

Malbank School and Sixth Form College

Welsh Row, Nantwich, Cheshire CW5 5HD

Inspection dates

27–28 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The standard of education provided at the school declined after the last inspection. Despite an improving trend, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching across a range of subjects are not good.
- Leaders have not been fully effective in secured disadvantaged pupils' good attendance and progress.
- The quality of subject leadership is mixed. As a result, the quality of teaching varies within and across departments. Despite recent improvement, teaching is not effective in mathematics.
- Teachers do not routinely use assessment information to set pupils work that stretches their thinking and learning.
- Although many pupils behave sensibly around the school, pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement, especially those of boys. In these cases, pupils lose concentration or are involved in low-level disruption.
- Teachers do not consistently support pupils to work with care or accuracy. As a result, some pupils' work, especially that of boys, lacks precision. Too many boys do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' work across a range of subjects contains too many misconceptions in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders' actions to strengthen the curriculum are having a positive impact overall. Pupils' progress is improving, including that of boys and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils make good progress in English.
- Leaders, including governors, demonstrate the capacity to improve the quality of education provided at the school.
- Pupils' personal development is good. They learn and care about themselves and others.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils, including those who have recently joined Year 7, say that they are well cared for and safe at school.
- Pupils who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) are well supported.
- The sixth form is a strength of the school. It is well led, and teaching is typically strong. Students attain the grades of which they are capable across the academic and vocational courses provided.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' outcomes:
 - across a range of subjects, especially mathematics
 - for boys
 - for those who are disadvantaged.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the leadership of subjects where pupils' outcomes are weak
 - increasing the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils, so that they are in line with others nationally.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - strengthening the quality of teaching across a range of subjects, including mathematics
 - ensuring that assessment information is used by teachers to set work that stretches pupils' thinking, knowledge and skills
 - ensuring that teachers support pupils to raise their expectations and work with more care and precision
 - extending opportunities for pupils to secure good spelling, punctuation and grammar across a range of subjects.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by strengthening attitudes to learning and reducing low-level disruption in lessons, especially by boys.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The standard of education provided at the school declined after the last inspection in 2015. As a result, too many pupils attained examination grades across a broad range of subjects which were significantly below those of which they were capable. School leaders' actions to rectify the weaknesses which led to this downturn have had some success. The tide is turning, and leaders recognise that more needs to be done to move the school forward.
- Overall, leaders demonstrate the capacity to improve the standard of education provided. Although they have responded to the areas for improvement noted at the last inspection, the success of their actions has not been fully effective. Despite progress in several subjects not being strong, improvements are emerging. Leaders have embedded pupils' good progress in English, including for boys and those who are disadvantaged. More pupils learn well in science than was previously the case, although some weaknesses remain. Similarly, despite some clear signs of improvement in mathematics, too many pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders have introduced systems to secure pupils' positive attitudes to learning. These systems, where they are managed effectively, have resulted in high levels of engagement from pupils, including boys. However, in some cases current pupils' attitudes to learning are weak and this prevents them making good progress.
- Senior leaders are clear about the current strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching. They know where teaching is most effective, such as in English and art. Leaders share these strengths, when they review and refine the training that teachers receive. They also seek external support to develop expertise among staff. Teachers, including those who are recently qualified, who spoke with inspectors and responded to the staff survey at the time of the inspection were typically positive about the impact of the training that they receive. This has led to improvement, including in some areas of modern foreign languages and science. Several weaker aspects remain across a range of subjects, and especially in mathematics.
- Senior leaders have a sharp focus on securing good subject leadership. The leadership of English, art and some other subjects is effective. As a result, pupils learn well and make good progress in these subjects. Senior leaders have recently prioritised stronger leadership of mathematics, science, geography and modern foreign languages. They see these as key aspects to support improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Inspectors saw that there have been aspects of improvement in the leadership in each of these subject areas. Leaders of these subjects are now more aware of what needs attention. They are in the early stages of putting these actions in place and leadership of several subjects is not fully effective.
- Leaders' use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not fully effective. Leaders, including governors, have prioritised this aspect as one which requires their sharp focus and further strengthening. Disadvantaged pupils make better progress overall than previously, but too often they are not attaining the levels of which they are capable. Leaders' actions to embed the good attendance of these pupils have not maintained the upward trajectory seen in recent years.

