

Melior Community Academy

Chandos Road, Scunthorpe DN17 1HA

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This school requires improvement

- Middle leaders have not been consistently effective in establishing good teaching and progress for pupils in all subjects.
- Pupils make less progress in English than in mathematics.
- Teachers do not provide consistently good explanations or use questioning and feedback well enough to promote effective learning. The use of homework is variable.
- Pupils do not develop their reading and comprehension skills well enough across the curriculum.
- The use of teaching assistants is inconsistent. Leaders have not evaluated the impact of extra support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs sharply enough.
- In the 2016 unvalidated GCSE results, overall rates of progress were below national averages. Disadvantaged pupils and boys did not make enough progress, especially in English and humanities. Outcomes in technology and science were below national averages.
- Attendance has dipped below average and persistent absence has risen. Disadvantaged pupils attend less well than other groups.
- Exclusions have risen in response to stricter sanctions for behaviour and are above average.

The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. The principal's strong leadership, determination, clear-sighted evaluation and effective actions have brought about improvements in teaching and assessment, behaviour, outcomes and leadership.
- Recent actions by the trust have strengthened the support and challenge for senior and middle leaders and have had a positive impact in some subject areas. The trust and the education advisory board hold senior leaders to account well.
- Pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, achieved well in their 2016 GCSE results in mathematics.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and attainment, especially that of disadvantaged pupils and boys, by ensuring consistently good teaching and assessment in all subjects, especially English.
- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment by:
 - strengthening the consistency and clarity of explanations
 - using questioning effectively to probe pupils' knowledge and understanding and challenging pupils to explain their ideas and express their opinions
 - improving the quality of feedback to pupils, especially in English
 - using teaching assistants effectively to maximise impact on learning
 - ensuring that expectations and quality of homework are consistent
 - ensuring that teachers assess pupils' work in key stage 3 accurately and use assessment information to inform their planning.
- Ensure that additional support and challenge from the academy trust enables all middle leaders to be effective in:
 - improving the quality of teaching and checking its impact on learning
 - increasing pupils' progress, particularly in English, science, technology and humanities.
- Strengthen pupils' comprehension skills and extend their vocabulary by providing greater variety and challenge in reading activities in lessons.
- Further improve the literacy and numeracy skills of less able pupils by:
 - evaluating the effectiveness of the range of additional programmes for literacy and numeracy in order to concentrate more sharply on those that make most difference.
- Increase attendance and reduce persistent absence, particularly of disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - improving home-school liaison and strengthening relationships with poor-attending pupils and their families
 - motivating and rewarding pupils, especially boys, for good and improved attendance
 - ensuring that the new system of behaviour management results in fewer exclusions
 - tightening arrangements to ensure that unexplained absence at alternative provision is followed up in a proactive and timely manner.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that teaching and learning are consistently good. Pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 4 have improved, but they are not good enough.
- Some middle leaders are new to post and have yet to demonstrate their impact on outcomes.
- Absence and exclusions have risen in response to the higher standards of behaviour and dress. A few parents and pupils have not fully accepted the stricter approach to sanctions.
- The principal provides strong leadership. Her vision and determination have brought about improvements in teaching, behaviour, outcomes and leadership. She and her leadership team recognise that there is more to do.
- Leaders have tackled key weaknesses in teaching and subject leadership effectively, leading to improved learning in some subjects. However, some of these actions are relatively recent and teaching still requires improvement.
- The principal has established a culture of openness and honesty that enables staff and governors to identify weaknesses accurately and to take effective action. Senior leaders have clear roles and responsibilities. They work well as a team. The principal has managed the restructuring of staff well and staff morale is positive.
- The principal has demonstrated courage in establishing new behaviour policies. For the most part, pupils value the clarity of the consequences system for behaviour and believe firmly that it contributes to the safety and security of the school.
- Leaders' clear expectations and practical guidance have improved the quality of teaching. For example, pupils say that starting with a learning question is helping them to focus on the purpose of the lesson. However, the quality of teaching remains uneven.
- Leaders have established strong systems to check the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of subject leaders. Performance management procedures are robust, with targets closely linked to school priorities.
- Subject leaders in mathematics and science have a systematic and proactive approach that has improved the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The quality of assessment has improved. Leaders check the accuracy of assessment regularly and GCSE predictions have been accurate in most subjects, but not all. Staff have received training in the new GCSE grading system. The application and accuracy of these grades, particularly at key stage 3, is at an early stage of development.
- Weekly professional development has been effective in developing whole-school approaches and subject teaching. Newly qualified teachers are supported well by their mentors and other teachers.
- Leaders restructured the curriculum sensibly to remove weaker subjects. They have retained the breadth of the curriculum, including the performing arts. Increased

flexibility gives extra time for English and mathematics in key stage 4 for pupils who are not making enough progress in the basics. Leaders see this as key to enabling disadvantaged pupils to reach higher standards in English and mathematics.

