

Aldercar Community Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112939
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357228
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	892
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham King
Headteacher	Anthony Cooper (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2007
School address	Daltons Close Langley Mill, Nottingham NG16 4HL
Telephone number	01773 712477
Fax number	01773 531969
Email address	info@aldercar.derbyshire.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. One inspector focused on safeguarding for half a day. Inspectors observed 43 teachers in 44 lessons. Two inspectors also conducted a series of brief lesson visits. One was focused on the engagement of boys and the other on the quality of learning in the sixth form. Meetings were held with groups of staff, students and the Chair of the Governing Body. One inspector had a telephone conversation with the college's School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, data and analysis, policies, the school's monitoring records and the minutes of the governing body meetings. They considered the responses to questionnaires from 119 parents and carers, 128 students and 43 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective have leaders and managers been in ensuring progress is satisfactory or better across all subjects, especially English, mathematics and specialist subjects?
- Is teaching consistently meeting the needs of all groups of students, particularly those known to be eligible for free school meals, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more-able boys, so that they all make satisfactory or better progress?
- How effectively is the curriculum provision securing satisfactory or better outcomes for all groups of students?
- Do leaders effectively monitor and accurately evaluate the school's performance and use this evaluation to secure clear and sustained improvement?
- How effective have leaders and managers been in ensuring satisfactory or better outcomes for students in the sixth form?

Information about the school

Aldercar Community Language College is an average sized secondary school. It gained specialist status in languages in September 2001, applied learning in December 2005 and a further specialism in science in September 2009. Aldercar manages a specially resourced provision for special educational needs for 11 deaf students and 12 physically disabled students. Most students join the college from local primary schools. Almost all students are of White British heritage although other ethnic groups are represented. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below that found nationally and all speak English fluently. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that found nationally and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. Since the previous inspection the college has opened a sixth form. It holds Healthy Schools Status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Students feel safe and happy in this satisfactory school. There are many strengths in the college including students' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. One reason for these strong outcomes is the warm and trusting relationships students have with their teachers and other staff in the college. The college is fully inclusive and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including deaf students and those with physical disabilities, are active members of the college and make sound progress.

The college's commitment to working with the local community is exceptional and this is demonstrated clearly in students' excellent involvement in a variety of local projects. The college's work on promoting community cohesion is also outstanding. This is due in part to the impact of the college's specialist subjects, especially languages.

Students make satisfactory progress overall and there are signs that this is improving, especially in Key Stage 4. The large majority of students in Year 11 are on track to gain five A* to C grades at GCSE. Progress is particularly strong for students taking applied subjects. There are clear signs that progress is becoming more consistent across all subjects areas. For example, progress in English has been significantly below expectations over the past few years and this has improved this year. Progress in mathematics has also steadily improved. The progress made by more-able boys and students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is satisfactory.

Students are keen to learn and respond enthusiastically when they are given opportunities to engage in active learning tasks. There is a significant amount of good and better teaching which is supporting the improvements in progress. Where teaching is not as strong, weaker areas are to do with questioning and with matching work to students' abilities. The college's specialism in applied learning has had a marked impact in improving the curriculum, especially in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. There are a range of exciting courses for students to choose in both traditional A and AS level subjects and more applied vocational subjects. The progress they make in applied subjects is good and often outstanding. The specialism in science is developing well and improving progress steadily.

The relatively new sixth form is providing a good range of experiences for a wide range of students including students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including deaf students and those with physical disabilities. The leadership and provision of the inclusion unit is good.

Leaders and managers track progress of individual students well. In Key Stage 4 the college tracks the progress of different groups of students and takes effective steps where there is under-achievement. This is not as strong in Key Stage 3 and senior leaders do not have a precise understanding of the progress made by different groups of students.

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Consequently, evaluations of the quality of the college's work are sometimes too generous. The college has a sound system to monitor lessons and students' work and this involves middle as well as senior leaders. Leaders and managers have demonstrated their satisfactory capacity to sustain improvements in their success in improving boys' progress and in the improvements to the curriculum.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure progress is consistently good or better across all subjects and year groups by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently use high quality questioning skills to promote students deeper thinking and help them to offer extended answers
 - ensuring teachers consistently use assessment data to plan to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students.
- Improve the accuracy of the college's evaluations by:
 - ensuring all leaders have a precise understanding about the progress made by different groups of students in all year groups
 - building on the good practice established in Key Stage 4.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enter the college with attainment that is broadly average. This fluctuates and in some year groups, they are below average. By the time they leave in Year 11 the large majority of students gain five A* to C grades at GCSE. Students make good and sometimes outstanding progress in the college's specialist subjects. This is especially true in applied subjects. There are no significant differences in progress of different groups of students. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they are enabled to engage in lessons by the well-led inclusion unit.

Learning in over half the lessons seen by inspectors was good but a significant proportion was satisfactory. Students have good attitudes to learning, they listen carefully and produce work at a steady rate. They answer questions when they are prompted to do so. In good lessons, teachers' skilful questioning encourages students to think deeply about their work and offer extended answers. This is not consistent and in some lessons students lack confidence in offering more than one or two word answers. Students respond well to practical activities and they learn at a good rate in lessons that allow them to work collaboratively and acquire practical skills.