- The management of the support provided for pupils who have an education, health and care plans is effective. When inspectors checked these plans, they found that school leaders monitor them closely. Their actions ensure that these pupils are typically taught and supported effectively and make good academic progress. Similarly, the pastoral and health aspects of these plans are set and reviewed effectively. Other pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) attend school regularly and staff support their pastoral needs effectively. The progress of these pupils is steady and like other pupils varies between subjects. They learn best where teachers and other adults make use of the information provided to support and challenge them effectively, such as in English and art.
- School leaders are taking steps to strengthen the implementation and impact of the curriculum. For example, leaders' recent actions to review and improve the Year 7 curriculum have had a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils in Year 7 have, in some cases, revisited aspects of their learning from earlier in the term with greater depth and detail. This opportunity to look again at previous topics has bolstered their learning. Despite these improvements, weaknesses remain, for example in mathematics, where opportunities for pupils to build upon and apply their learning are not routinely planned or applied. In contrast, the English curriculum is a rich and rewarding experience for pupils and, as a result, many make strong progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a high profile. Pupils think about a wide range of issues, such as prejudice, and do so with depth and detail. Pupils from all year groups fully contribute to a school house system. Remembrance Day activities, including wreath laying, are carried out with care and consideration. The pupils who responded to the pupil survey at the time of the inspection said that they understand and value people's differences, other faiths and cultures and fundamental British values.
- The careers guidance programme is generally effective. Pupils receive advice and guidance which meets their requirements. As a result, almost all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, move on to further education or training.
- Leaders plan a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. The programme caters for and develops pupils' wider academic, cultural, artistic and sporting interests. As a result, pupils generally speak positively about the opportunities which are provided.
- The Year 7 pupils with whom inspectors spoke were positive about the school and their transition from primary school. Leaders' plans to support the pastoral transition of pupils are effective. Pupils in Year 7 say that they feel safe and supported. Senior leaders' actions to strengthen these pupils curriculum in Year 7 have had some impact. Overall, teachers use the information that leaders share about pupils' academic performance at primary school more regularly than previously. Leaders manage Year 7 catch-up funding well. They plan and monitor the progress of pupils who join the school with low levels in English and mathematics effectively, to support them in catching up with others.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved, and they recognise the school's current strengths and the priorities for improvement. They are clear of their responsibility to ensure that the current areas of weakness are addressed.

- Governance has strengthened in recent years. Newly appointed governors have provided additional expertise. Governors have undertaken training where this has been required. As a result, current governors support and challenge senior leaders. Their experience of financial management enables them to support senior leaders' plans to strengthen the quality of education that the school provides. Governors have, through their well-chosen actions and impact to date, demonstrated the capacity to make the improvements necessary.
- Governors clearly set and promote the school's values with pupils, parents and carers and staff. They have confidence in the changes made to the curriculum to help pupils achieve the academic outcomes of which they are capable and '...be the sort of people that you would wish to live next door to'.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain effective safeguarding records. They check the backgrounds of staff when they are appointed.
- Checks made by inspectors found that staff, including non-teaching staff, are trained in identifying potential risks to pupils.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and that staff provide for their safety effectively.
- Leaders work effectively with external agencies and parents. They act swiftly when required to secure pupils' safety and well-being. Referrals are made to external agencies as appropriate.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe, including when online. They know to whom they should report concerns and how to do this.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving overall, pupils' experience of teaching is too mixed. This is the case within and across departments. Despite this, there are subjects where teaching is consistently effective, such as English and art. Some pupils across year groups benefit from effective teaching across a range of other subjects, including in science, geography, history and modern foreign languages. However, other pupils do not. In these cases, some pupils' attitudes to learning waver, especially boys. They lose concentration or become involved in low-level disruption.
- Despite some recent improvements to the teaching of mathematics, several weaker aspects remain. Teachers do not regularly set pupils work that challenges them sufficiently. In these cases, pupils repeat calculations or other work that they have already secured and are not provided with work that stretches their thinking and learning. On the other hand, teachers ensure that pupils gain a secure foundation in basic skills.
- Teaching is good in English, art and there are good features of teaching within other subjects. Teachers assess pupils' learning effectively in these subjects and provide them with an accurate view of their strengths and weaknesses. These teachers use

what they know about the pupils' learning to set work that supports and challenges them. In these cases, pupils have the confidence to improve their work and attempt more complex activities. As a result, pupils learn well in these subjects. They speak and write with clarity, depth and precision. In other subjects, where teachers do not regularly provide pupils opportunities to work at a level which matches their needs, they do not learn as well as others.