- Leaders have carried out two external reviews of the pupil premium funding, the most recent a year ago. This rightly concluded that the first priority is to ensure consistently good teaching and learning. It also highlighted inconsistency in the rigour of evaluating the impact of additional support for disadvantaged pupils. This inconsistency remains, hence the school cannot say for sure that all the funding is well spent.
- Leaders have not evaluated closely enough the impact of the extra support for pupils, including those who have special educational needs. Some of the programmes have measurable success but it is not clear that others are effective enough.
- A new pupil premium champion has started a promising programme to promote greater learning, enjoyment and attendance by disadvantaged and disengaged boys. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this.
- The quality of learning at off-site alternative providers is inconsistent. Leaders are planning to bring the alternative curriculum in-house to meet the needs of pupils more effectively.
- The positive school climate and the mutual respect between pupils and teachers help to promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils of different faiths and sexuality are accepted and respected. Pupils develop effective economic skills and awareness about the dangers of borrowing on credit. These features help pupils to prepare for life in modern Britain.
- The range of extra-curricular activities, including trips abroad, caters for a wide range of interests and provides intellectual stimulus; activities include astronomy and debating.

Governance of the school

- Since the summer term 2016, the leaders of the trust have brought in new ways of working, and tried and tested methods for bringing about school improvement. The trust has begun to work effectively with school leaders to implement these new approaches.
- Following the trust re-organisation, the regional director has had more time to support and challenge senior leaders. Increased support and direction by trust subject directors for school subject leaders has had an impact in some areas. The trust has introduced a more comprehensive and rigorous approach to testing and analysing pupils' progress. Leaders in science and mathematics are starting to compare test results with other trust schools to check the accuracy of assessment and to identify weaknesses in learning and teaching.
- The trust's system of curriculum-led financial planning has led to recent changes in staffing. In addition, the curriculum now includes the same courses and examination boards as in other Delta academies. This has created a platform for shared approaches to subject leadership, professional development and teaching resources.
- The principal and trust regional director keep the education advisory board well informed about progress in tackling the strengths and weaknesses in performance. Governors have a good range of expertise and parental representation. They are candid about the strengths and weaknesses and are astute in questioning leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff know pupils well and pupils are confident that they can talk to adults who will help them. All staff carry a card to remind them of how to identify a concern and make a referral. Policies and training are up to date. Well-organised case files demonstrate effective action to support pupils and strong links with other agencies. Governors check regularly that school safeguarding procedures are up to date.
- Procedures for children missing from education follow the statutory guidance. One alternative provider made daily phone calls home to follow up persistent absence but, on occasion, got no response over several days. School checks were not rigorous enough to ensure that the alternative provider was taking timely action to investigate unexplained absence. During the inspection, leaders took action to rectify this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved. However, it is not consistently good.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to probe and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through questioning. When questioning, some teachers do not give pupils time to think, to develop their answers or to say they do not understand. On occasion, teachers lack strategies for checking understanding and responding to misconceptions.
- Pupils' responses to the Ofsted questionnaire indicate that some are not satisfied with the quality of explanations and some do not feel that they have enough opportunity to contribute their views and questions.
- In some lessons, teachers read information without discussing or explaining key words and knowledge. Many pupils appear to read fluently but too often lack comprehension. Sometimes, the least able do not receive enough support in understanding key words and the most able lack challenge in extending their vocabulary. Pupils borrow books from the small school library but lack guidance in matching the book to their reading level.
- Pupils have a wide range of programmes to help them catch up and extend their literacy and numeracy skills. Some of these are providing measurable benefits. Pupils value the strong support they get from older pupils, well trained as 'reading buddies'. In some extra support sessions, a weakness in the quality of questioning and limited discussion of vocabulary resulted in a lack of engagement and enjoyment in reading.
- The quality of teachers' feedback to pupils is not consistently in line with the school's policy. The quality of feedback for the most able is often precise, detailed and constructive. For middle- and low-attaining pupils it is not as developmental and is sometimes limited to spelling corrections. Feedback to pupils is better in science and mathematics than in English.
- The most able pupils are confident of the progress they are making and say they feel challenged. However, this is truer of mathematics and science than of English.
- The school has a new homework policy and teachers are not yet setting homework regularly enough to meet the guidance on amounts and frequency.

- Teaching assistants often know and support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. In some cases, teaching assistants have good knowledge of the subject and break tasks down well into manageable steps. Sometimes their impact is limited because they lack direction from the teacher and do not reinforce pupils' understanding of key concepts and application of skills.
- Teachers are using the school's teaching framework to good effect. Pupils say that the 'learning questions' that teachers pose at the beginning of lessons provide a clear purpose. Teachers allocate pupils to seats effectively to manage learning.
- Learning is better when effective questioning enables pupils to deepen their knowledge and ask high-quality questions.
- Teachers use their positive relationships with pupils well to encourage participation and develop pupils' confidence and resilience.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils, particularly boys, do not have positive enough attitudes to learning. A few lack personal and academic skills and confidence, which limits their progress.
- Pupils take their responsibilities for supporting other pupils, as mentors and 'reading buddies', seriously. Leaders are planning more opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles.
- Pupils move safely around the school. The well-staffed adult supervision at break and lunchtime gives pupils a strong sense of safety and security.
- Bullying occasionally takes place but pupils said that it is dealt with well. All pupils have a named adult they can go to if they have a problem. Pupils are aware of the need to be safe on the internet and on social media.
- Pupils appreciate the increased range of extra-curricular activities such as girls' football.
- The careers information advice and guidance programme provides a well-developed range of activities including careers fairs, visits to university and an interview for all pupils at key stage 4. All Year 11 pupils experience a day at college. More parents attended the recent careers fair than on previous occasions. In the pupil questionnaire, a few said that they would like more information about work experience, apprenticeships and university.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance declined from average to below average in the last school year. Persistent absence also increased and was above average. Attendance was lower at the end of this autumn term than at the same time last year. This is partly due to the increased use of exclusions following the introduction of the new behaviour policy.

