

## Pendle Community High School and College

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135015
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	294253
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alastair Younger

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	129
6th form	18
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Trevor Ashton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Wright
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Gibfield Road Colne Lancashire BB8 8JT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 865011
<b>Fax number</b>	01282 859096

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<b>Age group</b>	11–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school was formed in autumn 2005 following local authority reorganisation. An all-age school for students with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities and an all-age school for those with severe or profound learning difficulties were closed and replaced by new generic primary and secondary schools.

Students are drawn from an extensive range of backgrounds, with many from families of above average social and economic disadvantage. All students have statements of special educational need. Most of the staff and students transferred from a school for students with moderate learning difficulties, often with associated emotional and behavioural problems. A small number of students have autistic spectrum disorders. Most students are White British but there is also a substantial number of Pakistani and Asian British students. A small number of students are looked after by the local authority. The school operates on two sites whilst awaiting the completion of new premises. Students with profound and multiple learning difficulties spend most of their time on the Pendle View Primary School site because that is where much of the essential specialist equipment and medical care is located.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of its work and understand that it is helping their children to thrive and make good progress in a safe, supportive, happy and well managed environment.

The nature of students' difficulties means that they are unable to reach national standards, but in relation to individual targets they achieve well as a result of good teaching. This is more evident among students with moderate learning difficulties, whom staff have considerably more experience of teaching, than among the small minority of students with severe or profound learning difficulties, many of them in the sixth form. All groups of students though, make good progress in their personal development. They behave well and most attend whenever they can. Sensible behaviour and a good awareness of other pupils' needs help to make school a safe place to be. Students join in enthusiastically with learning and recreational activities and show a good awareness of what they can do to stay healthy and avoid bad habits. The progress made by students in their learning and personal development means they are well prepared for the future.

Good leadership, management and governance are helping the school through its ongoing reorganisation. Sensitive consideration has been given to minimising the impact of students transferring from one school to another only to have to move again once the new building is completed. Students have been well involved in helping to create a good sense of community and contribute well to the lives of others in the locality. The school works well with a huge number of other professionals to ensure that students' needs are well met. Close ties with several other schools open up good opportunities for students to share activities and experiences with students in the mainstream. The views of parents are regularly sought and good support and advice are given to help them contribute constructively to their children's learning and development.

The school is modest in its self-evaluation. Until recently it did not have enough reliable, or sufficiently accurate, information to help it to check the progress students were making. This was partly because students arrived from several different schools, sometimes with very little information, but also because assessment within the school was not sufficiently developed. This situation has been remedied. It is contributing to more accurate self-evaluation and with it, a good capacity to keep improving.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

Students in the sixth form make good progress. This is weighted in favour of personal development and well-being, rather than academic achievement, which is satisfactory. The curriculum is good. Students have many opportunities to gain experience in the workplace and run successful mini-enterprises. Links with colleges are improving by extending access to more successful courses and cutting out less successful ones. New opportunities for students to gain qualifications have been identified. Teaching is good and improving as staff develop their expertise in working with students who are older, and frequently less able, than those they have taught in the past. A strength of teaching is the skill with which teachers promote students' personal development.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Further raise the expertise of staff in teaching groups which have a mix of students with moderate and severe learning difficulties.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students achieve well. The nature of their learning difficulties means that they are unable to meet national standards. The best achievement is seen among students with moderate learning difficulties. The evidence of inspection suggests that students with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties occasionally fare less well in a few lessons as most teachers have less experience of working with these students. This is most pronounced in classes with a mix of severe and moderate learning difficulties. There is no evidence to suggest any differences in the achievement of boys, girls, looked-after children or minority ethnic students.