- Teachers apply their good subject knowledge effectively across a range of subjects and set high expectations and support pupils' learning. In these cases, such as in art, pupils tend to work with care and accuracy. At times, when pupils are not provided with this level of support, such as in aspects of mathematics and science, their work sometimes lacks precision. This is especially the case for boys. Some pupils' misconceptions are not effectively challenged. As a result, pupils do not learn from their mistakes and continue to make them.
- Although the teaching of English is effective, there are occasions when, across a range of subjects, insufficient attention is given to improving pupils' skills in writing. Misconceptions with spelling, punctuation and grammar are left unchallenged and pupils continue to repeat their errors. On the other hand, when pupils are supported to develop these aspects, including in English and Spanish, they improve the accuracy of their writing skills.
- Overall, pupils and parents generally say that they are satisfied with the homework that pupils are set. In these cases, it is set regularly and at the correct level.
- Leaders provided inspectors with reports that they send home to parents. These documents contain information about pupils' recent assessments and next steps. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, said that reports which they receive are useful.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most of the pupils with whom inspectors spoke were confident, considerate of others and courteous. They think deeply and explore ideas with curiosity and creativity when provided with the opportunities to do so.
- Pupils usually enjoy positive interactions with one another and adults. Most pupils and parents say although there are instances of bullying, it is rare. Pupils say that bullying is not tolerated, and staff deal with it effectively. Checks made by inspectors showed that incidents of bullying are followed up and resolved effectively.
- Pupils say that they are cared for and valued as individuals. They say that they and others are safe and supported to be who they want to be. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke were very clear that people's differences in and out of school are respected and valued.
- The pupils with whom inspectors spoke confirmed that staff are approachable and considerate of pupils' mental and physical well-being. They felt that the school's

curriculum and support services are effective in raising their awareness of potential risks to their well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons varies. This is especially the case for boys. Pupils generally behave well where teachers have high expectations and set work at the appropriate level. However, where this is not the case, pupils too easily lose concentration and sometimes disrupt learning.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is usually good. Most move around the school in an orderly manner. Their behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the change of lessons typically supports an orderly environment. A minority of pupils who misbehave or are boisterous around school are usually supported effectively by staff to moderate their conduct. Pupils usually arrive punctually at lessons.
- Most pupils attend school regularly. However, current levels of absence and persistent absence of disadvantaged pupils are too high. Systems introduced to establish the routinely good attendance of these pupils are starting to show a positive impact.
- Leaders manage effectively the attendance, behaviour and safeguarding of pupils who attend alternative provision.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Too many pupils, including boys and disadvantaged pupils, have not attained the grades of which they are capable in external examinations in recent years. Despite signs of improvement, pupils' grades have been lower than others nationally with similar starting points over a range of subjects.
- Pupils have typically attained the grades of which they are capable in English but, despite some recent improvement, their results in mathematics have too often been poor. More pupils attained the grades of which they were capable in some aspects of science in 2018 than was the case previously. Pupils generally attained good results in biology, but this was not typically the case in chemistry and physics.
- Inspectors' analysis of the progress seen in pupils' books shows that, overall, more of them are working to the standard expected at this time of the year. The strengths seen in the recent examination results in English are being sustained. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils in some subjects, including English and art. As a result, pupils from a range of starting points, including boys and those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in these subjects.
- In science, pupils' progress is improving overall, but is less consistent. Where progress is good, for example in biology, pupils typically demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and teachers deploy their good subject knowledge effectively.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is showing some signs of improvement. Pupils typically have a secure understanding of the basic skills and they use these accurately. However, they are not routinely provided with the opportunity to think about and apply

these strengths in more complex ways. Therefore, despite the upward trend, too many pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable in mathematics.

