



Malvern, The Chase

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116942
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279957
Inspection dates 22 February 2006 to 23 February 2006
Reporting inspector David Simpson HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Geraldine Road
School category	Community		Malvern
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Worcestershire WR14 3NZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01684 891961
Number on roll	1709	Fax number	01684 566643
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Sylvia Braim
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Kevin Peck

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 22 February 2006 - 23 February 2006	Inspection number 279957
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Chase is a mixed comprehensive school. For the past six years it has been a technology specialist school. There are 321 students in the sixth form. The school is much bigger than most secondary schools and is oversubscribed. The proportion of the students who are entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The school's population includes an above average proportion of students who have statements of special educational needs but an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Almost all students are White British.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Malvern, The Chase is a good school with some outstanding features. There is a distinctive common purpose amongst the adults who work at the school, which results in students who understand that learning is best achieved through a mixture of independence and working well with others. The school has benefited from specialist school status, which has helped to improve access to information technology (ICT) across the curriculum and strengthened links with local primary schools and the community. Standards overall in end-of-key-stage tests and examinations are well above the national average. The students make above average progress throughout the school although some middle and lower attaining students do not achieve as well as they should in Years 10 and 11. The majority of students are keen to learn, polite and welcoming. Movement around the school requires little supervision and students generally feel safe and cared for. However, the school is aware that the behaviour of a small minority of students is significantly disrupting learning in some lessons and is a source of concern amongst parents and carers. The quality of teaching is good as a result of well planned lessons, effective questioning and regular opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning. Relationships between adults and students are a strength of the school. The school takes pride in building its curriculum at Key Stages 4 and 5 around students' requests to study individual subjects. However, the school knows that more work needs to be done to improve vocational and work related provision. The range of extra-curricular activities is excellent and is enriched by many residential trips. The school is well led and plenty of opportunities are provided for staff to contribute to decision making. The school is not complacent about its performance and makes sure that developments are introduced systematically and incrementally in order to ensure that changes are successful and well supported. The school accurately judges its performance as good and provides very good value for money. It has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to continue to make significant improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school's sixth form is outstanding. The students take up enthusiastically an excellent range of opportunities, which help them to develop into mature young people. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 13. Students make excellent progress and achieve extremely well, because they are taught very well and have very positive attitudes to their work. They are successfully encouraged to work independently. The academic curriculum for the sixth form is outstanding. A satisfactory range of vocational courses is developing but there is more to do to extend the range of options. The sixth form is led well. The students' progress and achievement are carefully monitored, so that any potential underachievement is quickly identified and dealt with appropriately.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of some middle to lower attaining students in Years 10 and 11.
- Continue to improve the behaviour of a minority of students.
- Develop further vocational and work related pathways from Year 10 onwards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is around the national average and students make good progress overall, including those with learning difficulties and the small number from minority ethnic groups. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2005 were well above national averages and have improved since the last inspection. In 2005, 66% of students gained five or more A*-C grades. This figure is above the national average, and higher than at the time of the last inspection. The proportion gaining five or more A*-C grades including English and mathematics has increased from 48% to 56% over the past year, which is also above the national average. Results in examinations in the sixth form were extremely high compared to national standards, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

In 2005, Year 9 students achieved significantly higher standards than predicted from their previous attainment, but they were not quite as high as in 2004 when they were in the top 2% in the country. Overall achievement is good at Key Stage 4, although a minority of middle to lower attaining students underachieve. The school has accurately identified its priorities for improvement, particularly in English. The sixth form results are significantly better than the standards predicted from the students' GCSE scores.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The personal development and well-being of learners is good. The majority of students are well behaved and courteous, particularly around the school, but a small minority can be disruptive in lessons. The school is tackling this through a range of interesting initiatives, some of which are designed for specific groups and individuals. The vast majority of students enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. Students get on well with each other, have a strong sense of right and wrong and appreciate learning about a rich variety of cultures and religions. The impressive displays of student work and achievements are treated with respect.

Students contribute to the direction of the school through the highly effective School Council. Attendance is good with effective procedures in place to follow up non-attendance. The contribution by students to the local community is very good with many students showing a commitment to raising funds for local and international charities. Students show good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and a high proportion of boys and girls participate regularly in sporting activities. Students

are well prepared for their future economic well-being through a carefully structured and interesting programme of social and citizenship sessions. The students in the sixth form make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and to the local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Teaching and learning are good overall, with some examples of outstanding practice. In the sixth form, teachers have excellent relationships with their students; they know their subjects well and make lessons both interesting and challenging. The best lessons are characterised by careful planning, good pace and the skilful use of open-ended questioning, which challenges students to respond and justify their answers. During the inspection, the quality of relationships in the best lessons was such that students showed great confidence in the ability of their teachers. For example in a Year 8 religious education lesson students responded very positively to the teacher's enthusiasm, commitment and humour. Where teaching was not so effective lessons lacked a crisp, clear start with shared objectives and there was little opportunity for independent work, which resulted in pupils making slower progress.

The school has a good marking policy but this is inconsistently applied. In examples of best practice students' work is regularly assessed and comments clearly indicate what is needed to bring about improvement. Systems for assessing and tracking student progress are good. Most students know the levels they have achieved. However there is some inconsistency in the setting of targets and students' understanding of what they need to do to improve their levels of attainment.

Overall, leaders have developed effective comprehensive systems to promote improvements in teaching and learning, in order to raise standards and secure good achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. All statutory requirements are met. School leaders have responded to parental concerns over Key Stage 4 courses with the addition of twilight sessions to support the range of subjects offered. The school is aware of the need to develop further opportunities for vocational courses and work related learning. Good leadership and management ensure that the curriculum is driven by student choice at key option times. A recent review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum has enabled all groups of students to access the curriculum more effectively. The Junior Sports Leadership Award is an excellent component of the curriculum, which illustrates the deliberate strategies used to motivate potentially disaffected students. Extensive links with the "family of schools" at Key Stage 2 are improving learning opportunities

in the primary schools and supporting pupils' preparation for secondary education. A very effective management structure has been established to support curriculum development.

Specialist school status has expanded provision in science and technology, leading to improved performance and the successful meeting of targets. The development of facilities in ICT has improved skills in all curriculum areas.

The range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities is outstanding. A significant proportion of students enjoy participating in sporting activities, a range of clubs including music and drama, and drop-in sessions for careers, revision and homework. An extensive range of off-site learning includes visits to the Eden Project, Germany, France, Morocco and Spain. Master classes at universities further enhance students' opportunity to progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support for learners are very good, particularly for those with learning difficulties who have access to a dedicated and skilled team of teaching assistants. The allocation of teaching assistants to specific departments strengthens teamwork and improves learning. As a consequence of this, and the exceptionally detailed guidance given to staff, these students generally make progress that is as good as that of other students. However, there is a very small minority who do not respond to the level of care and guidance offered. Students new to the school are very well looked after. They benefit from individual support before and after entering and then throughout their school career, particularly with the setting of appropriate targets. Relationships between students and teachers are a strength of the school with students appreciating the access to staff to support them in their studies and when they have problems. Sixth form students enjoy their time at school and value very highly the guidance and support they get from teachers.

Students' progress is very well monitored and parents are kept informed of how well their children are doing. However, the parental questionnaires indicated that a minority felt the school did not listen to their concerns when issues were raised. Careers provision is good and all students have access to individual guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher is a dedicated and thoughtful leader with an effective team of senior managers. Together they have sensitively and successfully motivated staff to rise to the challenge of further raising standards and improving achievement. There is good capacity to improve.

The quality of middle management is good overall, with a clear commitment to a common purpose. The school makes effective use of its own expertise to spread good practice amongst staff in order to raise standards.

The school has a wide range of data available to track and evaluate its performance. Currently however, the data is not used systematically or consistently enough by all heads of department.

The school's self-review is accurate. The issues that the school has identified for improvement are appropriate with clear strategies to evaluate its success. It consistently meets or exceeds the challenging targets included in its specialist school action plan.

Students value very highly the very good opportunities to be involved in decisions about their school, as for instance, through the school council and two student-governor posts.

Resources are well deployed. The standard of accommodation ranges from the excellent new building to some that is unsatisfactory, and which limits the range of teaching and learning styles.

Governance overall is good. The governing body is fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and holds the school to account well. Governors have ensured that the school meets statutory requirements fully apart from the provision of a daily act of collective worship.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We would like to thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so helpful and courteous. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. Here are our main findings.

We feel Malvern, The Chase is a good school with some outstanding features, such as the excellent enrichment activities you are offered. You achieve very good results at the end of Years 9 and 11 and the standards achieved in the sixth form are extremely high. This is because the school supports you very well and helps you to make good progress during your time in the school, especially those of you in the sixth form. Most lessons are very well planned by your teachers. They use a good variety of approaches to keep you interested and show you how to improve your work.

The school provides very good care, guidance and support for you all. We were very impressed by how much most of you enjoy the school, and feel that your positive attitude to learning is helping you to succeed. A few of you do not behave as well as the school expects, and we are sure that the measures being taken will improve this situation. The school is led well and the leadership of subjects is good, and sometimes very good, so the school's tradition of high standards has been maintained, and further improvements have been made.

The inspectors feel that the school has the capacity to improve even further and we have made the following recommendations:

- Improve the progress of some middle and lower attaining students in Key Stage 4
- Improve the behaviour of a minority of students
- Develop further vocational and work related pathways from Year 10 onwards

Thank you for the way in which you represented your school and yourselves during our time with you. We wish you well.