- Attendance is lower for disadvantaged pupils, for pupils from hard-to-reach families and those attending off-site alternative provision. The school has appointed a full-time education welfare officer to develop better links with families through home visits. A new pupil premium champion is developing activities to increase targeted pupils' enjoyment and attendance. It is too early to see the impact of these appointments.
- Exclusions peaked in the summer term and are lower this term. However, exclusions remain higher than last year.
- Behaviour has improved since the last inspection. The large majority of pupils behave well and the school is calm and orderly. Pupils are polite and respectful with each other and adults. Short lunch breaks with staggered times for different year groups have reduced the number of behaviour incidents.
- Most pupils welcome the clarity and consistency of the new consequences for misbehaviour. They say they are able to learn effectively because there is now little low-level disruption in their lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- In 2016, pupils' overall progress at GCSE was below average. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was the weakest aspect of performance.
- Progress in English remained below the national average. Disadvantaged pupils and boys did not make enough progress in English. This is due to the inconsistent quality of teaching. The new leader of English, with support from a trust subject director, has begun to make improvements to the scheme of work and the use of assessment.
- Boys also performed poorly in humanities. However, boys performed as well as girls in mathematics and triple science. Overall, girls achieved well and performed in line with girls nationally.
- Attainment by disadvantaged pupils at GCSE remains low. Some disadvantaged pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stage of education, training or employment.
- Attainment and the progress made by pupils at the end of key stage 4 improved in 2016. The progress made by all groups, including boys and disadvantaged pupils, has improved over the last three years.
- GCSE results in mathematics have improved markedly. In 2016, pupils made as much progress in mathematics as pupils nationally due to effective teaching and subject leadership.
- Attainment in science has risen from low to below average. Progress has also improved but remains below average. The improvement is due to stronger leadership, better teaching and sharper assessment. The limitations in progress are partly due to weaker teaching by temporary staff and the difficulty in recruiting specialist teachers.
- Weaknesses in the 2016 GCSE results in history, art and design, health and social care and design technology were due to past weaknesses in subject leadership and teaching. Teaching, learning and progress are now more effective in these subjects.

- In 2016, at GCSE, the progress made by the most able and the least able pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, was close to the national average. The progress of middle-ability pupils was below average.
- The most able disadvantaged Year 11 pupils made good progress in mathematics in 2016. They did as well in mathematics as the most able non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- School data shows that disadvantaged pupils, and others, in Years 9 to 11, are making expected rates of progress from their starting points at key stage 2. However, disadvantaged pupils have lower starting points and there is no evidence that they are catching up.
- In 2016, German GCSE results were strong as result of effective support from a subject director from the academy trust. Current progress in French is not as strong.
- In 2016, pupils attending in-house alternative provision gained more GCSEs at grades A* to G, including English and mathematics, than those at external providers. Similarly, more pupils attending school-based provision went into education, employment or training after leaving school.

School details

Unique reference number	139059
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10019689

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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	639
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Peter Raspin
Principal	Zoe Bidmead
Telephone number	01724 868 666
Website	http://www.melior.org.uk/
Email address	adminstaff@melior.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is in the Delta Academies Trust. In summer 2016, the School Partnership Trust Academies changed its name to Delta Academies Trust, under a new chief executive officer and board of directors.
- Following a re-structure, the education advisory board has a new chair and more members with educational expertise.
- The principal took up post in January 2015 and a vice-principal took up post in January 2016. Six teachers left the school at the end of the summer term.
- The school is smaller than the average secondary school.

- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is high.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- In 2016, 24 pupils left the school to take GCSE courses in the new key stage 4 provision at the neighbouring sixth form college. Five Year 10 pupils also left to join the university technical college.
- The school uses the following alternative providers for a very small number of pupils: Darley Centre, 7KS and North Lyndsey College
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. A number of observations were carried out jointly with three senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning and their experiences at school.
- Discussions were held with the principal, senior and middle leaders, the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of the board of trustees, the regional director working with the school, members of the education advisory board, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. An inspector visited two alternative providers.
- Inspectors checked the school website and evaluated a wide range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress, and behaviour, attendance and safeguarding records.
- The inspection took account of 21 responses from parents, including a few written comments, 57 responses from pupils and 18 responses from staff to the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Crerar	Ofsted Inspector
Beverly Clubley	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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