- Pupils who have an EHCP typically make good progress. Staff know these pupils well and ensure that the work they are set supports and challenges these pupils effectively. The progress of other pupils with SEND is mixed, as is the case for other pupils. Where teaching is effective, staff, including teaching assistants, plan and cater for these pupils' needs and so their progress is good. At other times support is not directed enough to the needs of these pupils and this slows their progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than previously, but too many of them still do not make the progress of which they are capable, across a range of subjects. However, in English, art and some other areas these pupils typically learn well and make good progress. Their work shows that the gaps between them and others are diminishing.
- Leaders have acted to improve boys' progress and, as a result, more boys are now making steady progress, similar to the girls. However, this improvement varies between and across subjects. Boys are making good progress in English, because their attitudes to learning are positive and teachers expect them to work with care and precision. However, this is not consistently the case elsewhere, including for the most able boys, especially where teachers have lower expectations of them.
- Leaders monitor effectively the quality of education for pupils who attend alternative provision. These pupils benefit from appropriate curriculums that focus on preparing them for the next stage of their education.
- As improvements continue to have a positive impact on pupils' progress, they are becoming more prepared for the next stage of their education. Almost all pupils move to further education, employment or training. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are supported effectively and remain in education or training. However, weaknesses in pupils' grades in mathematics have required too many of them to follow a GCSE mathematics course in the sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- The standard of education provided by the sixth form is of a higher quality than the rest of the school. This is because students' attitudes to learning are good, teachers have high expectations of students, including boys, and leadership is effective. Students' conduct is good and they attend regularly. Those students who did not attain the grades of which they were capable in Year 11 improve and make better progress in the sixth form.
- Students' outcomes are good. Most students follow academic courses. These students typically attain the examination grades of which they are capable, including those who join the sixth form from other schools and those who join the sixth form with the A and A* GCSE grades. Similarly, the smaller proportion of students who follow vocational courses typically attain grades that match or exceed those of students with similar starting points nationally. Disadvantaged students' progress closely matches that of others with similar starting points.

- Students who resit GCSE English or mathematics make better progress than others nationally in improving their grades and/or attaining a pass grade in these subjects
- The quality of teaching is consistently good across the academic and vocational courses which are provided. In some cases, such as psychology, teaching is first rate. Teachers have a clear understanding of their students' progress and take the necessary steps to support, deepen and extend their learning. Students respond positively to teachers' well-matched and high expectations and, as result, work with care and precision. Their attitudes to learning are typically strong.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Leaders know students well. For example, they assess, monitor and evaluate students' learning consistently and effectively. As a result, where students' progress dips, leaders act accordingly to support improvement.
- Students benefit from the activities which leaders provide to broaden their study programmes. Leaders ensure that opportunities for students' personal development and work-related learning form an integral part of their curriculum experience. For example, all students undertake a work experience placement, which supplements and enriches these students' preparedness for their next steps. They participate in a range of additional activities, including the support of pupils in key stage 3. These aspects of the curriculum meet the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes and make a strong contribution to students' wider development.
- Sixth-form leaders provide useful information and support for students' next steps in education and employment. Students' retention in the sixth form matches that of others nationally. Almost all pupils complete and take examinations in the courses that they begin. Leaders ensure that the careers advice and guidance curriculum provides good-quality opportunities for students to think about and apply successfully for their chosen destinations. They typically move on to university courses, including at Russell Group universities, and apprenticeships.
- Safeguarding is effective in the sixth form. Students are well prepared for adulthood. They are supported well in managing risk and looking after their own welfare.

School details

Unique reference number	111419
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	10052942

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,103
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	116
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Scott Harding
Headteacher	Jeannette Walker
Telephone number	01270 611009
Website	www.malbank.com
Email address	jwk@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 and 26 November 2015

Information about this school

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The proportion of girls at the school is well above the national average.
- The school uses alternative provision for a small number of pupils at Reaseheath College, The Lodge. Cheshire Fire and Rescue, Get Hooked, Our Space and Cre8.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings took place with school leaders, teachers and members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions were held with pupils to gather their views on a variety of issues, including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour, teaching, careers guidance and the curriculum.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school’s documentation, such as the self-evaluation and improvement plan, assessment information, the pupil premium plan, attendance and behaviour records and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of 60 staff survey responses, 66 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 33 written responses from parents to Ofsted’s free-text facility. They also considered 61 pupil survey responses.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across and scrutinised pupils’ work across a range of subjects and year groups. They were accompanied by school leaders on some of these observations.

Inspection team

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