

Malet Lambert School Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118069
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	326756
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Ripley HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Barker
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005
School address	James Reckitt Avenue Hull HU8 0JD
Telephone number	01482 374211
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a larger than average 11 to 16 secondary school which is oversubscribed. Most of the students are White British and the proportion for whom English is not their first language is very low. The proportion of students entitled to a free school meal is well below average. Fewer than average students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Malet Lambert was redesignated as a specialist language college in 2005. It holds the International Schools Award and the National Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Malet Lambert School Language College provides its students with a satisfactory education. It has some good features. This matches the school's own view of its effectiveness. Leadership and management are good overall. Since her appointment in 2006 the headteacher has worked closely with senior and middle leaders, to set a clear direction and vision for school improvement. This has resulted in significant improvements in the school's provision; most notably in the quality of the curriculum and the care, guidance and support that students receive. Consequently most students report enjoying their education and a majority of parents are strongly supportive of the school. As one parent explains, 'the school continues to go from strength to strength, the leadership team are approachable and helpful and the school is being increasingly innovative'. Governors fulfil their roles effectively and make a good contribution to the life of the school. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Staff know students well; they give willingly of their time and work hard to create a safe and lively learning environment where all members of the school community feel valued. Consequently, this is a well ordered and inclusive school with a positive and productive atmosphere. As a result, students' personal development and well-being are good. Students' attitudes to learning have improved considerably since the last inspection as have their behaviour and attendance. Exclusions have reduced significantly. The way in which the school works with other partners and agencies to enhance provision and meet students' needs is outstanding. The quality of care, guidance and support for students is good. Support staff are effectively managed and work closely with teaching staff. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included in all aspects of school life and make good progress because of the excellent standard of care and support they receive. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The school's specialist language status has been used well to establish links within the local community and in the wider world. This has contributed significantly to the strong understanding and respect the students show for the beliefs and cultures of others.

Students join the school in Year 7 with broadly average standards. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 11, most students have made satisfactory progress overall, but students' progress in Key Stage 3 is too slow and too many boys underachieve in both key stages. The standards reached by most students in national examinations at the end of Year 11 are broadly average and beginning to rise. The proportion of students obtaining at least five GCSE passes with high grades in 2008 showed a marked improvement and represented the school's best ever results.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of good or better lessons has increased since the last inspection. Individual teachers work hard, have good subject knowledge and establish very positive relationships with students, although in some lessons the silly behaviour of a small minority of students is not always tackled swiftly and effectively enough. Lesson planning is thorough and there is a consistent approach throughout the school. However, activities are not always matched to students' individual learning needs and the quality of marking is too variable: it does not always explain to students what they need to do next or how they can improve their work. Whilst the school's assessment information is being used satisfactorily to group students in classes according to ability, it is not used to the same good effect to identify and tackle pockets of underachievement. The curriculum provides a good balance of academic and practical courses. More able students are provided with 'fast-track' options which enable them to sit GCSE examinations before they are sixteen. There are excellent

links with external agencies, other schools and colleges, employers and the local community which extend and enrich the provision and opportunities available to students. These partnerships contribute significantly to the students' future economic well being. For instance, in 2007, 97% of students progressed to further education, employment or training, the highest rate in the local authority.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the quality and consistency of teaching and share best practice in order to raise standards and accelerate progress throughout the whole school, but particularly in Key Stage 3 and for boys.
- Ensure activities are well matched to students' abilities and build more effectively on what they know and can do.
- Improve the consistency and rigour of marking throughout the school and ensure that it lets students know how they can improve their work further.
- Use assessment information more effectively to identify and tackle pockets of underachievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in Key Stage 3 are broadly average. The school's own data show that the proportion of students attaining mathematics and science at the higher levels in 2008 improved considerably in comparison with previous years. Nevertheless, results of national tests over a number of years have shown that students are not making enough progress in Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science.

