



Astley Sports College and Community High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106269
LEA Tameside
Inspection number 277523
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Bill Keast CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Yew Tree Lane
School category	Community		Dukinfield
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Cheshire SK16 5BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 3382374
Number on roll	831	Fax number	0161 3049251
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Taylor
Date of previous inspection	29 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr J Mayes

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	5 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	277523

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Astley Sports College and Community High School changed status in September 2002 and became a full service extended school in September 2004. This is its first inspection. It is an average sized school for boys and girls in the town of Dukinfield. Many pupils live in an area which has above average social deprivation. Nearly one quarter of pupils are entitled to free school meals. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The proportions of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and of those with statements of special educational need are broadly in line with the national averages. The school is linked to a school for pupils who have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has Sportsmark and Healthy Schools Gold Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors and the school agree that Astley Sports College and Community High School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It makes good use of financial resources and provides good value for money. There are many strengths in the work of the school which benefit both pupils and the wider community. Pupils' personal development is good, supported, for example, by the very effective working links with the adjacent school for pupils who have severe learning difficulties. The school takes good care of its pupils and supports and guides them well through school to life beyond. Links with the community are good and developing as the school seeks to meet their needs. The way the school promotes and the extent to which pupils adopt a healthy lifestyle are exemplary. A good curriculum provides courses and learning opportunities which are well matched to pupils' needs and aspirations so that they enjoy their learning. However, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make while at the school are no more than satisfactory. Attendance is a little below average with a minority of pupils arriving late. Leadership, while introducing many good initiatives, has yet to bring them together to raise the quality of teaching so that all pupils make good progress. The school has successfully tackled the issues identified prior to its change in status and has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by reducing the variation between teachers and subjects.
- Work to ensure that all pupils make good progress by identifying the most effective monitoring and support procedures and using these more widely.
- Evaluate more clearly the effect of school initiatives in order to maximise their impact on pupils' standards and progress.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

This inspection took place before national comparisons were available for the 2005 results. Standards in 2004 were broadly average. Although pupils join the school with standards which are broadly average, there are fewer than average with the highest scores. Standards on entry vary, with the occasional year group being below average. Pupils in Years 9 and 11 made satisfactory progress in relation to their standards on entry. Boys, girls and pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities all made satisfactory progress but newly available national data show that the group of Year 11 pupils entitled to a free school meal made inadequate progress. In 2005, standards at the end of Year 9 were similar to the previous year although, in English, there was a marked improvement as lower-attaining pupils reached higher standards. At general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), the average total points score for pupils' best eight subjects fell slightly. However, the proportion of pupils achieving five or

more GCSE grades A* to C was the highest ever, with a big increase in the proportion of these pupils whose results included English and mathematics. Pupils reached their targets in English and mathematics at the end of Year 9 but did not quite reach those in science or the challenging Year 11 targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils are happy and well supported. They are attentive in lessons and work hard. In the very best lessons, boys and girls hang on their teacher's every word as they try to improve their work. Pupils are proud to come to this school, most attend regularly and arrive on time and these good habits prepare them well for the world of work. A significant minority still finds it difficult to attend every day and some parents are not conscientious enough about making their children attend, preferring to take pupils on term-time holidays. As a result, attendance is slightly below average. Pupils behave well; older pupils, trained to help younger ones, act as exemplary models and this helps all pupils to mature more quickly. They respond well to the high expectations of adults.

Pupils make significant contributions to the life of the school and beyond through a multitude of sporting, art and business initiatives. These add significantly to their personal growth. They develop respect for the feelings and needs of others. They forge uplifting links with pupils from the neighbouring special school and they become increasingly considerate members of society as a result. Pupils have taken to heart the constant messages about healthy eating and lifestyles provided by the committed team of teachers, catering staff and support staff.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school accurately judges teaching to be satisfactory with a number of good features and a few weaker ones. A common approach to planning lessons gives structure to the pupils' learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching in most subjects. A range of teaching techniques makes lessons interesting. Work is well marked so that pupils understand how they can improve. Pupils know the level at which they are working, understand what they need to be able to do to reach the next level and know the target they are expecting to reach. Teachers manage behaviour consistently and the good relationships in the classroom allow them to use techniques, such as discussion, to enable pupils to gain confidence from articulating their ideas and opinions. However, these strengths do not yet come together in enough lessons for teaching to be as consistently effective in all groups in all subjects as it is in the best.

