

Alderman White School and Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122851
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327810
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	David Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	545
Sixth form	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tina Launchbury
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Dean
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2006
School address	Chilwell Lane Beeston Bramcote Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG9 3DU
Telephone number	0115 9170424
Fax number	0115 9170494

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors. The school was invited to nominate a member of the senior management team to join inspectors in all aspects of their work; the head of school accepted this role.

Description of the school

The school is part of the White Hills Park Federation of schools that serve the Bramcote and Beeston areas of Nottingham. Sixth form provision is organised within the federation and the numbers of post-16 students are rising. Currently smaller than average, the number of students at Alderman White School is set to rise in September 2009 when a local reorganisation of provision brings a significant increase in student numbers in Years 7 to 9.

The students' social and economic backgrounds vary but are average overall. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The numbers of girls and boys in each year group varies annually. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average in the main school although the proportion who enrol in the federation sixth form is average. The number of students whose first language is not English is below average but rising.

The proportion of students registered by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is low. Attainment on entry is average and has been so for five years. There are a small number of looked after children in each year group.

The school has been granted specialist status for modern foreign languages and has received the following national accreditations: Healthy Schools Award; Football Association Charter Standard for schools; Investors in People; and the schools financial management award, FMSiS.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with a number of good and some outstanding features. The school has made good progress since the last inspection; the senior leadership team has done well to improve teaching and learning and enhance the range of curriculum opportunities. The impact of the school's specialist language provision is outstanding.

Standards and achievement are satisfactory overall and the 2008 GCSE results confirmed the positive impact of the federation arrangements on student progress. Examination outcomes already secured for 2009, notably in English and mathematics, are closer to the national average than those secured in previous years. Standards and achievement in the sixth form are broadly average.

The students' personal development is good overall. Attendance has improved and is just above the national average. Behaviour is generally good; parents and students commented positively on the improvement in behaviour in recent years. Care, welfare and guidance are good with particular strengths in the pastoral care for those with significant social and emotional need.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with half the lessons seen judged to be good or better; a third of lessons could have been more effective if the match of task to the students' learning needs had been stronger. Where opportunities to enhance teaching and learning were missed, insufficient attention was given to student involvement and independent learning.

Curriculum provision is good with strong pathways to post-16 provision, including the new national Diploma courses. The sixth form curriculum opportunities provided within the White Hills Park Federation are good and provide access to the subject specialisms of all three schools. Community cohesion is outstanding because of the collaboration within the three pyramids of feeder schools supported by the federation; in the way the school's language specialism supports local industry and community groups; and in the manner that students' perceptions of other cultural systems are developed.

Leadership and management are good overall; the head of school and the federation executive headteacher are a strong professional partnership. Good progress has been made on the areas for improvement given at the last inspection because of the manner in which the collective strengths of the federation have been deployed to enhance provision and outcomes at Alderman White. Governance is good and the school's capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school has a small sixth form provided by the White Hills Park Federation and post-16 provision is concentrated on the Bramcote site. A previous partnership arrangement with another local school has ended with the establishment of the new federation sixth form. The school is able to offer a broad range of post-16 pathways and a range of Level 2 and Level 3 courses are available; curriculum opportunities are good. This is proving attractive to students from beyond the federation schools and the numbers applying to join the federation sixth form in September 2009 have increased significantly.

Standards of attainment are broadly average and student achievement is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall and students respond well to the conceptually challenging tasks provided. The students' personal development is good and their attitudes to learning are very

positive. Care, guidance and support are good. The students were quick to praise the very positive support they receive from staff and the quality of the academic guidance available. One student synthesised the views of a number of her peers noting: 'The sixth form is the reason I get up in the morning. I smile and look forward to my future.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to improve standards and achievement particularly in the core subjects by providing a more consistent focus on learning outcomes in all lessons.
- Develop the quality of learning by providing a greater range of independent and practical learning opportunities.
- Finalise the storage of science materials raised with senior managers.

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

The percentage of students obtaining five A* to C grades at GCSE, 60%, was just below the national average; however, the proportion of students who obtained five higher grade GCSEs that included English and mathematics, 31%, was only just above the National Challenge benchmark; the performance of boys was noticeably weaker than that of the girls. The performance of those students with some form of learning difficulty and/or disability varied significantly.

