

Tribal
Kings Orchard,
One Queen Street,
Bristol
BS2 0HQ

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01173115246
Direct F 01173150430
Sara.Whalley@Tribalgroup.com

5 June 2015

Mr T Gilson
The Headteacher
Malmesbury School
Corn Gastons
Malmesbury
SN16 0DF

Dear Mr Gilson

No formal designation monitoring inspection of Malmesbury School

Following my visit with Sue Frater Her Majesty's Inspector to your academy on 3 June 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. The inspection also focused on relevant aspects of the quality of leadership and management, including governance, at the academy.

Evidence

Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and representatives of the governing body. A telephone conversation took place with the school's education welfare officer. Meetings were also held with groups of students from Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. Inspectors visited a number of lessons to focus on the progress of disadvantaged students and the quality of work in their books. Two written responses were received by parents. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents relating to the achievement, attendance and behaviour of disadvantaged students.

Context

Malmesbury School is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school with a sixth form. The proportion of disadvantaged students on roll who are eligible for pupil premium funding is much lower than the national average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care. An average number of students are disabled or have special educational needs. Most students are from White British backgrounds.

The school was last inspected in May 2012 and was judged to be outstanding. In September 2014, the school became the lead Teaching School in The Avon Teaching School Alliance. In March 2015, the school established The Athelstan Trust. The Trust is the sponsor of The Dean Academy, Gloucestershire; plans are in place for another secondary school to join the trust. The headteacher of Malmesbury School is also the Chief Executive Officer of the trust.

Main Findings

In recent years, the attainment and attendance of disadvantaged students have been below that of other students, both within the school and nationally. Disadvantaged students have also made less progress than their peers in English and mathematics. You, along with your senior and middle leaders, governors and staff, recognise the need to raise the achievement of this group of students. You are determined to reverse this historic trend of underachievement and you have put a number of strategies in place to do so.

You ensure that disadvantaged students are a high priority within the school. You have significantly raised expectations of the quality of teaching and of the quality of the monitoring of each disadvantaged student's progress. Every teacher's performance targets now include the expectation that disadvantaged students will make at least as much progress as their peers. All staff have embraced this clearer focus on raising the achievement of disadvantaged students; they are fully committed to bringing about more rapid improvements.

You have developed highly effective monitoring processes to ensure that the progress, behaviour and attendance of each disadvantaged student are fully understood; each student is very well known. Academic and pastoral leaders meet regularly to discuss each student and to plan appropriate extra support where necessary. The school works very well with other agencies, particularly when reviewing the quality of education it provides for students in local authority care. The majority of the extra government funding is used to provide highly effective one-to-one support for students. These sessions are carefully targeted to develop disadvantaged students' specific academic needs; students make strong progress in these sessions due to the effective teaching that they receive. As well as academic support, some students access high quality social and emotional support to provide them with the strategies to enable them to be successful at school.

Transition arrangements between different phases of education are well developed. Your senior leaders liaise with primary school teachers to ensure they have a thorough understanding of each disadvantaged student's individual strengths, interests and needs. The extra support the school provides to those students, and to families who may find the move to secondary school more challenging, is highly effective. Through extra visits to the school and with the help of sixth form advocates who forge helpful working relationships with these students, they are well prepared to start secondary school. Transition arrangements between Year 11 and the sixth form are equally effective. Disadvantaged students progressing to post-16

education are well prepared for this move by, for example, developing their organisational skills. The literacy support low-attaining disadvantaged students receive through their English lessons and one-to-one support is effective. This extra support, delivered by subject specialist teachers, enables these students to speed up their progress in English. However, in lessons in other subjects, the literacy needs of some of these students are not always well planned for by teachers. For example, worksheets are sometimes too difficult for students to read. This slows the progress they make and does not adequately consolidate, or develop, their literacy skills.