Standards in Key Stage 4 are average and improving. The proportion of students obtaining at least five GCSE passes with high grades in 2008 showed a marked rise and represented the school's best ever results. Students achieved particularly well at the higher levels in science, history, physical education, business studies, engineering and health and social care. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 11, most students have made satisfactory progress. However, this picture masks students' slow progress in Key Stage 3 and some groups of boys are not making enough progress or achieving sufficiently well in both key stages. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make good progress because of the well targeted support they received.

The school achieved its targets for English and mathematics in 2008. In recent years, the school had not met its specialist college targets for modern foreign languages. However, robust action taken by school leaders has led to the proportion of students achieving a qualification in a modern foreign language in 2008 being higher than that found nationally.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, are good. Students are valued as individuals and encouraged to develop their particular talents and abilities. Students enjoy coming to school and are well

motivated. As a result, attendance has improved and is above the national average. Students report that they feel safe and would know who to turn to if they faced difficulties. Incidents of bullying and racism are rare and students report that when they do occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Students generally behave well both in lessons and around the school and take good account of their own and others' safety. The school's behaviour strategy has been improved and is being applied more consistently. Consequently, students are very clear about the system of rewards and sanctions. This, combined with other effective school actions such as good range of support for vulnerable students, has resulted in a significant reduction in exclusions.

Students say the school effectively encourages them to follow healthy lifestyles. They welcome the new healthy choices in the canteen and are enthusiastic about, and participate well in the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Students make an outstanding contribution to the community. They have opportunities to influence the development of the school and to take on positions of responsibility such as 'listening peers'. The school council is very active and was closely involved in the adoption of the new school uniform which the majority of students wear with great pride. Students also make valuable and well received contributions to the wider community through musical and dramatic productions, charity work, fund raising and other activities. For example, students regularly work alongside local residents in the 'garden village', have raised funds to help build a school in Kenya, organised a 'Polish day' and performed a pantomime in French. A local community group chaired by the head boy and girl meets each term. Outcomes of this group to date have included students working with older members of the community to help them feel safer in their homes, enterprise days sponsored by the local council and opportunities for students to participate in extended work experience in East Park. Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being and have many opportunities to develop their workplace and enterprise skills. As a result, only a very small number of students do not move on to employment, further education or training.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Although the proportion of teaching which is good or better has improved since the last inspection, the quality still varies across the school from outstanding to a small amount that is inadequate. Most lessons are well planned, with a clear structure and a range of activities. Relationships between students and teachers are generally good, although in a small number of lessons some low-level disruption is not always tackled swiftly and effectively enough. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the best are imaginative and very enthusiastic communicators. This in turn helps to motivate and enthuse students. When this occurs, learning is strong, as is the case in classes where students are 'fast-tracked' to achieve GCSE qualifications before they are 16.

Throughout the school there is an emphasis on improving the quality of learning, with individual teachers working hard. However, some opportunities to raise standards and accelerate progress are currently being missed. Activities in lessons are not always pitched appropriately to match students' varying capabilities. The quality of marking is too variable. There is no common whole-school approach. Teachers' comments do not always provide sufficient guidance for students about how they can improve their work and what they need to learn next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