Students have a good awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and generally choose healthy options from the canteen. Deaf students and those with physical disabilities adopt good approaches to their personal health and well-being. Attendance is in line with the national average and the numbers of students who struggle to attend college regularly is reducing steadily. Students are well prepared for their future because of the good quality guidance they receive. The skills and self-discipline they acquire through applied subjects prepare them very well for the world of work. Consequently, almost all students secure

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employment, further education or training by the end of Year 11. Students socialise well together and they have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. The opportunities offered to them through languages, humanities and science secure their good spiritual and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make a consistent effort to make lessons fun and learning proceeds at a steady pace. There is a core of good and outstanding teaching. In satisfactory lessons, teachers have sound subject knowledge and ensure students are generally engaged with their work. They identify students needing extra support but too often they do not plan how they will meet those needs. Consequently some students lack confidence and do not make as much progress as they could. Students have warm relationships with their teachers and so students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Some teachers are very skilled in planning probing questions, which promotes high quality dialogue about the learning. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, the teachers' skilful questioning helped Year 11 students work out solutions for complex problems. However, this level of skill is not consistent and in many lessons teachers give answers too readily, consequently the challenge for students is not sufficient to promote good progress.

The college has an effective curriculum and students benefit from an individualised approach. The college has responded to students' poor literacy skills when they arrive in

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Year 7 by providing an effective basic skills course. This has resulted in good improvements to students' spelling and reading. In Key Stage 4 all students follow an applied learning course and the college's specialism in languages has enhanced the variety of courses available. Students have responded well to the practical nature of these courses and results in these subjects demonstrate good and often outstanding progress.

Students, and parents and carers are confident in the good quality support offered to students. Particular care is taken in supporting students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Adults often go the extra mile in providing tailored help in overcoming barriers. There are good arrangements to support students at key times such as when they first join in Year 7 and when they choose courses for Key Stage 4. The support for deaf students and those with physical disabilities is thoughtful and well planned. For example medical visits are conducted on the college site to avoid the need for absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The college has a well-developed system for tracking the progress of individual students. This has enabled middle and senior leaders to take effective action when a student is at risk of under-achieving. In Key Stage 4, senior leaders rigorously track the progress different groups of students make. They have been successful in improving boys' achievement as a result of this analysis. Systems for analysing the progress different groups make in Key Stage 3 are under-developed and senior leaders do not have a precise understanding of the different rates of progress for different groups.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy the same opportunities as other students and make equally sound progress. The college has a good level of commitment to ensuring all students make the most of the opportunities available to them. This can be seen in students' aspirations to succeed as demonstrated by the high number who go on to the sixth form or secure other training or employment.

Senior and middle leaders have sound roles in evaluating the work of the college. Sometimes their evaluations are over-generous and the college's evaluation of the quality of teaching and achievement was higher than that of inspectors. There is a systematic approach to observing lessons and this has been successful in ensuring that inadequate teaching is tackled robustly. Leaders have also been successful in improving some satisfactory teaching but this focus is not rigorous enough to raise teaching to good across the college.

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The governing body fulfils its role well and it offers a good level of support and challenge to the college. Members of the governing body visit departments regularly so that they have a good understanding of the work of the college. They have developed effective methods of gathering the views of parents and carers.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust and the evaluations of these arrangements are strong. Training for staff and governors is rigorous and well-planned.

A particular strength of the college lies in its outstanding work to promote community cohesion. The impact of the college's specialisms is a key element here. The college works effectively with partners to engage all groups of students in community projects both locally and internationally. For example a group of students, including deaf students and some with physical disabilities, worked with a wide range of local groups, including the police and a retirement home, to produce a banner promoting the local area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The progress students make is good overall and is outstanding in some of the applied learning courses. This good progress is supported by an inclusive curriculum offer. It builds on students' success in applied subjects in the main school so that they can take subjects such as hair and beauty and engineering. Students also benefit from good links with industry and this enhances their career opportunities. Last year all students who applied for higher education courses gained places on their chosen course. The range of pathways also supports students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in making good progress. Teaching is good because students respond well to the practical approaches to learning in both academic and vocational subjects.

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Overall, students feel valued and well-supported. They speak warmly of the support they get from the learning manager. There is a positive ethos and students take their responsibilities to younger students seriously. For example, one group are working effectively with younger students to promote their awareness of how to deal with cyber-bullying.

Leaders have been successful in establishing good quality provision that meets the needs and aspirations of students. The good results and tailored curriculum is attracting increasing numbers of students from other schools.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed with all the statements. They were very positive about the experience their children had at school. A few raised concerns about the extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles. Inspectors found that the college has clear systems to promote health and students have a good awareness of how to lead a healthy life. They generally make healthy choices while they are at college.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aldercar Community Language College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 892 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	34	73	61	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	36	69	58	7	6	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	39	59	50	12	10	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	41	63	53	5	4	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	51	43	59	50	4	3	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	34	60	50	14	12	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	21	79	66	12	10	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	30	69	58	4	3	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	34	70	59	5	4	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	33	65	55	7	6	5	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	26	69	58	11	9	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	44	37	67	56	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	45	58	49	4	3	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Aldercar Community Language College, Nottingham, NG16 4HL

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We found it very helpful to talk to you, look at your work and visit your lessons. There are some things that the college does very well.

You make excellent contributions to the college and local community. The college helps you to have an excellent understanding of being a good citizen.

You all make satisfactory progress in lessons and sometimes you make good progress, especially in specialist subjects.

The college's specialisms are providing you with lots of opportunities and helping to make the choice of courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form exciting.

You behave well and the college helps you to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The sixth form is good.

Senior leaders and all the staff want the college to be even better so we have asked them to do the following things.

Make sure your progress is consistently good in all subjects by making sure all teachers develop good questioning skills. They should also make sure teachers use your assessment data to plan work that is exactly right for each one of you.

Make sure all leaders check the quality of the college accurately. They could do this by using your assessment information to look at how different groups in Key Stage 3 are making progress. This is already done well for students in Key Stage 4. This will help you all to make good progress throughout your time at the college.

You can play your part in improving the college by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

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