Pupils who have particular difficulties are supported well both in and out of lessons. Learning support assistants know their pupils very well and are able to give them work which is matched to their particular needs so they make satisfactory progress. The

school recognises the need to raise the quality of the satisfactory teaching to that of the best and is well placed to do this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is very relevant, meaningful and well matched to pupils' needs and aspirations. It meets national requirements and the different subjects are given sufficient time. In Years 10 and 11, the innovative structure and evolving range of courses recognises the stage pupils have reached and prepares them well for educational or employment opportunities when they leave. Effective collaboration with other educational institutions and the local business community results in vocational and work-related opportunities for all pupils. These serve pupils' career aspirations well. Alternative arrangements provide effectively for pupils seeking a less academic programme and are effective in keeping within a safe learning environment those who might otherwise have lost interest in education. The citizenship programme and personal, social and health education programme contribute well to pupils' understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles and their personal development. Sports college designation has allowed the school to offer additional opportunities that complement clubs, visits and subject support. Pupils' enthusiastic involvement in the wide range of learning opportunities outside the classroom makes a major contribution to their personal development and enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a strong aspect of provision. Staff keep pupils' personal development at the heart of the school's work. Pupils are encouraged to become mature members of the school through roles such as their mentoring, where older pupils help the younger ones to settle in. Supportive links with primary schools ensure that pupils are well prepared for the important move to the next stage in their education; they settle quickly and soon feel at ease and able to enjoy school. Regular assessment of pupils' work is used well to monitor the progress of each pupil and, where potential underachievement is identified, additional support and monitoring are provided.

Pupils' emotional and physical well-being is at the centre of the provision. Pupils say that they feel safe here and parents confirm this. They place high value on the impressive care the school offers. There are many adults to turn to for help. Support for potentially vulnerable pupils extends significantly beyond the physical, as adults take time to nurture pupils' emotional health through timely interventions from counsellors, mentors and other staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with many strengths. Leaders are responsive to national developments. These are implemented with a good awareness

of, and sensitivity to, the local context of the school. As a result, the school is at the forefront in many developments within its local community. This extended provision for its community complements the sterling work over the past few years as a Specialist Sports College. The headteacher provides visionary leadership and is well placed to sustain improvement as indicated by the good improvement since the last inspection. Leadership works hard to provide the best education for all its pupils, particularly those who join late in their career, often with unhappy past experiences. As a result of the school's leadership, most learners make satisfactory progress academically. Responsibilities for developments are delegated well and leadership in many of these is good. The development of staff ensures that improvement is not solely dependent on the headteacher. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. It involves subject leaders and identifies strengths and weaknesses in different aspects of provision. However, the evaluation of how all the developments complement and support each other is not as rigorous and, crucially, has yet to impact enough on the quality of teaching or on the progress made by all pupils. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and have a strong commitment to the school, particularly in the community dimension. Parents are very satisfied with the school. The contribution of the non-teaching staff is growing and is valued at all levels. The business management team provides excellent support for learning through the removal of inefficiencies and waste, with the result that the school has benefited significantly in terms of budget, income, and training provision.

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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	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	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?	2	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	2	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	3	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 am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and other interests and concerns.

We found that your school gives you a satisfactory education. It is also a school that has improved in many ways in the last few years. Your examination results have improved. You enjoy sports and physical education and are pleased that your school is a Sports College. Most of you, encouraged very well by the school, adopt healthy lifestyles. You are well cared for, and well supported in developing your skills and interests.

Your headteacher wants each of you to do the very best that you can. He also wants you to enjoy being in school and to feel safe while you are there. This is what other staff in the school want for you as well. This is why they provide good opportunities, within the classroom and outside, for you to learn and to study subjects which will help you succeed later on. You and your parents can help in this by making sure that you always attend school and get there on time!

We also think your school can continue to improve by making sure that all the teaching is as good as the best so that, rather than making simply satisfactory progress, you will all make better progress than pupils from similar starting points. To help this, we think that the leaders of your school should be clearer about which of the many good developments which are happening have the greatest impact on this improvement.

Most of you are proud of your school and recognise the opportunities you have. You respond well in what you do for the local community and for those less fortunate than yourselves. Good luck as you work with your teachers to make further improvement.