

# Aldercar Community Language College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112939
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311061
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Cook HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
College	784
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr B Stone
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A W Cooper CBE
<b>Date of previous college inspection</b>	10 November 2003
<b>College address</b>	Daltons Close Langley Mill Nottingham NG16 4HL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 712477
<b>Fax number</b>	01773 531969

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the college

The number of students attending Aldercar Community Language College (ALCLC) makes it a slightly smaller than average sized school. The college has dual-specialisms in languages and, for Key Stage 4 students, vocational provision. Special provision is made for students with special educational needs including those with physical disabilities and hearing impairments. This means that the proportion of students with statements of special educational need is above the national average whereas the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. An average proportion of students is eligible for free school meals, and very few students have a language other than English as their first language. The college has successfully gained awards in recognition of its practice by the Basic Skills Agency, Football Association and Health Promoting Schools. The college is looking forward to a new post-16 centre, to be purpose-built on the college site by September 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the college

### Grade: 2

The outstanding provision for languages and vocational learning are distinctive features of this good school. All students, including those with physical disabilities and learning difficulties, enjoy and experience achievement because of what Aldercar Community Language College (ACLC) has on offer. There is an impressive choice of languages on offer including Japanese, French and Italian. Older students also have opportunities to learn through an extensive range of vocational courses which they both enjoy and also find motivating in deciding their future education, training or employment. Leadership and management are good overall and it has been the innovative vision and leadership of the principal that have brought about the specialist character of the school.

Teaching and learning are good. High expectations and good relationships between staff and students are key ingredients that make most lessons enjoyable. Specialist advanced skills teachers are very effective. In vocational lessons, students are very enthusiastic about what they are learning, for example in construction, where they are eager to achieve. In most subjects students make good progress. Standards are generally above average and achievement is good. The school has taken effective action to improve teaching so that a dip in mathematics standards is addressed. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are also improving because leadership and management, as well as teaching, are now good.

The personal development of students is good, as seen in their good behaviour and positive attitudes. Healthy lifestyles are promoted very well and the school has skilled staff that provide support and guidance for students on health and emotional matters. The level of care and guidance provided for students is good. The necessary checks are made to ensure that the school is safe. The academic guidance students receive through the marking of their work varies in quality. Although there are some outstanding examples of marking too often opportunities are missed to encourage and help students know what to do to improve.

Many parents speak highly of the education on offer, for example, one parent wrote 'ACLC provides our child with many opportunities, both at curricular and extra curricular levels'. However, a small number understandably raise concerns about the state of the buildings. A rolling programme of work has been followed to upgrade them and both governors and the senior leadership team recognise this as a constant challenge.

Overall leadership and management are good and the capacity to improve the school further is also good. All those who form the senior leadership team (SLT) provide good leadership. They work well together and are totally committed and enthusiastic about the school and its future. The school has recognised that subject leadership could be improved to achieve consistency of good practice in all areas.

### What the college should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics
- Improve marking so that good practice is consistently used across the school

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Students make good progress at Aldecar. Based on the tests taken at the end of Year 6 students' attainment when they enter the college is broadly average. By the end of Year 11 students

succeed in a range of courses, which reflects their good progress. In vocational courses their progress is often outstanding. The school has been successful in improving the progress boys make in English. While standards are generally above average there is variation at the end of Year 11 in different subjects. In some, for example science, history and child development, GCSE results are well above national averages. All students study a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11 and examination results for 2007 matched the school's challenging targets. Standards in mathematics have dipped in the last two years and the school is working hard to bring them up to where they should be. There has also been progress in improving ICT standards which in the past have been too low.

The progress made by students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with statements of special educational need is good.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are good overall. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Some aspects of their social development are outstanding, as exemplified by the empathy and respect students show towards each other's needs and abilities creating an inclusive school. Some aspects of cultural development, such as the school's provision for modern foreign languages are outstanding.

Students feel safe at school and know who to go to should they need help or support. They feel that there are very few instances of bullying and when these do arise they know who to approach and are confident of immediate and effective support. Students speak well of their school and on the whole enjoy their learning. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Students know about and adopt healthy lifestyles through work done in lessons, physical education activities, some extra curricular opportunities and choosing healthy options in the school canteen. There are several ways that students make good contributions to their community. For example, the school council meets regularly and discusses issues such as the bullying and anti-racism policy as well as planning events and activities. Older students are involved in mentoring to support younger students. The twice termly school newspaper, produced by students, covers events as well as celebrating individual success. To contribute to the wider community students take part in regular charity events including Children in Need. Although provision in mathematics particularly and also ICT need further improvement students are well prepared for their future lives through the good quality careers guidance, vocational courses and their positive outlook. At the time of the last inspection the school was asked to meet statutory requirements by ensuring that there was a daily act of collective worship; as yet this has not been done.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers plan lessons well with a stimulating variety of approaches which keep students interested and engaged in learning. Teaching observed included clear explanations and effective use of questions enabling students to consolidate and extend their understanding. High expectations drove progress forward rapidly. Examples of helpful and specific marking enabled students to understand how to improve their work. Students with additional learning needs keep up with their peers because they benefit from good individual support by additional staff

in the classroom. Students' attitudes to work are generally good. As a result, they apply themselves willingly, even in those lessons which do not stimulate them to their fullest. The school is developing a good system to track the progress of individual students and to set them challenging targets. While students benefit in some cases from excellent advice on their written work, the quality of marking across the school is inconsistent. In less successful instances, work is unmarked for too long and, when it is done, it does not offer sufficiently specific advice for improvement.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. It meets the needs of all students well. The school is particularly successful at including students with a range of physical disabilities and learning difficulties into the mainstream curriculum. The college's specialist status enables it to make outstanding provision for modern foreign languages; all students study two languages from a choice of five, and almost all go on to study at least one language to GCSE level. All areas of the curriculum have a strong international dimension, which promotes students' cultural development very well. The Key Stage 4 curriculum offers a standard choice of academic GCSE courses, complemented by an outstanding range of vocational courses delivered by well-qualified specialists. The school is a leading light nationally in vocational education and prepares its students very well for the world of work. An exceptional range of sporting activities, which promote healthy lifestyles, enriches the curriculum. Well-attended clubs cater for a wide range of other interests. Many students are motivated to attend twilight sessions, which supplement the main academic curriculum. Large numbers of students benefit from a wealth of opportunities to participate in foreign exchanges and other residential experiences.

Underpinning the outstanding features of the curriculum, provision for English is good and developing for mathematics and ICT. Improvements in mathematics and ICT are becoming evident; progress in these areas is gaining momentum. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 covers most aspects of the national curriculum well. However, less than the recommended curriculum time is allocated to some subject areas, for instance art and music.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding features. The staff demonstrate genuine care and commitment to the progress and achievement of the students. There is a very good inclusion policy and students with a wide and varied range of special needs receive outstanding care and support. Students have access to counselling and educational information on sex and drugs. The introduction of learning managers to co-ordinate academic guidance has been effective. Most students have a clear understanding of their targets for improvement. Students feel they are given sound advice about option choices and effective advice and guidance about future study and career paths. The school works closely with parents and carers, using home-school diaries to communicate effectively. The school has well-established links with a wide range of outside agencies to support student development and is currently working towards achievement of a Careers Mark award for excellence in student provision. All teachers are given risk assessment training and this is evident in the good practice observed in workshops and in corridors. Arrangements for overseeing the safeguarding of children are robust.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good and dedicated to provide an enriched curriculum. The headteacher has been the driving force to develop aspects which have resulted in its excellent features. Underpinning this work is the schools commitment to inclusion and giving all students the chance to achieve. Supporting the headteacher is a very able and dedicated senior team. Each member is focused on his or her key responsibilities as well as being fully signed up to the overall aims of the school.

Subject leaders know their areas well. They are making better use of assessment data and observation of lessons to check how well students are progressing, and they take action where progress fails to meet expectations. The school recognises that there is some inconsistency in the quality of leadership at this level and has identified it as a priority for development.

The school has good systems for monitoring and evaluating its own effectiveness. These include an informative middle leaders self-evaluation that each head of department conducts. The reviews ensure that the school is successfully evaluating standards and the quality of teaching and identify the next steps for improvement.

Since the last inspection the school has made progress in improving the provision of ICT and there are signs that improvements are being made in mathematics. Work elsewhere in the school to develop the curriculum, raise standards and improve teaching confirms the school has the capacity to improve further.

Governors receive and act on a good range of information they receive from the senior team including that on standards and achievement. Governors, along with the school community, are looking forward to the opening of the sixth form and thereby to develop and extend the good work of the school.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	College Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the college work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the college's self-evaluation	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
Does this college require special measures?	No
Does this college require a notice to improve?	No

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

23 November 2007

Dear Students,

Inspection of Aldercar Community Language College, Langley Mill, Nottingham NG16 4HL

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first I would like to thank you for your welcome and cooperation during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and value your comments and opinions.

What impressed us most about your school were the excellent opportunities you have to study and learn languages and vocational subjects. It was very evident that you enjoy and achieve in these areas. The success of the languages and vocational courses result from the innovative work of your headteacher who has been supported by all other staff.

We judged your school to be a good school. In lessons, teaching is good and you are challenged to think and learn so that you make good progress. The level of care you receive is good because skilled staff ensure you have access to support when it is needed. You told us that you enjoy school. Your behaviour and attitudes are good and are obviously helping you to learn.

To further improve your school we have asked the senior leadership team to focus on two areas that the inspection found needed improvement. The first is standards in mathematics which need to improve so that more students achieve a good grade at GCSE. The second is to improve the way your work is marked so that it always helps you know how well you have done and what you need to do to improve. We hope that an improvement in the way your work is marked will help you to focus your effort and improve your progress.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook - Her Majesty's Inspector