

Astley Sports College and Community High School

Yew Tree Lane, Dukinfield, Cheshire SK16 5BL

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors observed poor behaviour on the corridors and around the school. Pupils swearing and their use of bad language was common.
- A new behaviour policy has been recently introduced but staff are not consistently following it. Inspectors noted too many incidents of poor behaviour that went unchallenged by staff.
- The leadership and provision in science has been fragile and this has resulted in pupils underachieving.
- The proportion of long-term supply teachers, especially in science, has been too high and this has had a negative impact on pupils' achievement.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs or disability is not good enough. In the past, the support they received has not focused enough on their academic development.
- Teaching is improving but in too many lessons the needs of pupils are not being met. This leads to some disruption and insufficient learning taking place.

The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has brought a clear vision for improvement that is ambitious and achievable. He has a proven track record of outstanding leadership.
- The new leadership team has astutely identified the areas that need improving and has made many significant and necessary changes.
- The governing body has been re-formed and is now providing proper support and challenge to school leaders.
- The capacity for improvement within the school is developing quickly because staff are receiving appropriate professional development and support.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closing quickly.
- Attendance is above average for all groups of pupils.
- The level of persistent absenteeism is well below average.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - ensuring that all staff consistently apply the school's new behaviour policy so that all poor behaviour is challenged and the use of foul language is not tolerated
 - communicating clearly the expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour to parents and pupils.
- Improve the quality of provision and raise standards in science by:
 - implementing and embedding the newly devised curriculum
 - ensuring that pupils follow the most appropriate courses that meet their needs and allow for improved progression
 - stabilising the staffing so that pupils are taught by subject specialists and permanent teachers.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan work that meets the needs of pupils taking into account their starting points
 - continuing to raise the aspirations and expectations of pupils
 - embedding literacy across the curriculum and providing effective support for those who need to catch up.
- Improve the progress of pupils with special educational needs or disability by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use the information and strategies provided to them when planning their lessons and support sessions
 - the use of teaching assistants is focused on improving pupils' learning and progress
 - the expectation for these pupils' progress is as high as for other pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders did not have an accurate, clear or comprehensive understanding of the quality of provision at the school. This meant that it was difficult for them to plan, monitor or adapt actions to lead to improvement. Outcomes for pupils have been below average, staff turnover has been high and the school has stubbornly required improvement.
- The school has undergone a 'root and branch' review of systems, structures and practices since January 2016 and this has led to a significant number of changes. There were many immediate changes that have already had an impact. For example, the systems to gather accurate data to track the gaps in pupils' achievement are leading to better pupil outcomes. However, it is too early to see the impact of many other changes as they are still at an early stage of implementation.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is not promoted well enough. However, leaders are aware of this and have clear plans for the rightful place that this development will have in the curriculum and school day. The school's values of PRIDE (Positive, Resilient, Independent, Deep-Thinking and Enterprising) are underpinned by fundamental British values and help pupils to prepare for life in modern Britain.
- The executive headteacher has brought a vision and inspiration for staff and pupils to make this school good. He and his team have inspired confidence and momentum for the school to improve quickly. As one member of staff commented to inspectors on the staff survey, 'The changes and improvements are making a difference; we feel valued and able to contribute to this journey and the vision. There is much greater accountability, but where there is challenge there is also support.'
- The school receives extensive support from Longdendale High School and this has clearly accelerated the improvements needed and the confidence and the capacity of the staff at the school. The A+ Trust has also supported in a number of subject areas, notably in mathematics, and this has improved pupils' progress.
- Leaders have placed an increased focus on developing the quality and effectiveness of leadership through a programme of training for all staff. Until January 2016, there had been no overall system for checking teachers' effectiveness. Now, all staff have clear targets linked to pupils' outcomes and have regular reviews of performance towards these targets with their line managers. This is contributing to improvements in teaching as teachers are being held to account in a transparent and equitable manner.
