

Malton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121681
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	292201
Inspection date	9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Christine Harrison

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	686
6th form	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms L Clarke
Headteacher	Mr Rob Williams
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2002
School address	Middlecave Road Malton North Yorkshire YO17 7NH
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small comprehensive school serves the market town of Malton and the widespread surrounding rural area. Almost all students are of White British heritage with a few students from a range of minority ethnic groups. Almost all students speak English as their first language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds but, overall, their social circumstances are above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the proportion of students with a statement of special educational need are both average. Malton has been a specialist school for science since 2004. The new headteacher took up his post in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. The new headteacher quickly gained an understanding of what could be done to make a good school even better. With skilful and effective support from his senior leadership team, he has started to make those improvements and they are already having an impact on the life of the school. For example, the new 'positive discipline' policy is having a beneficial effect on behaviour; the number of incidents of poor behaviour has been reduced and students speak of fewer lessons being disrupted.

Students arrive in Year 7 with standards that are broadly average. They make good progress and by the time they reach Year 11, their GCSE results are above average. Therefore, their achievement is good. The main reason for students' good progress is the good quality of teaching they experience in all year groups. However, students' own conscientious and positive attitudes to learning also contribute to their success.

Students' personal development is good in the main school. Students generally behave well in class and around the school. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance, which has improved recently, is now good. Students know how to keep safe and have a clear understanding of the principles of a healthy lifestyle. They make a good contribution to both the school and the wider community, notably in their work for various charities and in the sporting activities they organise for primary school pupils. Students are well prepared for their future careers, for example, in a series of enterprise days, and almost all students from Year 11 either continue with their education or are enabled to find further training or employment.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but there is some variation in quality between individual lessons. Very good relationships between teachers and students underpin the learning in most lessons. Students value the extra help that teachers are always willing to provide when necessary. Teachers plan carefully but some of the activities do not exactly meet the needs of all students. This is a particular problem for lower attainers and results show that, although their progress is generally good, it is not quite as secure as that of other groups. The curriculum is good overall with a particular strength in the wide range of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. Extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and music, are an important strength of the school, contributing greatly to students' personal development.

Care, guidance and support for students are good in the main school. Teachers know students well and provide very good pastoral support for all, including those who are vulnerable. Systems for tracking and supporting students' academic progress are good in the main school and excellent in the sixth form, where students' progress is monitored more closely.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The school's self-evaluation of its work in the main school precisely matches inspection judgements and reveals a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The way the school has sustained its strong position, and made good progress this year, indicates that it is well placed for further improvement. The school has recently introduced good systems for monitoring the work of subject departments across both the main school and the sixth form. However, the arrangements are new and are not yet having as much effect as they should in ensuring consistency in teaching and management of behaviour across all teaching groups and subjects.

The school's specialist status has been well used to improve facilities and resources in science and to provide more information and communication technology (ICT) equipment across the school. It has also been used effectively to provide coaching for teachers in order to improve

teaching and learning across the school. Science and mathematics make a strong contribution to students' overall achievement. However, the school did not quite meet all of its specialist school targets in 2006.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

This is a good sixth form with some outstanding features, notably in students' personal development and the support that the school provides for their academic progress. Students are very enthusiastic about life in the sixth form. They take a full part in a wide range of enrichment activities and make a very significant contribution to the life of the school as a whole, for example, in organising concerts and exhibitions. Sixth form students are mature, confident and responsible young adults who provide excellent role models for younger students.

Standards in the sixth form are above average. Students make good progress and achieve well in A-level examinations. The quality of teaching and learning is good. At this stage, students benefit especially from teachers' very good subject expertise. Occasionally, students are not as actively involved in the lesson as they might be and this is a particular disadvantage for lower attainers. The curriculum is good and offers a good range of subjects together with several enrichment activities.

Students particularly value the excellent care, support and guidance that the school provides. Systems for keeping track of how well students are doing are excellent and better in the sixth form than in the main school. Students' progress is monitored every week and prompt action taken to solve any problems that arise.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Everything is well organised and runs smoothly. The school's self-evaluation of the sixth form was more positive than inspection judgements, largely because of a different view of students' achievement. The discrepancy arose because the school did not have access to all the 2006 data at the time its judgements were made.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the work provided in lessons more precisely meets the needs of all students, particularly lower attainers.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation by middle leaders to increase consistency across different subjects and the various teaching groups.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are above average and students' achievement is good throughout the school. In 2006 there was a 'dip' in the test results for Year 9. The school responded quickly to the problem, improving its monitoring procedures, involving parents more closely and providing extra support for students who were in danger of not doing as well as they should. Inspection evidence shows that standards have now risen again in Year 9 and more closely match the good achievement of 2005. Although GCSE results are above average overall, the proportion of students gaining five or more grades A* to C is not quite as good and there is not yet enough consistency across subjects in ensuring that as many students as possible gain these higher grades. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make good progress.

