

# Astley Sports College and Community High School

Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield, Tameside, SK16 5BL

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The proportion of students at age 16 gaining five or more A\* to C passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is below average and examination results in eight other subjects dropped in 2012. Nevertheless, students' achievement has improved since the previous inspection.
- The progress that students make is gathering pace securely. Most make the progress expected of them. However, not enough students make better progress than this, especially the more able in mathematics and the less able in English.
- Communication with parents is weak and reduces their understanding of how well their child is doing and what the school has to offer.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school and within subjects. This variability results in some students making better progress than others depending on which teacher they get. Because work is not matched to their needs some students lose interest in lessons and their behaviour is not managed effectively.
- While leaders and managers, including governors, have been successful in improving examination results they are not ensuring that performance management targets for staff are as challenging as they could be and that teaching and students' behaviour are consistently good enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Where teaching is good or better, students make rapid progress and achieve very well.
- Achievement is improving year on year and predictions for 2013 indicate that this upward trend will continue.
- Leaders and managers, have a broadly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They know what needs to be done to bring about further improvement.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons. Four of these were observed jointly with senior leaders. The vast majority of teachers were seen.
- Meetings were held with leaders, staff, members of the governing body, students and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents relating to students' progress in their learning, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, improvement planning, performance management of staff, information provided to parents, behaviour, safety and attendance were scrutinised. Inspectors also looked at students' workbooks during lessons.
- Parents' views were taken into account through the school's recent survey to which 34% of parents responded. Unfortunately, as the school did not inform parents, until part way through the inspection, how to access the online questionnaire (Parent View), the five responses were insufficient to trigger an analysis. Inspectors also took account of the 55 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The headteacher was absent for most of the inspection due to a family bereavement. During this time a deputy headteacher was in charge and she carried out her duties extremely well.

## Inspection team

Anthony Briggs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Worrall

Additional Inspector

Denah Jones

Additional Inspector

Fiona Dixon

Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than an average sized secondary school. Most students are White British.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average. (Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and the children of service families.)
- A small number of students take part in study away from the school site on a part-time basis at Tameside College and Manchester City football club.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set minimum standards for students' attainment and progress.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of teaching so that it is consistently at least good and in turn accelerates students' achievement by:
  - raising expectations of what students, particularly the more able, are capable of achieving
  - ensuring that teachers make better use of the abundance of information available about students' progress so that what students are given to do in lessons is neither too easy nor too hard
  - providing more opportunities for students to learn by themselves and spend less time listening to teachers talking
  - improving the way some teachers manage behaviour within their classrooms so that disruption to learning is eradicated and less use made of internal exclusion procedures
  - providing more opportunities for staff to observe good practice in different subjects across the school
  - improving how well students learn and behave in modern foreign languages and history.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on students' achievement, by:
  - increasing the rigour of checking on teaching and linking it closely to performance management targets supported by training that is targeted to specific teachers
  - making information about how well students are doing more accessible to all staff so that they can judge students' progress and needs much better
  - ensuring leaders and managers at all levels hold staff more rigorously to account for students' progress and achievement in all subjects.
- Improve communication and engagement with parents so that they have access to important information about the school and a greater understanding of how well their children are doing.
- Improve the rigour with which the governing body holds leaders to account and find out for themselves important information about the school including all statutory requirements:
  - an external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of the leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Although students' achievement has improved since the previous inspection, it is still not as good as it could be. Students enter the school with attainment that is significantly below average. The proportion gaining five or more A\* to C passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is rising at a faster rate than nationally, but remains significantly below average. An increasing number are making the progress expected of them in a range of subjects including English and mathematics but very few do better than this. This is particularly noticeable for the less-able students in English and the more able in mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that one of the reasons for this is that teachers do not match the work to the particular needs of students. Leaders have plans to resolve this but they have yet to show impact. Predictions for 2013 and beyond show that the improving trend is likely to be maintained.
- Results in other subjects are inconsistent. In 2012 a number of subjects dipped and a similar number improved. Students do best in drama. They did particularly badly in history and languages. Students were very critical of the quality of teaching in history and languages and inspection evidence backs up their concerns.
- The school has previously focused on ensuring that as many students as possible get a GCSE grade C in English and mathematics. In order to do this there has been a policy of entering students early for GCSE examinations. Until this year, the school allowed some students who gained a grade C early, but were expected to get a B or higher, to stick with their grade C and focus on other subjects. This has resulted in some students underachieving. Leaders have changed this approach and now students can only stick with their early entry grade if they have made at least expected progress in relation to their starting points.
- The small number of students who attend the off-site provision achieve appropriately in relation to their starting points.
- Students make appropriate progress in learning basic skills in reading and writing. They are less confident at communicating their thoughts and ideas with each other because they do not get enough chances to do so in subjects other than English.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. This is because of well targeted support and the successful way in which the school takes care of and supports the students, promotes equality of opportunity and tackles any form of discrimination successfully.
- The achievement of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is improving because leaders have used the funding effectively to reduce class sizes in mathematics and English so that students benefit from more support from the teacher. As a result, the gap between the average point score (a measure of overall attainment) of these students and other students in the school as well as similar students nationally is closing.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although just under half the teaching observed during the inspection was good or better, the rest required improvement, with a small amount that was inadequate. Consequently, not enough teaching results in students making good progress. Evidence from joint observations with senior leaders confirms that managers have a broadly accurate view of teaching and learning, and how it can be improved. However, inspectors' judgements matched the school profile in only 19 out of the 45 observations.
- Some of the many strengths of teaching include: positive relationships between teachers and students; secure subject and examination criteria knowledge which is passed on effectively; and helpful marking and written feedback to promote improvement. Some teachers ask lots of probing questions that challenge students to think more deeply and to explain their understanding of a topic. Planning of lessons is generally secure but, although lesson plans

identify the particular needs of students, too many teachers have a 'one size fits all' approach to teaching a lesson. This results in the more-able students often finding the work too easy and some lower-ability students struggling to get started.