- Following a curriculum review, the curriculum is now broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils well. The school is ready to deliver the curriculum changes that have happened nationally and have already begun to do this in key stage 3. Pupils at key stage 3 study a wide variety of subjects, which allows them to make informed key stage 4 subject choices.
- The local authority brokered the interim arrangements in January for the executive headteacher to lead this school. It has also supported governors through a difficult transition period. This has led to a stronger governing body and the permanent appointment of the executive headteacher.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the last inspection, the governing body has been restructured and there is a new chair of governors in post. Governors have completely reviewed all the functions of the governing body and have set up committees which had previously not been in place. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they provide the right balance of support and challenge to leaders.
 - The governors are very aware and supportive of the significant changes that have been made since January 2016. It is evident from discussions with governors and minutes of the governing body meetings that they want to see these actions having an impact, and that they are sustainable.
 - Governors have been active in rectifying their own ineffective practices prior to January 2016. For example, the pupil premium funding is no longer spent frivolously but on strategies and interventions that are having an impact and improving the achievement of pupils for whom the money is provided. Governors have an accurate knowledge of how well those eligible for this funding are progressing.
 - Governors have undertaken a skills audit. They have confirmed their considerable educational, human resources and financial expertise. They take their safeguarding duties seriously.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's policies and practices meet statutory requirements and the school has strong links with a wide range of external agencies. Staff receive regular and current training on safeguarding matters; for example, all staff have received training about reducing the risk to pupils of experiencing radicalisation or extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching is improving but still does not lead to good enough learning. This has led to outcomes that are persistently below average and pupils not making expected progress.
- Teachers have not been accurate in their assessment of pupils' learning and therefore their planning has not met the needs of pupils. Year on year, teachers' predictions have been incorrect and targets have been neither aspirational nor based on pupils' prior attainment. Since January 2016, leaders have introduced a completely new system for setting targets, assessing pupils' work and quality assurance. Teachers have benefited from high-quality support from colleagues at Longdendale High School and have established a close network to allow them to work together. The teachers have welcomed this support and are keen to implement the school's new initiatives.
- When lessons are not planned well, low-level disruption quickly occurs.
- The literacy skills of pupils are not sufficiently supported across the curriculum. Too often, basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar go uncorrected. Likewise, little attention is paid to promoting pupils' oral communication skills.
- Too many lessons are being covered by long-term supply teachers and also by non-subject specialists. This has had a negative impact on the progress of pupils in these classes. Leaders recently reviewed the deployment of teachers and ensured that subject specialists were teaching their own subjects.
- The quality of feedback is variable. When teachers follow the school policy, their feedback makes a difference and improves the learning of pupils. Some feedback focuses only on presentation skills and not on what pupils need to do to improve their work.
- Nonetheless, some teaching in the school is effective. When this is the case, teachers use their subject passion and knowledge to inspire and involve pupils in their learning. For example, an inspector saw pupils in a modern foreign language class being challenged to use advanced linguistic skills and show accuracy and confidence in their use of grammatical terminology.
- Pupils are now clearer about their targets and what improvements they need to make in order to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. As part of their response to Parent View, some parents told inspectors that they did not know how well their child is progressing. Leaders are aware of this and of the need to continue to develop parental engagement in the assessment process.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- A significant number of pupils show a lack of respect for each other, their teachers, other adults and visitors. These pupils lack basic manners.
- The quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance is effective. The school, with the support of Longdendale High School, is introducing a strategic plan to strengthen this provision even further. Pupils value the advice they are given and feel they have a good understanding of what they need to do in order to move on to the next stage of education, employment or training.
- Pupils are very well supported by the family liaison officer, the full-time social worker and the mental well-being worker that they have in school. The pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they felt safe and knew who they would speak to if they had any concerns. They had a good understanding of the different forms of bullying that can happen. They also had an awareness of extremism and radicalisation.
- Pupils feel that, when bullying occurs, it is dealt with appropriately. Not all parents shared this view, but the school records show an accurate recording of incidents, actions taken and the impact of such actions.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.

