

Astley Sports College and Community High School

Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield, Tameside, SK16 5BL

Inspection dates

17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 quality of teaching varies and is not good in all subjects or for all classes. Teachers do not always adjust their teaching and take the steps necessary to improve the rate of students' progress.
- As a result students' progress varies within and between subjects. Not enough students make more than the expected rate of progress in mathematics and science.
- The most able students do not always produce their best work or reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- A minority of teachers when they mark students' work do not give clear guidance on how to improve the work or time to respond to this advice.
- In a few subjects, for example science, students are not helped to organise and present their work well.
- Subject leaders are not making sure that all who teach their subjects follow the school's marking, literacy and homework policies.
- Subject leaders have not acted swiftly enough to ensure that students make good progress in their subject in all classes.

The school has the following strengths

- Lower- and middle-attaining students make good progress in English.
- Teaching in physical education, information and communication technology and drama is good, so that students make rapid progress in these subjects.
- The gap in attainment and progress between those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and other students has reduced, particularly in English.
- Students with special educational needs make good progress.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their actions have secured improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in students' behaviour.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 28 lessons. Fourteen observations were made jointly with senior and subject leaders.
- The inspectors took account of 53 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and met with, or received letters from, a small number of parents.
- Inspectors examined information on students' performance for the school year 2012/13 and detailed information provided by the school on current learning and progress. They looked at work in students' books.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders and with two representatives of the governing body. They also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with three groups of students and spoke informally with other students at different times in the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's own evaluation of its work, information on the quality of teaching and on teachers' performance and documents relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Liz Godman, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Barnes	Additional Inspector
Catherine Edens	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most secondary schools.
- The large majority of students come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students attend courses away from the school on a part-time basis at Tameside College and the Manchester United Foundation.
- The school is undergoing a period of extensive building and refurbishment work.
- The school is a member of the A+ Trust group of schools. This group includes the adjoining special school, Cromwell High School, which shares the site and some buildings with the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better by:
 - sharing more widely the examples of effective teaching so that all teachers are clear about the steps necessary to improve the rate of students' progress
 - reducing the variations in the quality of teaching between and within subjects
 - identifying the students who are at risk of not reaching their targets and acting swiftly to rectify this
 - ensuring that in all subjects students are given clear guidance about how to improve their work and by making sure that they have time to respond to this advice.
- Increase students' achievement by:
 - raising the expectations of all students, particularly those who are most able, so that they reach the standards of which they are capable in all subjects
 - increasing the rate of students' progress in mathematics and science, so that a greater number of students make better than expected progress in these subjects
 - helping students to organise and present their work well in all subjects.
- Improve the checks made by subject leaders on the quality of teaching and students' progress by:
 - making sure that subject leaders check that all who teach within their subject areas are implementing the school's marking, literacy and homework policies
 - using the regular checks on students' progress to eradicate the variations between classes in the rates of students' progress and by adjusting teaching so that all students make the progress of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement because, although attainment and progress are improving, they are not yet good in all subjects. In particular, too few students make more than the expected rate of progress in mathematics and science.
- Many students join Year 7 with attainment in English and mathematics that is significantly lower than expected nationally. For the last three years, the proportion of students who left Year 11 with five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has been below average, although the results have shown a steady improvement each year.
- The information kept by the school, supported by inspection evidence from observing lessons, scrutiny of students' work and discussion with students, shows that the progress of current students is improving, in particular, the progress of the vast majority of students in English.
- However, the most able students are not making the progress they should in most subjects, including English. Not enough is expected of them and teachers do not act swiftly when their work is below their target grade, meaning that they do not achieve as highly as they should.
- Most students take care with their work, but the way in which work is presented and organised sometimes does not help students to see their progress. For example, in science, work is kept on a variety of pieces of paper in plastic wallets and in books, also making effective revision difficult.
- Students with special educational needs make good progress. This is because their needs are identified accurately and they receive good help from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Most students read fluently. Additional help for those students who find reading difficult and for those who did not reach the nationally expected standard in reading at the end of Year 6 is proving effective through good use of the Year 7 catch-up programme.
- Work in students' books shows that they use mathematical skills accurately in a range of subjects, for example design technology, geography and science.
- In the 2013 English and mathematics GCSE examinations, the average attainment of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium was the equivalent of two-thirds of a GCSE grade below that of other students in English and half of a grade in mathematics.
- This gap in attainment and progress is reducing for the school's current students and this is most marked in English. More students eligible for the pupil premium are making better than expected progress in English and mathematics than is the case for other students.
- The behaviour of students who attend Tameside College and the Manchester United Foundation has improved and they make good progress. This helps them to gain useful qualifications and work-related skills.
- Most students feel prepared for work and the next stage of education and have the necessary skills to succeed. However, in 2013, some of the most able students did not achieve the higher GCSE grades. Until this is tackled successfully and the school's current most able students make the progress of which they are capable, the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is not complete.
- There is no evidence that entry for GCSE examinations before the end of Year 11 has limited students' achievement, for example in mathematics. There will be no early entry in future years.
- Students' progress in physical education, information and communication technology and drama is good. This is because teachers have an accurate view of what students know and can do, and use this information to provide students with work that ensures their rapid progress.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because its quality varies too much and is not good in all subjects or for all classes in the same subject.
- There is some teaching which is highly effective in ensuring students' rapid progress, for example in physical education, information and communication technology and drama. However, these examples are not used widely enough to develop teaching, so that some teachers in other subjects do not take the steps necessary to improve the rate of students' progress.
- The books of many students are marked regularly and carefully and students respond to teachers' advice by improving their work. However, there are also examples where the guidance provided by teachers lacks detail, so does not help students to improve their work.
- There are agreed approaches to the teaching of literacy in the different subjects. For example, most teachers emphasise the use of subject-specific language and take time to explain this to the students. However, work in students' books shows that when some teachers mark their work, common errors of spelling or grammar go uncorrected.
- There is also evidence from students' books that some of the most able students are producing work of a much lower quality than their target grades indicate. For some of these students this has persisted for several months and teachers have not acted swiftly to prevent or stop it.
- The work of teaching assistants is effective, particularly when the teacher has made careful plans for what they are to do. This is helping students, particularly those who have special educational needs, to make good progress.
- The school's checks on the progress of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium mean that the school knows which actions are aiding the progress of these students and allows adjustments to be made to the extra help provided.
- There is a clear policy on the use of homework published on the school's website. However, evidence from students' planners indicates that not all teachers are following this, so that students do not have the opportunities they should to extend their knowledge and understanding at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- The behaviour of students is good. Almost all students come to lessons eager to learn and expecting to work. Most are well-organised and bring the right equipment. These good attitudes to learning are promoted by the positive way in which almost all teachers greet the students at the classroom door and ensure they settle to work quickly.
- Occasionally a few students are distracted from their work, but teachers' quick use of the agreed approaches to managing behaviour mean that in almost all cases work is resumed swiftly.
- Students say that behaviour is much better than it used to be and comment that teachers are much stricter about behaviour and uniform. Almost all students take pride in their appearance and adhere to the school's uniform rules.
- The majority of students take pride in their work, although this is not promoted consistently by all teachers. For example, the way in which science work is kept on a variety of pieces of paper and in books and some teachers' untidy written comments do not help students to feel proud of their work.
- Students' behaviour around the school is very calm and sensible. During the inspection the school had to be evacuated as a result of a fire in the adjoining special school. The students' behaviour was exemplary, they showed great care and concern for the special school students as they left the building and waited patiently on the assembly area for some considerable time until it was safe to re-enter the building.
- Attendance was above average in 2012/13 and this has been maintained during the current school year.
- The use of fixed-term exclusions was high in 2012/13 but has reduced rapidly as a result of the