The careers education delivered for disadvantaged students from Year 7 onwards is more regular than in the past. Students say that they benefit from the range of activities and from the visiting speakers representing different careers. This develops students' understanding of the link between their education and potential careers effectively, raising their aspirations for the future. As a result of this well-targeted careers education, more disadvantaged students enter further education, training or employment at the end of Year 11. The vast majority of disadvantaged students who enter the sixth form progress to university.

You work closely with other local schools and have been active in seeking and learning from the most effective practice in raising the achievement of disadvantaged students. As a result of this, you have raised expectations of the quality and frequency of feedback teachers provide to students. Students now have a much better understanding of what level they are working at, and the key aspects, within each subject, that they need to develop to improve their learning. In lessons, and in students' books, the most able disadvantaged students are achieving well, and as well as their peers. These students take great pride in their work and show determination and resilience to do well. Occasionally, lower-attaining disadvantaged students do not take as much pride in their work; not all teachers help students to develop their presentation. Subject leaders are tackling this by paying closer attention to the quality of disadvantaged students' work through more focused scrutiny of their books. They jointly, and more regularly, scrutinise the quality of work with leaders in other subjects. This enables them to recognise the strengths within their department and also to implement strategies that other departments are using to good effect. Leaders are holding teachers more firmly to account for the quality of work that students produce.

You have developed a more rigorous approach to the use of the school's assessment information for each student. Teachers are making better use of this to plan learning activities that better engage and motivate students and also speed up the progress they make. Teachers now monitor carefully whether disadvantaged students can access extra support from adults, where required, and check that they are in supportive groupings, where they can work productively with their peers. As a result, disadvantaged students are now making much better progress than before across all year groups.

Governors are fully committed to raising the achievement of disadvantaged students. They fully understand the importance of this issue and provide high levels of

challenge to leaders. Governors receive more regular reports from senior leaders on the effectiveness of the school's work with disadvantaged students. However, when monitoring the progress of disadvantaged students, they sometimes focus on the gap between their achievement and other students; this does not always ensure that disadvantaged students make at least good progress in their own right. Leaders work well with most parents to engage them from Year 7 to support their child's progress. Weekly close scrutiny of students' attendance, alongside the education welfare officer, ensures that the school has a very detailed knowledge of students' trends and patterns of absence. Despite intensive work with parents, the attendance of some disadvantaged students remains low. Some parents do not respond positively to the school's attempts to encourage better attendance.

External support

Leaders ensure they have up-to-date knowledge on how to raise the achievement of disadvantaged students through research and attendance at relevant training events. As a result of this, they have implemented many strategies and approaches which are raising the achievement of disadvantaged students. The school also works closely and effectively with other schools through the North Wiltshire Teaching School Alliance and the Avon Teaching School Alliance to share, and learn from, effective practice.

The strengths in the school's approaches to supporting its disadvantaged pupils effectively to achieve their potential are:

- Leaders, including governors, and all staff are fully committed to raising the achievement of disadvantaged students. High expectations of the quality of teaching and achievement for disadvantaged students are firmly established.
- Each disadvantaged student is very well known. Tracking and monitoring processes are highly effective. The range of social, emotional and academic support disadvantaged students receive enables them to improve the progress they make.
- Transition arrangements for students from Years 6 to 7 and Years 12 to 13 prepare disadvantaged students well for the next stage in their education or employment. Consequently, higher numbers of disadvantaged students remain in education or employment after Year 11 and more progress to university after Year 13.
- High quality careers education from Year 7 onwards raises the aspirations of disadvantaged students.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of each disadvantaged student's academic levels as well as their interests. Teachers use this information to plan learning and to organise their classrooms to maximise their progress.

The achievement gap between disadvantaged students and their peers is closing particularly in Years 7 and 8.

Priorities for further improvement

- Raise the attendance of disadvantaged students.
- Refine governors' monitoring of the achievement of disadvantaged students to ensure that governors monitor progress from individual starting points, rather than gaps with other groups.
- Reinforce and develop lower attaining disadvantaged students' literacy skills and good presentation of work in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Wiltshire, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Education Funding Agency, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Chair of the Governing Body. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Simon Rowe
Her Majesty's Inspector