Students in the sixth form reach standards that are above average and they achieve well. Most students are successful in general studies in addition to their main A-level subjects. Gifted and talented students often take extra subjects that boost their qualifications. However, achievement for lower attainers, and in some individual subjects, is less impressive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development is good in the main school and outstanding in the sixth form. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Social and moral development is particularly strong, partly as a result of the excellent extra-curricular programme and the good systems for rewards and sanctions. Opportunities for spiritual development, a weakness at the time of the previous inspection, have improved, for example, in the periods of reflection in assemblies, and students respond well. Several aspects of cultural development are good but students say, quite rightly, that they do not have enough opportunities to learn about other cultures represented in Britain today.

The school holds the Sports Mark award, reflecting students' very good participation in physical education activities. Most students are keen to follow a healthy lifestyle. However, there are still a few persistent smokers, despite the increased supervision around the site. Students feel safe in school and appreciate the recent significant reduction in the incidents of bullying. They are confident that, if such incidents do occur, they are effectively dealt with by the school. A group of sixth form students agreed that: 'We have more respect for one another now and the atmosphere is much better between different groups of students.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. However, as the leadership team is aware, there are some variations in quality between and within subjects. Teachers are generally successful in creating a good atmosphere for learning. Most manage students' well so that good behaviour is maintained in the vast majority of lessons. However, students report that a few teachers do not follow the 'positive discipline' procedures as consistently as they should and inspection evidence confirms that there are very occasional lessons where poor behaviour disrupts learning. Teachers usually provide activities that are broadly suitable for the group of students and the topic being covered. However, planning, particularly for lower attainers, could be better in some lessons. Students sometimes find the tasks too demanding and do not learn as efficiently as they might. Teachers mark students' work carefully and give good advice on how it could be improved. Students in the sixth form particularly appreciate their teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects, the support provided for coursework and the thorough preparation for examinations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum meets students' needs and enables them to achieve well. The school's specialist status work, in partnership with other local schools, to increase the range of vocational subjects in Years 10 and 11, is exemplary. Around a third of students in these year groups are now involved in off-site learning, enabling the school to match the curriculum more precisely to students' individual interests and their plans for the future. Students, particularly higher attainers, have additional opportunities to study statistics and general studies. The arrangements for ICT in Years 10 and 11 are adequate but students express concerns about the ICT courses and the school already has plans for improvement. Within the school's excellent extra-curricular provision, the history department's annual research project is a particular highlight. Each year, up to 80 students are involved in researching an aspect of local history, for example, 'this countryside at war', and producing a film which culminates in a premiere evening. The project successfully promotes students' understanding of their cultural heritage as well as enhancing their research and presentation skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school takes good care of all its students and draws upon a wide range of expertise, including outside agencies to ensure students get the support they need. Arrangements for safeguarding students, and for ensuring their health and safety, meet current requirements. Procedures for welcoming students into Year 7 are good and students settle quickly. The new Phoenix Suite provides valuable extra support with learning for younger students and helps older students who have had problems gradually to get back into normal lessons.

The support for students' academic progress has improved this year, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and the school is gradually developing a better system giving a clear overview of how well students are doing across the various subjects. The outstanding quality of support in Year 12 and 13 is an important factor in enabling some students successfully to complete more examination courses than might be expected.

An early residential opportunity for Year 12 helps to establish very good relationships in the sixth form and is particularly valuable for those coming in from other schools. Students in Year 13 value the excellent guidance they receive when applying for universities and planning for future careers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school's most recent plans for improvement indicate the leadership team's determination to provide the best possible education for students and to raise standards. Governors are well informed; they are supportive and also prepared to challenge the leadership team when necessary. They are currently involved in monitoring the work of the new Isolation Unit which,

as part of the new procedures for maintaining good behaviour, has already contributed to reducing the number of fixed term exclusions. The school holds the Investors in People Award, reflecting its emphasis on developing the skills of all staff.

The leadership team has acknowledged the need to increase consultation with parents and has successfully introduced termly parents' forum meetings and regular questionnaires. The school council provides a satisfactory forum for students to make their views known but the school is aware that its role could be strengthened by, for example, giving it responsibility for a small budget. The weaknesses highlighted in the last inspection have been overcome well, particularly in improving the use of computer equipment to support and enhance learning across all subjects and increasing the opportunities for spiritual development. The school provides good value for money and has recently been awarded the Financial Management Standard.

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Annex A

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
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	3	
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	2
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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

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	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, 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**

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. As you know, the purpose of the visit was to check how well the school is doing. I am particularly grateful to those of you who talked to me about your experiences in school. The information and opinions you provided were very important in helping to make judgements.

I agree with you that yours is a good school. The quality of teaching is good so that you learn quickly and do well in tests and examinations. You told me how much you enjoy school and I know that you value the excellent range of activities that the school provides. Behaviour in lessons and around school is now good. Sixth form students told me that the new headteacher had 'put his foot down' and introduced new systems that have been successful in improving behaviour.

There are two outstanding features of the sixth form: the way in which students take responsibility and provide leadership for younger students and the excellent support and guidance that the school provides to keep students 'on track' with their work.

Nevertheless, even in a good school there are a few things that could be improved.

Sometimes, the work you are given to do is not exactly right for every student. I have asked teachers to make sure that they adjust the activities so that everybody can work successfully at their own pace. I have also suggested that teachers who are in charge of subjects monitor more closely to make sure that the same good features are present in all your lessons. I hope you will play your part by working as enthusiastically in every lesson as you do already in the lessons you enjoy most.