



Longdendale Community Language College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106267
LEA Tameside
Inspection number 277522
Inspection dates 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Janet Palmer HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Spring Street
School category	Community		Hollingworth
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Hyde, Cheshire SK14 8LW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01457 764006
Number on roll	909	Fax number	01457 766483
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Mike Collins
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Mr Brian Parker

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	7 March 2006 - 8 March 2006	277522

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by Janet Palmer of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Longdendale Community Language College is an 11-16, mixed comprehensive with specialist language status. It attracts pupils from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. It is smaller than average with a lower than average number of learners eligible for free school meals. The college has gained an Artsmark Gold award and awards for Healthy Eating and Investors in People. There are strong links between the local community and the college which hosts local clubs on the site five nights a week.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Longdendale Community Language College provides a satisfactory education overall with some good features. It offers good value for money verified by the good financial management that has resulted in a surplus to fund improved facilities.

The headteacher, senior team and governing body provide good leadership. They are generally aware of the strengths of the college and what could be improved, but their evaluation of the college's overall effectiveness was over positive. Not all heads of departments and year heads maintain sufficient oversight of the quality of teaching and learning and how well learners are progressing. However, the recent rise in standards shows that the college has good capacity to improve and issues from the last inspection have been successfully dealt with.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and the majority of learners make satisfactory progress, but some of the more able should be doing better and teachers need to have higher expectations of them in some core Key Stage 3 subjects. The college has sound systems to keep track of learners' achievement but they are not yet used consistently.

The college offers a good curriculum which is broad and balanced and has been strengthened by its specialist language status. The range of extra-curricular activities including many international trips is impressive and good local, national and international partnerships have been developed. Learners' moral, social and cultural development is good. Most enjoy college where they feel safe and well cared for.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of the less effective teaching and learning to raise standards, particularly of the more able learners.
- Improve the use of assessment data and the tracking of learners' progress.
- Further develop the role of middle managers, especially their oversight of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Data shows that learners make satisfactory progress overall given their level of attainment when they start the school. In Key Stage 3 standards are now average. Most learners make good progress in this key stage in English but their progress in mathematics and science is just average. However, a significant minority of the more able learners do not do well enough in science and English. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

In 2005 standards at Key Stage 4 improved with an increase in the percentage of learners achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE. These results are now satisfactory. Results are particularly good in art and music and reflect the college's Artsmark Gold award. After a number of years of low standards in information and communication

technology (ICT), results have improved significantly in the past year and learners are now making good progress in response to good quality teaching and learning.

Examination results show that standards at Key Stage 4 in business studies, communication studies and physical education have been poor but they are now improving as a result of a concerted effort by the college's leaders and managers. The achievement gap between boys and girls has been reduced and boys are now catching up with the girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Learners' personal development and well-being are good. They show good moral, social

and cultural development which is promoted in many lessons, such as personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education and citizenship. Most learners enjoy college and get on well with each other and their teachers and this is reflected in their above average levels of attendance.

Behaviour around the school is satisfactory overall and often better, but there is some disruption in lessons from a small minority of learners. The number of exclusions has risen

to average levels as the college seeks to embed more formalised systems for managing learners' behaviour. Learners generally feel safe from harassment. Bullying is rare and when it does occur it is swiftly and effectively dealt with by the college. However, learners are rightly concerned about some smoking and anti-social behaviour in the toilets.

Learners are regularly consulted through surveys and their student council, enabling them to influence the future direction of the college. They are helped to contribute to the

community and develop their self-esteem and initiative through a wide variety of performing arts activities, schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, environmental initiatives and charity fundraising.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some examples of good practice. This is reflected in the learners' progress.

The best lessons are well planned with challenging and appropriate objectives. In these lessons the learners are often engaged in some elements of active, creative or collaborative tasks and teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Work is matched to the learners' different levels of attainment, and resources, particularly ICT, are used well. These lessons are well paced and varied.

However, in some of the satisfactory lessons, the progress of a few learners is limited because teachers' planning does not take full account of the range of ability levels in the class. Teachers use a restricted range of methods and there are sometimes few opportunities for learners to develop their communication and enquiry skills. Too often these lessons are characterised by over reliance on textbooks. Learners report that in some lessons a minority misbehave, hindering the progress of others.

Learners' written work is marked by teachers and there are some good examples of detailed and informative feedback linked to targets. However, the college's strategy for assessment is not yet sufficiently embedded to ensure that this is consistent, so marking does not always make clear to learners what they need to do to improve in the future.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The college offers a good curriculum that has improved since the last inspection and now meets the needs of a wide range of learners. The specialist language status has positively enhanced the curriculum by providing several language options and many extra curricular opportunities including international visits.