- The lack of consistency of teaching across the school and within departments provides students with, in effect, a learning-lottery which is dependent on which teacher they get. The strengths seen in the best lessons are often the very things missing from the weaker ones. The best teaching uses a variety of activities to capture the interest of the students and push them to deeper levels of understanding. This was seen in an outstanding English lesson and an outstanding science lesson where teaching created opportunities for students to work independently and together and think things out for themselves rather than being spoon-fed. Students say this is their favourite style of learning. It is in these high paced lessons that students make rapid and sustained progress and achieve well over time.
- Teachers are provided with a wealth of information about the students they teach. However, not all teachers use this to adapt their teaching so that any student identified as underachieving is focused on during the lesson. There is limited use of students assessing their own and each other's work, although this is a strength in physical education lessons.
- Teachers are aware of the need to develop students' communication and mathematical skills in a range of lessons. Inspectors saw examples of teachers offering good feedback on students' written work and students benefiting from producing longer pieces of writing. However, in some lessons opportunities were missed to develop students' communication skills such as in speaking and handwriting.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- While behaviour in many lessons is good and students clearly enjoy their learning, some students lack sufficient motivation to do their best when faced with work that is either too easy or too hard and teaching that is uninspiring or lacklustre. It is on these occasions when low-level disruption occurs and learning suffers. Of the 55 staff questionnaires returned, 58% of staff believe that behaviour is not good and not well managed. Leaders have recently introduced a new behaviour policy because they have recognised that there is work to do in improving behaviour.
- Leaders have put a great focus on developing mutual respect and a sense of pride among students. This constant drive to raise self-esteem and expectations is working well. Students treat each other and adults with respect. They show good manners towards each other and generally move around the building without any fuss. Their mature attitudes and respect for others reflect the successful focus the school has given to increasing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students feel safe and have a good understanding of the different types of bullying including cyber-bullying. They are keen to point out that bullying, including racism, is rare. They are confident that the school deals with incidents effectively.
- There is a relatively high proportion of students removed from lessons and 'parked' in other classrooms for lengthy periods of time, often without meaningful work to do. In addition to this, there is an internal exclusion room which is used extensively. Nevertheless, there has been a significant reduction in fixed-term exclusions.
- Attendance is improving and is currently broadly average. The school has been particularly successful in reducing the number of students who are persistently absent.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body set high expectations of staff and students and most staff and students have responded well to these. Leaders have focused on

appropriate priorities and have succeeded in raising attainment since the previous inspection. However, not enough focus has been given to how many students make more than expected progress during their time in school, taking account of their starting points.

- Leaders know how well the school is doing and what needs improving. Checking on the quality of teaching is restricted by a locally agreed policy which limits observations. All formal, graded observations are undertaken with the teachers having five days advance notice of the observation. Consequently, the school's judgement on the quality of teaching is more positive than that found during the inspection. Leaders have started a program of ungraded 'drop-in' sessions which should give them a more accurate picture of the day-to-day quality of teaching.
- Performance management targets are appropriate but are not linked closely enough to the specific needs of teachers and training is not always targeted to ensure that any identified areas for improvement are tackled. However, underperformance in teaching is addressed robustly and salary rises are approved only when teachers' performance merits them.
- Although leaders and managers have clearly defined roles, responsibilities are not delegated sufficiently and they are not operating as a well oiled machine. Not all leaders and teachers have a shared understanding of how to use data effectively in the classroom. Some data provided to teachers and inspectors was particularly difficult to understand due to the format it was presented in. Middle leaders believe that they are held to account but there is room for increased rigour to ensure more students make better progress across all subjects.
- The school is not successful in communicating with parents so that they can work with the school to ensure their children achieve as well as possible. Reporting to parents on how well their children are achieving lacks detail and appropriate timing. Parents of Year 11 students do not receive a report about the progress they are making from subject teachers until April, one month before the start of their examinations. Prior to this they receive a single sheet with numbers on but with little explanation of how much progress their child is actually making. The school website lacks the required information about how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally and all the required policies. It even states, 'Requests for our policies and procedures can be obtained by submitting a Freedom of Information Request'. In addition, the school did not send out the notification letter to parents requesting them to submit their views through the Ofsted online questionnaire.
- The local authority is providing appropriate support that is valued by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very supportive of the school. They have undergone training and bring a good range of skills and experience to their role. They know how well the school is doing in relation to other similar schools nationally and are aware of key information such as how pupil-premium funding is spent. They are also aware of how good the quality of teaching is and what is being done to recognise and reward good teachers and deal with weaker teaching. They ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements. They were not aware that the school website fails to meet requirements in relation to what content it is expected to have. They were also unaware of how the schools communication with parents is not as good as that normally found.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106269
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	400055

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	647
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elizabeth Pugh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Eamonn Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2011
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