weak teaching they have received.
- Since September 2014 there have been significant changes in staffing. Inspectors found that while the quality of teaching in the academy is improving, it is not raising students' achievement rapidly enough. An analysis of students' work showed that marking is inconsistent within and across subjects. There is some high quality marking which is helping students to begin to make good progress but there are also instances where some books have not been marked. Generally, marking is regular and comments for improvement are helpful. However, students do not respond well enough to improve their work and this slows their progress.
- Expectations of what students are capable of doing are not high enough. The quality of work accepted by teachers is often not good enough to ensure that good progress is being made. This is not encouraging students to strive to attain higher standards.
- Work is not always matched to the individual needs of students. For some, it can be too hard and they do not understand how to complete tasks and for others work can be too easy. This leads to students not being challenged appropriately to ensure that those of all levels of ability make good progress. When work is pitched appropriately with stretch and challenge students respond well. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson, students worked exceptionally well to analyse 'the blurb' (brief information describing a novel) discussing and writing about what they might expect from the novel.
- Some students say that their reading skills are not at a high enough level to access some of the work they are set and account is not taken of this by their teachers. Inspectors confirmed this and noticed from work

in books, and in class, that students' writing skills are weak and this limits their ability to make good progress.

- An analysis of students' work showed that expectations were not high enough in mathematics and as a result, students' progress is inadequate.
- There are good examples of questioning that assesses students' understanding well. For example, a Year 10 group in science were very keen to provide extended answers when being asked how the body responds to variations in temperature. All students learned well from the answers given. However, questioning is inconsistent across the academy and is not always used well enough to deepen the understanding of all students.
- Teaching assistants have been well trained and are increasingly making a more effective contribution to the development of literacy skills for disabled students and those with special educational needs.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students have made inadequate progress since the opening of the academy, especially in English and mathematics. The work set for students has lacked challenge and the curriculum has failed to match students' needs well enough. As a result, achievement is inadequate.
- Students enter the academy with attainment that is well below average. Those leaving in 2013 reached standards that were significantly below average in English, mathematics, science and humanities. In 2014, attainment improved in humanities due to improved subject leadership, but fell in English, mathematics and core science due to weak teaching.
- In 2014, students' progress in English was much weaker than in the previous year. Along with the weak progress made by students in mathematics, this led to the proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades between A* to C, including in English and mathematics, being exceptionally low. Students' attainment is better in vocational courses studied in the academy and at the alternative off-site provision. This supports students gaining places in employment or training. However, the courses have made an inadequate contribution to improving achievement, particularly in improving the proportions of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C, including English and mathematics.
- Students in Years 7 and 8 are making better progress than others in the academy. Overall, teaching is better for them because there is less inadequate teaching in the academy than there was in the past.
- The most able students, as with others in the academy, make inadequate progress. They are not challenged well enough, as teachers' expectations of them are too low. The curriculum does not match their needs sufficiently well and some are following subject courses that are inappropriate.
- The academy does not use early entry to GCSE examinations.
- Disadvantaged students make much less progress than others in the academy and other students nationally. The ineffective use of the additional government funding available to support these students has led to the standards reached by these students remaining behind other students in school and nationally. In 2013, disadvantaged students in the academy were over a GCSE grade behind other students nationally in English and a grade and a half behind in mathematics. In comparison to others in the academy they were almost a grade behind in English and a grade behind in mathematics. In 2014, academy data shows that disadvantaged students were a grade and a half behind other students in the academy in English and over a grade behind in mathematics.
- Those students with disabilities and those with special educational needs make much less progress than other students in the academy. Over time, additional support has not been effectively deployed. The curriculum and quality of teaching has not matched students' needs. Over the past year, a new leader for special educational needs has trained support staff and teachers so that the students are now receiving much better support outside the classroom and improved support in lessons. The full impact of these improvements in support and the organisation of teaching groups have yet to be seen.
- Year 7 catch up funding (government funding for those entering secondary school with below average standards in English and mathematics) is helping students to improve their reading. This is due to improved support from other adults in the academy who are now better trained to support the development of reading. In mathematics, progress is weak for these students. Older students say that their reading skills are not strong enough to be able to support their learning. The academy has yet to implement plans to improve reading for all students, but developing a library is planned.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139059
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	447869

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	747
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Sparham
Headteacher	Peter Whelan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01724 868666
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