As a specialist language college, the school provides a balanced curriculum but places an appropriate emphasis on modern foreign languages by, for example, ensuring all students study a foreign language throughout the whole of their school life. The funding for the school's specialist status has enabled the school to provide modern technology in all classrooms and this is generally used effectively. Also, increased funding is leading to additional staff being appointed to widen option choices further. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has improved since the last inspection. For example, three curricular pathways have been established from Year 7 onwards that more closely match students' learning needs. The more able are 'fast-tracked' in modern foreign languages, mathematics, science and expressive arts and achieve well in the GCSE examinations they sit before age 16. This enables them to broaden their experiences by studying additional subjects before they leave. The less able have the opportunity to increase the time that they study ICT which prepares them well for the next stage of their education. In Year 7 themed days provide opportunities for students to learn more about environmental issues and the effects of globalisation. In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum is more responsive to individual needs. In particular, it now offers students a good range of vocational and practical courses. This, and the school's provision for enterprise education and work related learning, is effective preparation for students' future economic well-being. Currently, the school intends to strengthen students' awareness of a healthy lifestyle by increasing the time available to study physical education in Year 11. The school has established excellent links with alternative providers. Links with a further education college, for example, enrich the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. A good range of extra-curricular activities, and trips and visits for learning outside the classroom, contribute well to students' enjoyment and achievement and to their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for students overall. There are close and effective links with primary schools that ensure a smooth transfer of students into their new school. Older students are very appreciative of the good guidance they receive about subject choices and their further education and career opportunities. In 2007, this resulted in 97% of students progressing to further education, employment or training; the highest rate in the local authority. Support for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent and consequently these students make good progress. Teachers, support assistants and outside agencies have forged strong partnerships and provide constructive help, care and support for these students. Parents speak highly of the quality of care and support these students receive. Health and safety and safeguarding requirements are met. Systems for risk assessment, including those for out of school visits, are thorough and well managed. Procedures to monitor attendance and reduce exclusions are robust and effective. However, whilst the school's assessment information is being used satisfactorily to group students in classes according to ability, it is not used to the same good effect to identify and tackle pockets of underachievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, working closely with senior and middle leaders, has set a clear direction and vision for school improvement. Self-evaluation is good and accurately reflects the schools strengths and areas for improvement. The school improvement plan sets clear priorities that are effectively translated into good quality development plans and a range of appropriate policies and procedures. There are some significant challenges in attracting new staff to the local area, but despite this, the quality of teaching and learning is beginning to improve as a result of rigorous recruitment processes and the ways in which the school seeks to nurture and develop its existing staff and manage their performance.

The impact of all these measures on the personal development and well-being of learners, the development of the curriculum and the care, guidance and support provided for students is already strong. However, the full impact of all these strategies on raising achievement and standards has yet to be seen. Nonetheless, signs of improvement are evident, notably in Key Stage 4, and the development of 'fast-track' provision and curriculum pathways matched more closely to students' abilities and interests. Some aspects of the school's work such as a common approach to marking and the effective use of assessment information in order to identify and tackle pockets of underachievement throughout the school are currently underdeveloped.

The governing body holds the school to account well. For instance, the governors' curriculum committee took a significant role in driving forward and monitoring the development of the 'fast-track' provision for the more able students. Financial procedures are sound and governors monitor the school budget and expenditure effectively. Deployment of resources to achieve value for money is satisfactory. The capacity to improve further is good.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

6 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Malet Lambert School Language College, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU8 0JD.

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we came to carry out the inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to talk to you and to hear that you feel happy and safe and enjoy your learning. You and the majority of your parents told us that your school has improved since the last inspection and we agree. Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.

The headteacher and all of the staff are working very hard to improve your school and they take good care of you. Most of you make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards. Some of the signs that your school is getting better include: your good attendance and increasingly positive attitudes to learning; the recent improvements in test and examination results at the end of Key Stage 4; the increased variety of courses you can study; and your enjoyment of what you are doing, including the activities you can take outside of school. We were impressed by how well the vast majority of you behave in lessons and around the school, although the silly behaviour of a very small number of students still spoils their own and others' learning occasionally.

The international experiences you get through the wide range of foreign languages you can study and the numerous trips and visits available to you, widens your future learning, employment and training options and increases your understanding of other cultures and beliefs. We could see that you contribute well to the life of your school. For instance, you wear the uniform you all helped to choose with pride and we were pleased to hear that you look out for each other, for example by acting as 'listening peers'.

Despite all the positive improvements the schools' leaders and all of the staff know there is still more work to do. These are the things we have asked them to do to improve things further:

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that all of you make better progress and achieve as much as you possibly can by the time you leave the school at the end of Year 11.
- Improve marking, for example by making sure all teachers follow a common scheme and explain clearly what will make your work better. Your part here will be to act on that advice.
- Tailor classroom activities so that they meet all of your individual learning needs more effectively. Your task is to make sure that you give feedback to the teachers which will help them to improve.
- Make sure that the information the school holds about your progress is always used effectively to set your targets and monitor how well you are doing. Again your feedback about what is working will be very helpful here.

You have a central role to play in continuing the school's journey of improvement.

We wish you every success for the future.

Wendy Ripley

Her Majesty's Inspector