At Key Stage 4 there is a broad range of academic options, including a variety of performing arts and more recently vocational courses such as leisure and tourism and business French. The alternative curriculum, which is available to a selected group of learners, includes courses in motor vehicle maintenance, catering and DIY, although few of these courses offer accreditation or certification.

A great strength of the college is the vibrant and extensive programme of extra-curricular activities. The numerous clubs, sports, trips and events help develop learners' talents, interests and aptitudes outside the classroom. These are very well supported by learners, although sports are less popular at Key Stage 4, particularly amongst girls where there are fewer options available to them. More systematic monitoring of the take up of extra-curricular activities could help the college ensure equality of provision.

Well developed programmes in citizenship and personal health and social education (PSHE) encourage learners to lead safe and healthy lives and become informed and active citizens.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Learners receive satisfactory care, guidance and support with some examples of good

provision. Procedures to ensure health and safety have improved since the last inspection and effective child protection policies are in place. There are appropriate systems and initiatives to ensure learners are not bullied and the support for looked after

children is well established and effective.

The learning support centre provides a haven for those experiencing difficulty in their learning, although its role needs to be more clearly defined. The new inclusion strategy is

well led and is starting to be embedded in some areas of the work of the college. By working more closely with pastoral leaders to identify and track the progress of learners, the centre is improving its capacity to meet individual needs. These interventions are timely in compensating for some continuing deficiencies in the provision for those with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The college provides satisfactory academic guidance. Parents and carers are supportive of the work of the college, but both they and their children would welcome more, and better organised homework tasks.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management in the college is satisfactory with a number of good features. The strong leadership of the headteacher is reflected in the commitment of the senior management team who share his ambitions. He knows the college's strengths and weaknesses and has a clear vision of how to improve.

Over the past two years the role of heads of department has been developed and is now effective in a few subject areas. However, senior managers recognise the need to further develop management at this level in order to iron out inconsistencies and ensure greater rigour in procedures. Effective strategies are now in place to monitor the performance of departments and individual teachers to help raise standards and achievement.

Other examples of recent initiatives designed to raise standards and achievement include pupil tracking, an improved and more realistic college improvement plan, better use of assessment data, rigorous subject reviews by senior managers and more robust classroom observations. These developments demonstrate the college's good capacity to improve.

The headteacher keeps the governors well informed. Consequently, they understand how the college operates and give support as well as acting as critical friends. Governors

and staff contribute to the college's self-evaluation which sets tough but achievable targets.

The college enjoys strong links with the community including the contribution to local sporting and youth activities and those developed as a result of specialist language status. Resources are adequate although the continued use of the library as a classroom is undesirable. The college runs a profitable, healthy school meals service. Budgetary procedures are tight and good financial management enabled a surplus to be carried forwards.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I would like thank you on behalf of the inspection team for making us feel welcome at your college. We appreciate the time many of you gave to tell us about your work and other activities.

These were the things that we found out about Longdendale Community Language College during our visit.

- The college is well led by the headteacher, senior managers and governors.
- The college provides a wide range of subjects for you to study, particularly at Key Stage 4 where there are opportunities for you to learn several languages or take vocational courses. There are also many different clubs, sporting activities, events and trips for you to enjoy.
- Students at Longdendale Community Language College do particularly well in English at Key Stage 3 and in art and music at GCSE.
- Most of you are well behaved in lessons and around the college and get on well with your teachers and each other. However, in a few lessons there are some disruptive students and their behaviour affects the progress of others.
- You have told us you enjoy coming to college and feel safe and secure and that on the rare occasion that bullying does occur, it is quickly and effectively dealt with by the teachers.
- You also told us that you do not enjoy using the toilets where some students smoke and behave anti-socially. The headteacher is aware of this problem and has plans to improve the toilet facilities. You can all help this situation by respecting the facilities in the future.
- Many of your teachers plan their lessons well and find interesting and challenging activities for you to do in class. However, some lessons do not meet the needs of all students sufficiently well. Heads of department are becoming better at overseeing the quality of teaching and learning and we recommend they continue to do this to ensure all students make good progress.
- Your teachers have begun to assess your work and monitor your progress in greater detail but, at the moment, you are not always clear about your targets or specific ways you can improve your work. We are recommending that your teachers improve the way they track your progress to help you achieve higher standards. You can help them to do this by continuing to work hard and listen to their advice.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for welcoming us into your college and being so friendly and polite. I wish you every success for the future.