- Pupils do not conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Swearing was heard by inspectors both inside and outside the classroom and yet nothing was done about this. During lesson time, too many pupils are sent out and wander the corridors.
- Low-level disruption is common. Pupils repeatedly told inspectors that their lessons are disrupted by other pupils. Most disruption occurs in classes covered by supply teachers, of which there are many. Year 11 pupils had almost become accepting of this as the norm.
- In the past, parents have become increasingly concerned about the standards of behaviour at the school. Pupils, parents and staff confirmed that the behaviour that inspectors saw was typical.
- The attendance of pupils at the school is very high and the number of persistent absentees is very low.
- Pupils are punctual to school in the morning, but this is not always the case for lessons.
- A new behaviour policy has recently been introduced that is appropriate, clear and staged. However, this policy is not being implemented by all staff and poor behaviour is not being challenged appropriately. More needs to be done in communicating the expectations for good behaviour to parents and pupils.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions for poor behaviour has reduced considerably.
- The behaviour and attendance of pupils who attend alternative provision is good. There are clear procedures in place and the communication between the school and alternative provider is regular.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who left the school with five or more grade C passes and above, including English and mathematics, was well below the national average, although an improvement on the results secured in the previous year. Attainment was low in science and English literature, both of which subjects were studied by almost all pupils.
- Pupils made less progress in English and mathematics from their starting points than was the case nationally. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress was also below average, particularly so in English.
- Pupils' outcomes in science have been persistently low. This is partly because pupils have been taught by non-subject specialists and have followed inappropriate courses.
- The gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers was wide in 2015. In English, disadvantaged pupils achieved one grade and a third less than their peers and in mathematics they achieved one grade and two thirds less.
- In 2015, the most able pupils did not make the progress that they should have done from their starting points and they did not attain the top grades. For too long, the most able have been overlooked as they are such a small group in the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability do not make good progress. The support that they receive is very much focused on their personal development and not enough on their learning. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as possible. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to review the provision for these pupils.
- Since January, the executive headteacher and senior leaders have introduced new assessment systems and quality assurance procedures. Alongside this, teachers have received training from colleagues at Longdendale High School to help them improve their practice. Despite the short period of time, this has already had an impact as predictions for pupils' achievement this year are more secure than they have been in the past.
- Current assessment information provided by the school demonstrates an improving trend for all groups of pupils in English, mathematics and the other subjects. This improving trend was also seen in pupils' work and during the lessons observed. The most notable improvements were seen in key stage 3 mathematics. This improvement was evident across all year groups. Leaders are very aware that the progress needed to ensure good outcomes needs to be much stronger and more rapid than it is at this time.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils are currently making means that the gap between them and their peers is closing quickly. The interventions for these pupils have been effectively targeted and proven to work.
- The most able pupils are now making better progress. It is clear that in the past the progress of these pupils was not tracked and their aspirations were depressed. The new target-setting system places no limits on pupils and tracks their progress at regular intervals. Teachers are now clearer about these pupils' capabilities and how well they should be achieving.

- The school has recently introduced a programme of support for pupils who arrive with low levels of literacy and numeracy. Already, the gains that are being made in improving pupils' reading ages are clear, with some pupils improving their reading age by 11 months in a short period of time.
- The very few pupils who attend alternative provision are making expected progress. The school regularly receives assessment information and tracks and monitors their progress.
- The proportion of pupils who leave the school and are then not engaged in education, employment or training is very low.

School details

Unique reference number	106269
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10012174

This inspection 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	612
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Barker
Executive headteacher	Matthew Bowler
Telephone number	0161 228 2374
Website	www.astley.tameside.sch.uk
Email address	mail@astley.tameside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is almost double the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding given to schools for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average. The proportion who have education, health and care plans is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The school is part of the A+ Trust, an educational trust between Ashton Sixth Form College and six schools in the Tameside area. These schools work together to raise attainment, aspiration and achievement in the area. This trust is in the process of forming a multi-academy trust, of which this school intends to be part.
- The school receives extensive support from Longdendale High School.
- The executive headteacher, who is also the headteacher at Longdendale High School, was appointed as an interim solution to this school in January 2016 following the resignation of the previous headteacher in December 2015. The executive headship arrangements became permanent in May 2016.
- Very few pupils are educated off-site at Tameside College.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school meets the requirements for providing information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons across all subjects and across all year groups. They observed four lessons jointly with senior leaders. They reviewed pupils' work during observed lessons.
- Inspectors spoke with more than 70 pupils from both key stages about their experience of school and their learning.
- Inspectors considered 58 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 35 responses from staff to Ofsted's survey. There were no pupil responses to Ofsted's inspection questionnaire. Inspectors also considered a number of emails that were sent directly to Ofsted during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body and two other governors, and a representative from the local authority. Meetings were also held with the executive headteacher, senior and middle leaders and members of staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan; minutes of the governing body meetings; anonymised performance management documents; school policies and procedures and the school's own assessment information. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was scrutinised, including behaviour and attendance records and bullying logs.

Inspection team

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