There is a very wide range of attainment on entry. A few students are at the very earliest stages of learning when they are admitted and some hardly move on from this point because of the nature of their difficulties. For these students, good progress is measured more in terms of their personal development and improvement in their ability to communicate. A small number have deteriorating conditions; when this is the case, good achievement is measured in terms of moderating the impact of their condition. More able students frequently enter school performing at a level more frequently found among students at the beginning of junior school. Most of these students make good progress and many attain passes in Entry Level examinations including English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 11. Last year, a few students also gained passes in the lower levels of GCSE mathematics.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. The results of good moral and social development are clearly evident in high standards of behaviour and the friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the school. There is very little misbehaviour and it is very rare for any pupil to be excluded. This contributes well to students' enjoyment of school and results in good attendance. Minor incidents of misbehaviour are usually associated with the impulsive or irrational actions of students with autism or with assessed emotional or behavioural difficulties. They are usually very quickly resolved. Good spiritual development is seen in the way that students show sensitivity to one another in times of difficulty, in their cheerful, optimistic outlooks and in their generous celebration of other people's successes. Good cultural development is evident in students' consideration and respect for each other and other people in the diverse local community. Students have also benefited from a good link with an orphanage in Africa. Many students are very vulnerable but they develop a good understanding of how to avoid unwanted attention and to stay out of harm's way. Physical activity is popular with most students, but a few remain reluctant to exert themselves to the full. Students' pride in their school contributes well to it being a harmonious community. They also contribute well to environmental projects in the locality and to fundraising for a wide range of charities. The

progress that students make greatly enhances their prospects of leading increasingly independent and useful lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Most staff are particularly skilled in promoting learning among students with moderate learning difficulties. A smaller number have similar expertise in teaching students with severe and profound learning difficulties. Lessons are well planned to include plenty of opportunities for teachers to check what students have remembered from the past before they move on to new learning. Good opportunities for students to work in pairs or small groups are frequently woven into lessons, making a good contribution to students' personal development. Most teachers are subject specialists and show a good understanding of the courses they teach. Behaviour is very well managed with the result that it is very rare for any learning time to be lost.

Occasionally, teachers who have relative little experience of working with students with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities fall into the trap of feeling that slower learners need slower teaching. As a result, when they are faced with a mix of students of widely differing ability, the pace of lessons sometimes slows because work is not fully matched to the needs of individuals and the roles of classroom assistants are not clearly identified. When this happens, learning slows for everyone as teachers labour points for slower learners rather than adding pace and variety to tasks to compensate for shorter attention spans.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is well enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors which add spice to students' learning and by an equally good range of outdoor and adventure activities which contribute well to students' personal development. The timetable includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum with a good focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. It also includes religious education and a wide range of activities which promote students' personal social and health education. Last year, students with severe or profound learning difficulties had few opportunities to gain qualifications. The range of courses leading to qualifications has now been extended so that all students have a realistic chance of leaving school with appropriate, nationally recognised accreditation. Older students have many opportunities to learn about the world of work and the choices that will be available to them on leaving school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Physical care and support are particularly good, with all requirements for safeguarding and protecting students being carefully observed. Good procedures to ensure smooth transition between each key stage and between schools are in

place, as are procedures to ensure successful outcomes for students leaving the sixth form. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory and improving fast. Until recently, they have been hindered by the lack of reliable data available to the school, but good systems are now in use to ensure that assessment is more accurate and hence more useful for determining whether students are making enough progress or needing more help. The school works closely with parents, making available its expertise to help them help their children to best effect. It also coordinates well the work of a huge range of other professionals which ensures that their time and effectiveness are put to best use in support of students.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Good leadership, management and governance have been instrumental in ensuring that reorganisation has proceeded smoothly, with as little disruption as possible to students' education. The process is ongoing, with good plans to facilitate the transfer to new premises by September 2008. The very difficult task of integrating a mix of staff from different schools has been achieved successfully so there is shared sense of purpose with high aspirations and good morale. Areas where specialist expertise is weakest have been identified and satisfactory training offered to help make up ground. Resources are carefully managed, but the location of many of the specialist ones for students with profound learning difficulties on a different site limits the full inclusion of those students. This will be resolved on transfer to the new building. Leaders and managers have the full support of parents and the school is increasingly successful in involving them in their children's education and well-being. Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and their contribution to evaluating standards and improving provision is good. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. It is developing well following earlier teething problems relating to line management, roles and responsibilities. The school gives good value for money.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Pendle Community High School and College, Colne, BB8 8JT

I had a lovely two days with you when I inspected your school. Thank you for making me so welcome and telling me so much about your school. I can say with confidence that yours is a good one!

You are making good progress because you are well taught and keen to learn. You behave very well and get to school whenever you can. You obviously enjoy all the activities that staff arrange for you. Your parents tell me that you are very happy in school and it seems to me that they are right. This is probably because you are so well looked after.

I've asked teachers to make sure that you can all understand what they want you to learn in all lessons rather than just in most of them.

I wish you luck in your new school, when you get there. The plans look great!

All the best

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector