

Moseley School A Language College

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	103519
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	308346
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Rashida Sharif 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	1342
6th form	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Assad Hamed
Headteacher	David Peck
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2004
School address	College Road Moseley Birmingham B13 9LR
Telephone number	0121 6786400
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Age group	11–18
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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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

Moseley School A Language College serves a catchment area that has significant levels of social, economic and educational disadvantage. The majority of the students come from the Pakistani community. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is well above the national average. The proportions of students eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also well above national averages. Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are below the national average.

The school gained its specialist language status in 2000. It had its International School status renewed and achieved its information and communication technology (ICT) quality mark in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Moseley School A Language College is a satisfactory school with many good features. The headteacher and his staff have established a culture where students know what is expected of them. The school is fully inclusive and everyone subscribes to the three core values of courtesy, cooperation and respect.

The school is a calm and orderly community that provides good care, guidance and support for its students. Students enjoy coming to school and participate enthusiastically in the numerous extra-curricular activities. Attendance is satisfactory. Students display good attitudes to learning and behaviour in class and around the school is good. Older students take responsibility for the younger students and act as mentors. Students have a good awareness of healthy eating and how to keep safe. They make good contributions to the school, local and international communities through raising funds and helping those who are less fortunate than they are. They speak enthusiastically about their international links and about the many visitors they regularly receive into the school.

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Support given to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them to progress as well as other students. Although standards are improving, they remain below average. Students do well in some subjects, but not enough achieve a grade C or above at GCSE in both English and mathematics. Specialist status has enhanced the curriculum through the offer of a range of languages, including Urdu, which is one of the best performing subjects. This also helps to extend the students' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. The curriculum is constantly evolving to ensure that the needs of all students are met, and is enriched through good partnerships with other schools and a broad range of extra-curricular activities that take place during and after school. The introduction of a 'learn to learn' strategy in Year 7 has had a positive impact on students' literacy skills and is now being extended to year 8.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge. The best lessons make use of a range of strategies such as effective questioning and peer assessment to assess students' understanding. However, these features are not yet consistent within and across departments. In addition marking does not always inform the students of what it is that they need to do to further improve their work. Workplace skills are developed through good teaching in numeracy and ICT, and through the range of vocational courses available in the sixth form. However, literacy and oral skills in English are less well developed across the school, and lesson activities do not focus sufficiently on students' ability to speak and discuss fluently and accurately.

The school's senior leaders have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for further development through rigorous self-evaluation, and their improvement strategy places an appropriately high priority on developing students' literacy skills in order to raise overall achievement. However, the role of middle leaders is not yet sufficiently developed to resolve inconsistencies in teaching and the implementation of this strategy. The successes achieved so far show that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Students' attainment on entry is below average and sound teaching ensures that they make satisfactory progress by the time they leave. The school continues to develop the curriculum to meet the changing needs of learners. Students receive good guidance to help them identify the best programmes of study to suit their individual needs and capabilities. Courses are offered in collaboration with partner schools to broaden their options. Most students stay to complete their course successfully. Attendance and punctuality are good. Students display positive attitudes and conduct themselves well. Those students who need additional support receive this from a dedicated learning mentor. Students appreciate the high levels of care, support and guidance they receive. They are proud of their school and would have no hesitation in recommending it to others. A significant number of students spend three years in the sixth form and many students follow degree courses at their universities of choice. Effective procedures are in place for setting targets and monitoring students' progress. However, the school has yet to fully develop its systems for evaluating the quality of what is offered to students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring a consistent approach in all year groups to the implementation of the literacy strategy.
- Ensure all teaching focuses on meeting the needs of individual students and showing them clearly what they need to do to further improve their work.
- Ensure middle managers are more accountable for leading their areas or subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students' attainment is below average when they enter the school in Year 7 and remains below average at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, and the sixth form. This represents satisfactory achievement in the main school and the sixth form.

Standards at GCSE reached an all-time peak in 2007 with 48% of students gaining five or more grades at grade C or above. Results were particularly good in ICT and art with 100% and 95% of students respectively obtaining grades A* to C. Geography and Urdu also did well, but results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well below average. The results of the modular exams already taken in mathematics and science by the current Year 11 are encouraging. The majority of students in the targeted 'study plus' group in mathematics are making outstanding progress.

National test results at the end of Year 9 also improved in 2007 but remained below average. The school's own tracking data on individual students in English, mathematics and science shows that Year 9 are now making better progress in these subjects than in previous years.

Students who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for performance this year and students are making satisfactory progress towards them. However, the once a term cycle of assessments and review is insufficient to identify underachievement at an early stage by middle leaders. Provision for the large number

of students needing support with literacy skills has improved recently but the legacy of weaknesses in handling English text continues to suppress standards and achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong sense of community and common purpose within the school. Students enjoy being at school and show loyalty to the school community and its values. They form good and productive relationships with each other and adults. They are supported in this by the school's well established approach to behaviour and discipline, based on the 'Golden Rule'. Students feel safe in school, and say that bullying is not a problem. If it does occur, they say it is dealt with quickly and fairly by the school.

Students' social development is addressed well through their involvement in extra-curricular activities, and through extensive fundraising for charity. They take responsibility for each other through mentoring younger students, and through being prefects and members of the school council. Personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons and the school's clear set of shared values contribute effectively to students' moral development, and allow them to understand how to take care of their own and others' health and safety. The school has systems in place to prevent the abuse of computer technologies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The strengths lie in the teaching of languages; there are inconsistencies of practice in other subjects. Where teaching is good, teachers capitalise on students' interest and keep them engaged by well directed questions, individual prompts, encouragement and high expectations of their work. In such lessons, there is a buzz of enthusiasm shared by teachers and learners alike so that there is always rapid progress within a short time. Where lessons are less successful, teachers talk too much. They tell students what they are supposed to know but do not always question them to check whether they have understood, and do not offer sufficient opportunities for students to develop speaking and listening skills through discussion. Students are expected to copy out material they do not always understand. Students lack the confidence to express themselves because they do not get enough opportunity to develop their ideas. Teachers do not always plan to meet the needs of individual students. As a result, some students find the work too easy and others struggle to keep up. In good lessons, teachers check progress through carefully directed questioning and give individual advice on how to improve. In others, there is little individual guidance and assessment is poor. For example, some books remain unmarked for long periods and when there is marking, it does not help the students know what it is that they need to do to further improve their work. This results in some students' writing deteriorating over time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is enriched by the school's specialist language status. The wide range of languages, including Urdu, offer help to extend the students' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. For example, the international dimension of the curriculum involves working with a number of schools in various parts of Europe and Pakistan. Cross-curricular events such as the 'Festival of Diversity' celebrating European and a range of different cultures are further developed through the arts. To ensure that all students are able to access the broad and developing curriculum, the school has introduced a 'learn to learn' programme that helps students to improve, for example, their literacy skills. Older students benefit from a wide variety of off-site, vocationally-based activities and work experience. These provide valuable community and enterprise experiences and support their future economic well-being. The curriculum is further enriched through an impressive range of extra-curricular activities. These include, for example, sport and physical fitness, musical productions and visits to community facilities to extend students' social awareness and confidence. Partnership with the youth services further enriches the experience of students through a wide range of provision including residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Staff have a clear commitment to ensuring good quality care for learners. Students told the inspectors how much they appreciate the high levels of care and support they receive from staff. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are robust and fully comply with statutory requirements. Supportive relationships are in evidence throughout the school. Students are particularly proud of their listed building, which has retained its original character. The school provides an extensive range of support for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. However, those who are more able are not sufficiently provided for or challenged. Support for new arrivals who are at an early stage of learning English is good. The school works well with parents, carers and outside agencies to support its more vulnerable students. Learning mentors and teaching assistants are well used in support of students at risk of underachievement or disaffection.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The leadership provided by the headteacher is good. This is complemented by his dedicated and committed senior leadership team. Together, they form an effective leadership group that has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. They have set clear expectations of staff and students, and have been working hard to identify and implement the necessary changes, such as the 'learn to learn' strategy, to improve overall standards. The school has established a positive climate and a good working environment where students are happy to learn. Robust and honest self-evaluation is central to the school's

improvement. Systems for checking all aspects of provision have identified strengths and guide developments. Any weaknesses identified have been or are being addressed through decisive actions.

Middle leaders are committed to providing every opportunity for students to do well. A developing team of middle leaders is gaining confidence in being able to lead their own departments. However, there are still inconsistencies between and within subjects and aspects in terms of, for instance, teaching practice. The senior leadership recognises this and has recently put in place clearer line management systems to provide effective intervention and support. Good monitoring and evaluation systems are in place, including rigorous analysis of attendance, attainment and progress towards targets.

The recently re-formed governing body and elected chair are good advocates for the work of the school. They are supportive but do not yet have the skills to appropriately challenge the school. Leaders ensure that a wide range of views, including those of students and parents, informs the school's planning so the right priorities are identified in the school's improvement plan. However, outcomes are not always measured against the targets that are set.

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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	3

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 disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	2
The behaviour of learners	2	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	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
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	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Moseley School A Language College, Birmingham, B13 9LR

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you extended to my colleagues and me when we visited your school recently. It is a delight to write to you and say how impressed we were with you and some of your beautiful historical school buildings.

Thank you very much for contributing to the inspection. We spoke with many of you in class and around the school. We would particularly like to thank the school council and students from the sixth form who gave up their lunchtime to speak with us. We were very impressed with your positive attitudes to learning and each other. You have a good headteacher who, with help from his senior leadership team, has established a school where you all feel valued and where you feel safe and enjoy your lessons. We judged your school to be satisfactory with many good features. The teachers are supportive but we felt that some of them did not always plan their lessons to meet your individual needs. There is good care and support available for each of you, whatever your circumstances. The good curriculum is constantly being improved to give you greater choice and to meet your changing needs. You told us how much you enjoyed the range of courses and all the other interesting opportunities you have beyond the classroom. You make a positive contribution to the life of the school through your involvement in, for example, the school council and as mentors helping younger students.

To improve the school further, we have asked the headteacher, senior leadership team and chair of governors to:

- raise standards by making sure that rigorous monitoring leads to a consistent approach to the implementation of the literacy strategy
- ensure all teaching focuses on meeting the needs of individual students and showing them clearly what they need to do to further improve their work
- ensure middle managers are more accountable for leading their subjects or aspects.

You can help by making more contributions to discussions in lessons through expressing your own views with more confidence. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours Sincerely

Rashida Sharif Her Majesty's Inspector