school's effective management of students' behaviour.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Students know how to stay safe. This includes a good understanding of how to use the internet safely because the school promotes this well. Students say that bullying of any kind and the use of derogatory language are rare. Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) agree that their children are safe in school and that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- Students show a mature understanding of the forms that bullying may take and why particular groups of people may be discriminated against. They are clear about the sources of help.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders' actions are not yet ensuring that teaching and students' progress are good.
- However, senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have secured improvements since the previous inspection, most notably in students' progress in some subjects, including English and history, and in behaviour.
- Senior leaders challenge teaching which requires improvement. They have started to use the examples of good and outstanding teaching to provide a model for training and support where necessary. However, this has not yet resulted in consistently good teaching.
- Subject leaders are not securing students' good progress in all classes. There are regular and accurate checks on progress but these are not used effectively to eradicate the variations between classes in the rates of students' progress. Consequently, teaching is not adjusted to ensure that the most able students, in particular, make the progress they should.
- Similarly, there are variations between subjects and between teachers in the extent to which all staff adhere to the school's marking, literacy and homework policies and this is not followed up consistently by all subject leaders.
- With the exception of the challenge provided for some of the most able students, the courses and activities the school provides meet the students' needs. Provision, both within and away from the school for students who find learning and good behaviour difficult, is particularly effective in helping these students to regain interest and achieve success in learning.
- The school's provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A wide range of additional activities assist this, and sporting links are particularly varied and effective.
- Students are thoughtful about the needs of others and take good care of the special school students, for example at lunchtimes. A number of students have also chosen to donate to charity the rewards they have earned in school for good work and behaviour.
- The school makes sure that safeguarding arrangements meet the government's requirements. The site is managed well so that the building work does not interfere with students' learning or compromise their safety.
- The involvement of parents has improved since the previous inspection. A vast majority of parents who gave a view through the online questionnaire or in person are happy with the school's work, although a number expressed the view that their children do not receive appropriate homework. This is confirmed by the inspection findings.
- Good partnerships with other schools in the A+ Trust are helping the school to check and improve its work. The strong involvement of the local authority school standards and performance officer in recent months has played a key part in helping senior leaders and governors to bring about the necessary improvements to date.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Following a review of the work of the governing body after the previous inspection, the governors have acted decisively in starting to improve the work of the school. They visit the school regularly and have reorganised their meetings to ensure a sharp focus on students' achievement and teaching. In particular, their detailed and accurate view of the school's work

and the actions they have taken have helped to secure the improvements in students' behaviour. They ensure that only good or better teaching is rewarded and have used the pupil premium wisely to improve the attainment and progress of these students.

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

Unique reference number	106269
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	442351

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	575
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Pugh
Headteacher	Eamonn Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2013
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