Those students for whom the match of task to their learning need was managed through the school action support programme achieved at levels below the national average. However, those who received this support and additional help from outside sources or who had a statement of special educational need performed well.

The results attained by the small numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds were in the same range as those secured by their White British peers. The school was invited to join the National Challenge support programme in September 2008. The school's performance in modern foreign languages, the subject specialism, was significantly above the national average; all specialist subject targets were met.

The educational value added between Year 7 and Year 11 was just above the national average in 2008; however, students made good progress during their Year 11 examination courses as a result of the positive impact of the support available through the White Hills Federation and the resultant improvements made in teaching and learning.

A review of the school's robust evidence base and the outcomes of the 2009 GCSE modular courses already secured, point to continued improvements in standards, notably in English and mathematics. Overall, standards and achievement are satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development and well-being of students are a result of effective pastoral care. Parents say how much their children enjoy school. This can be seen in the way students participate in lessons, in the many extra-curricular activities on offer and the good relationships

they develop with staff. Moral, social and cultural development is strong, the students enjoy good relationships with their peers and, for example, in a physical education lesson they showed both respect and maturity in the way in which they gave feedback to each other to promote better learning. Students understand well the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle and can explain how this can be attained. There is a comprehensive programme of physical education and effective support for the emotional well-being of students. The sports leader programme is just one aspect of the students' satisfactory contribution to the school community.

Students say they feel safe at school and know who to talk to about any concerns. They are very aware that time at school is important for their future, and appreciate the school's target setting process. Inspectors noted the relaxed and courteous manner students displayed as they moved between lessons. Managed moves within the federation help to provide those students who are excluded with an opportunity of reintegration.

Attendance is just above national expectations and the school's efforts to target specific groups have met with some success, notably in the reduction of persistent absentees. The student mentoring system for those with English as an additional language has enhanced students' understanding of different cultures, faiths and ethnicities. The strength of the personal development and curricular opportunities provided help to develop appropriate skills to facilitate the students future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Through its active teaching and learning group, the school has invested significant effort in staff development in order to improve teaching and learning. The success of this work has helped to secure the notable improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Consistent models of planning and the use of objectives have been at the centre of a successful drive for improvement, although there are still variations in the learning outcomes secured in the core subjects. Pace, challenge and independent learning are evident in those lessons where students make the best progress and when students' commitment and relationships contribute to a strong learning atmosphere. Teaching assistants play an important role in effectively supporting students with additional learning needs. Good behaviour contributes to learning in all lessons.

Students understand their own achievement because of the school's effective assessment and target setting and, when given the opportunity, are good at both peer and self-assessment. Learning is less effective when tasks are not appropriate for students with a range of abilities and when there are fewer opportunities to work in groups or pairs. In such lessons, the teacher dominates activities for too long and too much time is spent in plenaries. When this happens, some students become disengaged from the learning and, as a result, objectives are not consistently met and student progress is variable. In a number of lessons, teachers attempted to explain a topic which could easily have been demonstrated, observed or even handled and thus lost the opportunity to capture students' interest.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Through the federation, the school has developed a curriculum which meets the needs of the full range of its students and is providing a range of appropriate accreditation. Level 1 and 2

vocational programmes at Key Stage 4 complement GCSE courses. Planning is in place to develop greater variety, including a Diploma course in manufacturing provided in partnership with local industry. Programmes for gifted and talented students in minority subjects will be introduced in September 2009. The curriculum provides considerable support for the needs of adults in the local business community in both languages and business, and in addition through courses for students in catering and hospitality.

Careers education and guidance is a strength of the curriculum. It is delivered through the citizenship programme and includes a half-course GCSE based on preparation, practice and evaluation of work experience. There is strong support from the Connexions adviser, who meets all students in Years 9, 10 and 11. All students take a further GCSE half-course in citizenship. There is a wide programme of extra-curricular activities, both in support for learning, and leisure. Students appreciate the intervention programme which provides support across the curriculum in preparation for their examinations. Opportunities to participate in sport, music and dance and martial arts are plentiful and this includes Boccia, a sports activity for students with additional learning needs.

The impact of the school's languages specialism is outstanding. Targets in modern languages were exceeded in 2008 and the school is increasing the numbers of students following language courses at Level 3. There is a wide range of accreditation, some of which have become part of the curriculum after being introduced as twilight sessions. Partnerships with local universities bring students to school to support language learners. The school has a 90% take up of modern languages at Key Stage 4. In addition to the main languages of French and German, there are classes for Spanish and Italian: and Japanese and Mandarin are offered to adults and students, including those from other schools, and to family classes. The school hosts a centre for the Chinese community. The impact of the school's curriculum has been significant, leading developments in digital learning and virtual learning in the federation, and these are now extending to mathematics and science. Support for the family of primary schools in their development of Key Stage 2 modern languages has included the provision of teachers working in the schools and feeder schools and training staff in the use of interactive white boards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This school has a strong ethos of care and support for all students. They feel safe in the knowledge that there are robust systems in place to support them. Many staff show a high level of commitment to supporting students, who in turn support and care for each other well. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements; staff know the child protection and health and safety procedures well.

The school works effectively with parents to support all students' progress in learning including those who find learning more difficult; communication with parents on pupil progress or areas of concern is good.

Students are well informed about the progress they are making in their learning - performance targets. Assessment processes are used successfully to raise motivation and improve attitudes to learning. The school has devised effective tracking and target setting procedures to inform students and their parents/carers. A wide range of assessment tasks all contribute effectively to the development of an individual student profile; mentoring is effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The significant improvement secured in teaching and learning since the last inspection is a key factor in the emerging improvement evident in standards and achievement. The strength of the school's subject specialist provision and the curriculum as a whole has been the result of the senior leadership team's pertinent decision to focus on the quality of provision and the students' personal development. The improvements secured in teaching, student progress and behaviour were a feature of an above average proportion of positive parental responses to the inspection questionnaire.

Quality assurance procedures are robust and the use of assessment information to inform management decisions is a real strength. The school development plan is very clear, reflecting agreed priorities; resource management is good and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The school provides good value for money.

The school provided a senior management team nominee to join the inspection team; the head of school played a full part in the inspection process. Senior managers were involved in the joint observations of lessons with inspectors. A formal evaluation of this exercise and the school's formal monitoring procedures revealed that although all participants identified the major strengths and areas for development in each lesson, the grading offered by inspectors was, on some occasions, more positive than the views expressed by the school.

Senior managers direct improvement and promote the well-being of learners through effective care, guidance and support and this has been at the heart of the improvements made within the school. HMI raise a matter of secure storage with the headteacher who took steps to address the matter before inspectors left the school. The governance of the school is good and the manner in which senior leaders and governors responded to substantial physical difficulties within one of the federation schools has helped to protect the progress made at Alderman White and enhance the collective provision. Community cohesion is outstanding, not just because of the significant efforts to support local community initiatives but in reaching out through the subject specialism to ethnic and business communities within Nottingham.

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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	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?	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	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	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3	3
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	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
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	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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**

5 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Alderman White School and Language College, Nottingham, NG9 3DU.

It was a pleasure to meet so many of you when inspectors visited the school at the end of June. Many of you were keen to give us your opinion of the school and the opportunities it provides. You invariably greeted us in a friendly manner as we moved around the school and were keen to show us your work in the classroom. Thank you for contributing to the inspection.

All the students we spoke to and a significant number of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were keen to praise the pastoral care provided by the school, the target setting system and the improvements made in both teaching and behaviour. The inspection report praises the way the school has developed its language specialist provision, the positive results you achieve in subjects like French, and the outstanding way the school uses these skills to support local community groups and businesses. Inspectors were impressed by the way the schools in the White Hills Federation are now working together and the sixth form students I spoke to were very pleased with the wide range of opportunities offered in the joint sixth form.

I have asked the head and senior staff to focus on:

- improving standards and achievement in the core subjects by providing a more consistent focus on learning outcomes in all lessons;
- developing the quality of learning by providing a greater range of independent and practical learning opportunities.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection. I look forward to hearing of your future success.

David Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector.