

# Melior Community Academy

Chandos Road, Scunthorpe DN17 1HA

## Inspection dates

2–3 April 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The principal leads the school with passion and determination. Leaders, including governors and the trust, are ambitious for pupils in the school. Their outstanding leadership has led to better teaching, much improved behaviour and a rapid improvement in outcomes for pupils over the last three years.
- Senior and middle leaders know what the school's strengths are, and those aspects which could be even better. Appropriate steps to promote further improvement are underway.
- The present leadership team quickly recognised that behaviour and attitudes to learning were not good enough. Their prompt actions have had real impact, and teachers and pupils can see the improvements. The stricter code of conduct led initially to an increase in exclusions but the number of pupils excluded is decreasing rapidly.
- Teaching is good overall, and progress made by pupils has increased rapidly over the last three years. Leaders continue to take effective action to eradicate weaker teaching and increase the proportion of good or better teaching. However, they accept that there is still some variability.
- The 2018 GCSE results were a triumph for the school. The improvements seen demonstrated very clearly the impact of leaders' strategies. Current pupils, too, are making good progress overall.
- Governors have the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide robust challenge to senior leaders. They know the school well and are clear about what more needs to be done.
- The Delta Trust has provided highly effective support and an extra layer of professional challenge for leaders. The value of links with trust staff and other trust schools is very clear.
- Safeguarding is effective, and leadership of this area is strong. As a result of appropriate training, staff are vigilant, and pupils feel safe.
- Middle leaders have developed their skills considerably as a group and they are now a strength of the school.
- There is a clear rationale to the curriculum, which puts the needs of individual pupils first. This is seen most clearly in the flexible way bespoke support is provided for pupils.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve pupils' behaviour further so that the number of exclusions and overall absence reduce to below the national average.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that all teaching comes up to the standard of the very best teaching now evident in school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The principal sets very high standards and has a clear view of what she wants to achieve for the pupils in her school. She has taken decisive action to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning, and to improve pupils' outcomes and behaviour. This action has led to exceptionally rapid improvement.
- The principal has created what she calls, 'a culture of absolute honesty'. Weaknesses are not hidden. They are brought out into the open and effective strategies and support put in place to make improvements. Leaders at every level have embraced this open and honest approach. What is best for the pupils is always at the forefront of their mind.
- Outstanding leadership at all levels is at the heart of this school's success. The headteacher is very ably supported by an extremely strong team of senior leaders. The principal describes the middle leaders as the 'engine room of the school' and they are indeed a real strength. Like senior leaders, they are ambitious for their pupils and show no complacency. They have risen to the challenges given to them by senior leaders. Middle leaders are proud of the school's success, but remain determined to make further improvements. They use progress data effectively to pinpoint underachievement in each year group and put into place appropriate support for pupils falling behind. There are strong, effective links between middle and senior leaders.
- The trust provides highly effective support and rigorous challenge to the school. Middle leaders value the work they do with specialist directors. The chief executive and other trust staff add an additional, extremely robust, layer of challenge for school leaders with very regular analysis of pupils' progress. School leaders acknowledge the part this played in the rapid improvement over the last three years.
- With valuable trust support, leaders have worked hard to ensure that school progress information is as accurate as possible. The accuracy of last year's assessments during key stage 4 was an important part of the school's success in GCSE examinations. Accurate progress information enabled leaders to tailor their highly effective intervention strategies to the needs of each pupil.
- Leadership of teaching and learning is very strong. Leaders use a range of evidence to determine the quality of teaching and learning and the progress that pupils are making. These include lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and rigorous analysis of pupils' progress information. Systems are in place for checking the performance of teachers and identifying areas that require strengthening. This has led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. There are weaker areas, but leaders are clear about where teaching is less strong, and they are taking effective action to improve them.
- Staff morale is high. Staff at all levels have embraced the changes and are proud to be part of a successful school.
- Leaders use all of the additional funding they receive to good effect. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils leaving the school at the end of Year 11 in 2018 is testimony to the way leaders have used pupil premium funding. However, they are not

complacent. They realise that overall disadvantaged pupils attend less well than other pupils and are more likely to be excluded. Catch-up funding is used effectively to help Year 7 pupils whose literacy and numeracy skills are not at the level required for secondary education to improve those skills.

- A change in leadership for the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has had a very positive effect. Pupils with SEND are now making stronger progress.
- Leaders organise spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well. Pupils receive this education in form time, assemblies and across different subjects. Enrichment days give pupils further opportunities to develop this aspect of their education. In addition, pupils in key stage 3 have a weekly timetabled lesson. Leaders ensure that the school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have tailored the curriculum to the needs of their pupils. The key stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders strive to avoid needless repetition of key stage 2 work, but do reinforce key concepts and skills. The key stage 4 curriculum has more flexibility. Information from assessments enables leaders to focus different interventions for each pupil, as they move through the key stage. There is a real emphasis on English and mathematics, but leaders check carefully to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is not neglected.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are very ambitious for both pupils and staff. They have effective systems in place, including frequent visits to school to check on progress and to ensure that the school is improving. They know their school well and have a very clear view of the overall effectiveness of the school and where further improvements are necessary.
- Governors come from a variety of backgrounds and bring with them a wide range of skills and experience. They speak with confidence about how the school has improved since the previous inspection, and can spell out clearly the reasons for the improvement. They speak with equal assurance about the next steps for further improvement.
- An analysis of governors' minutes and conversations with governors showed that they provide real challenge and support for the leaders of the school. They are not afraid to ask difficult questions about all matters of school life.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders foster a strong safeguarding culture. All staff receive effective training and are aware of the risks that young people may face in the community. Pupils say that they feel safe and they know that they have a member of staff to speak to, if they need help. Most importantly, they are confident that the member of staff will listen and help resolve the issue.
- The area is well led and record-keeping is strong. Logs and files show timely actions from school staff. No stone is left unturned to ensure that pupils stay safe.

- Pupils benefit from the strong links that leaders have established between the school and a wide variety of support agencies. In addition, there is a well-developed programme for pupils on how to keep themselves safe. As an example, during the inspection pupils listened intently to a local authority presentation on child sexual exploitation.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching and learning are at the centre of leaders' vision for the school. There is strong leadership and the improvements since the previous inspection are clear. The positive effect of whole-school strategies is seen across the school. Teachers are aware of the different needs of pupils and work is set to provide appropriate challenge to every pupil.
- Robust systems are in place to check the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, all leaders, including governors, can identify not only where the strongest teaching is, but also where there is less strong practice. Senior leaders know that there are areas, such as technology and expressive arts, where pupils are not making the strong progress seen in other subjects. They are also aware that, even within the strong departments, there are teachers who are not using the whole-school strategies as skilfully as others. They have a track record of improving weaker teaching and continue to work with those teachers who are not meeting the standards leaders expect.
- The pace of improvement since the previous inspection was crystal clear in the 2018 examination results. English and humanities are just two examples of where much improved teaching led to much more rapid progress than previous years, when compared with pupils across the country.
- The improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes have clearly been important in raising standards in the classroom. Pupils know the routines and disruption is rare. If it occurs, there are clear systems in place to ensure that the behaviour of an individual or small group of pupils does not spoil the learning of others. Pupils are showing an increasing pride in their work. However, leaders are aware that presentation of written work is still an issue for some pupils.
- The current leaders were quick to see that a major barrier to learning for many pupils was weaker literacy skills. They have developed a whole-school literacy strategy which has had a very positive impact. Silent reading in tutor time and initiatives such as 'Drop everything and read', are just two examples which have helped raise the profile of reading. A school-wide system of approaching new vocabulary has played its part too. Inspectors saw how across a range of subjects the approach was the same. Pupils would first say a word, model it, explain it, repeat it and then understanding is tested.
- Leaders have also adopted a whole-school approach to developing numeracy skills. Tutor time again has been used for this. In doing so, pupils get valuable practice and teachers in their form tutor role see at first hand the methods the mathematics department encourage for different aspects of their subject. There has been whole-staff training too. The mathematics department also have worked closely with individual departments to get a common approach. The benefits of this can be seen clearly in science and geography.

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers and pastoral leaders have created a caring environment with high expectations. Pupils treat others with tolerance and respect.
- Pupils have positive attitudes. They are proud of their school and the improvements they have seen. They wear their uniform immaculately and treat the school buildings with respect. As a result, the school is a welcoming, litter-free environment.
- Staff know pupils well. They respond in a timely manner to any concerns, and they maintain contact with parents and carers as much as possible. The school provides effective support to vulnerable pupils. There is a well-organised response to helping pupils overcome difficulties they are facing.
- As a result of a well-structured programme of personal, social, health and economic education, pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They can explain clearly, for example, the precautions to take when using social media.
- Careers guidance is effective. Linked with the improved examination results, this has led to the vast majority of pupils leaving the school to move into appropriate further education, employment or training. Once again, this shows real improvement since the previous inspection.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The Junior Leadership Team is an example of this, and their recent projects have focused on healthy lifestyles and mental health.
- Six pupils are educated off the school site. Leaders take great care in ensuring that this provision caters for the needs of the individual pupils. School staff keep close contact with the providers, to ensure that the pupils are safe and making progress in their studies.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school system to promote good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning is well understood by pupils. The system is clear and teachers apply it consistently.
- Staff and pupils agree that behaviour has improved significantly. Teachers use rewards and sanctions effectively and pupils have responded well to the approach. Pupils appreciate that teachers no longer, 'just put up with poor behaviour'.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils settle quickly and show positive attitudes to their learning.
- Right from the start of the day when pupils arrive at the school gates, there is a visible staff presence. Pupils appreciate this and it helps contribute to the calm, purposeful atmosphere about school.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. During the inspection, they responded

willingly to inspectors' questions and were clearly proud of their school and the way it has improved.

- Leaders have used a range of effective strategies to improve attendance. As a result, both overall absence and persistent absence are moving close to the national average.
- The stricter behaviour code led initially to an increase in exclusions. However, again leaders' strategies have been effective in reducing the number of exclusions and there is no complacency. Leaders accept that there is still work to do. They are determined to bring exclusions down at least to the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Achievement across the school has improved significantly since the previous inspection, as a result of good teaching.
- The 2018 examination results showed these improvements very clearly. Overall, pupils made significantly better progress than the national average, and the school was ranked in the top 20% of schools for progress. Progress in mathematics and science was in the top 10% of schools nationally. Progress in English put the school in the top 20% of schools in that subject. The open element was less strong than other areas, but still in line with national averages. Leaders are clear that subjects like technology and expressive arts in this element are not performing at the level of the stronger subjects.
- School progress information suggests that current pupils across both key stages are making good progress. Lesson observations and detailed scrutiny of pupils' books confirmed this to be the case. Most importantly, leaders are clear about the areas where progress is slower and they are supporting staff to accelerate the rates of progress.
- The Year 11 disadvantaged pupils who left the school in 2018 made exactly the same progress as other pupils in the school. This was significantly better than their peers across the country and indeed progress for disadvantaged pupils was in the top 20% of schools nationally. Disadvantaged pupils in the school are making good progress too. Indeed, inspectors who looked closely at pupils' books with middle leaders commented that it was impossible to see any difference in the rates of progress of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
- In 2018, lower-ability pupils, including those with SEND, performed in line with national figures. However, their progress was not as rapid as other groups of pupils. Inspection evidence showed that a change in leadership of SEND provision and a whole-school focus on lower-ability pupils were having a positive effect. Current pupils with SEND are making stronger progress.
- In 2018, only a small percentage of pupils qualified for the English Baccalaureate. Progress in the individual subjects needed, English, mathematics, science, humanities and a foreign language, was strong. However, the main barrier to pupils achieving the English Baccalaureate is the fact that only small numbers opt for a foreign language. Leaders are aware of this and looking to make improvements. In the present Year 11 there is a slight increase in the percentage of pupils qualifying for the English Baccalaureate.

## School details

Unique reference number	139059
Local authority	North Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10087562

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

Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	667
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Mr Peter Raspin
Principal	Miss Zoe Bidmead
Telephone number	01724 868 666
Website	<a href="http://www.melior.org.uk/">www.melior.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:adminstaff@melior.org.uk">adminstaff@melior.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	13–14 December 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school opened on 1 January 2013 and is sponsored by the Delta Academies Trust (Delta). Delta is a multi-academy trust (MAT) and the Delta Board of Directors is the legal governing body of all academies within the MAT. Each Academy within the group has an Academy Advisory Body (AAB), which is a sub-committee of the main Delta Board. The structure of the trust's governance and management can be found on the school's website.



- Pupil numbers have increased since the previous inspection.
- The school uses five alternative providers for a total of six pupils. They are the Darley Centre, the Haxey Centre, Act Fast, Changing Lives and TAMNET, the local authority medical needs team.
- The current principal was in post at the previous inspection.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of teaching and learning in parts of lessons, with five sessions jointly observed with senior leaders. They also conducted four scrutinies of pupils' work jointly with the appropriate middle leader. Inspectors also observed form time and an assembly.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, both informally and formally, about their learning and safety.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and scrutinised samples of work in pupils' books.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with five governors and with the chief executive and his deputy as representatives of the Delta Trust. Inspectors also held meetings with senior and middle leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' evaluation of the performance of the school, the school improvement plan and minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) and 51 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

David Pridding, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Julian Appleyard	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Rogers	Ofsted Inspector
Tanya Wiles	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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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