

Longdendale Community Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106267
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	324362
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Tetik HMI

This inspection of the school 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 on roll	
School (total)	862
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sandra Ward
Headteacher	Mr Brian Parker
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2006
School address	Spring Street Hollingworth Hyde Cheshire SK14 8LW
Telephone number	01457 764006
Fax number	01457 766483

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Longdendale Community Language College is a smaller than average 11–16 mixed comprehensive with specialist language status. It attracts students from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. Most students are White British. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement for special educational needs are in line with the national average. It has recently achieved the Artsmark Gold Award, the Gold Healthy Schools Award, the Silver Eco Award and the Tameside Inclusive Schools foundation Award. Longdendale is a local authority lead practice school for developing the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Longdendale Community Language College provides a good education. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils make good progress during their school career. In 2008, standards at the end of Key Stage 4 rose and were well above average, with over three quarters of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grade GCSEs. This improvement has been the result of careful tracking of pupil progress and effective interventions. Progress in English and mathematics and in Key Stage 3 has been slower, but inspection evidence shows that there is improvement.

The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear ambition to raise standards and to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop their academic and personal skills. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but this is not consistent across the school. In good lessons, teachers engage learners through activities that are lively, challenging and well-matched to their needs. In the small proportion of lessons that are satisfactory the needs of some learners are not fully met. In some, pupils are less engaged and this leads to low level misbehaviour and slower progress. The high quality marking that is evident in some classes is not yet fully consistent across the school.

Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and they say they enjoy school. This is reflected in the good relationships they share with staff and peers. Attendance is in line with national averages. There is a small number of pupils who are persistent absentees. The school has been successful in reducing this number and works effectively with other partners to achieve this.

The curriculum is good. The wider range of subjects, the increase in vocational courses and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities increase pupils' engagement and contribute to raising achievement. As a specialist language college six languages are offered and nearly all pupils leave school with a GCSE in a modern foreign language, which is well above the national average.

Care, guidance and support are good. Targets are being used effectively to raise standards and pupils receive good academic guidance. Pupils are well-prepared for their future economic well-being and the large majority go on to further education, training or employment.

Leadership and management are good. The role of middle managers has been developed and good progress has been made towards resolving the areas for improvement at the last inspection. The governing body is kept well informed and many are regular visitors to the school. They are supportive and are developing in the role of 'critical friends'. The school has a cohesive senior leadership team. The improvements in attendance and standards are evidence that the school has good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate at which pupils make progress in English and mathematics.
- Ensure pupils consistently experience high quality teaching.
- Ensure behaviour is good in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils enter school with a wide range of attainment, but overall it is above the national average. They make good progress during

their school career at Longdendale: the proportion of pupils who attained five or more higher grade GCSEs improved to 76% in 2008. This is well above the national average and the school met its targets for pupil participation and attainment in the specialist subjects at Key Stage 4. There is a trend of improving attainment and the pupils' average points scores at GCSE have been above average for three years. In 2008 the proportion of pupils who achieved a higher grade at GCSE was above the national average in science, music, physical education (PE), Spanish, geography and English literature. There has been a year on year trend of overall good progress by pupils in Key Stage 4 since 2006. Progress in mathematics and English has been slower. This is a high priority identified by the school and intervention strategies are beginning to have a positive impact. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other learners. Pupils' progress was slower in Key Stage 3. In 2007 the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 and above was broadly average. In 2008 there was an improvement in the proportion of learners achieving Level 6 and above in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. They say they enjoy coming to school and attendance is in line with national averages. Pupils say they feel safe and have confidence that any incidents of bullying reported will be dealt with effectively by the school. They have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. Many select healthy options at lunchtime and choose to participate in extra sporting activities in addition to the two hours of physical education a week. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community. Some volunteer to be peer mentors, assisting younger pupils to settle in when transferring from primary school. Others have responsibilities linked to the school's specialist status and act as ambassadors at events. Many pupils participate in charity events. The student council has been successful in contributing to improvements to school facilities. Pupils develop good numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology skills. Assemblies and lessons contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They engage well during assemblies and are encouraged to reflect on their roles as members of the school community. Good awareness of different faiths and cultures is fostered through the curriculum, such as learning about the Haka dance in physical education lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good but this is not yet consistent across the school. In the best lessons, teachers have secure subject knowledge which they use well to enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers also use question and answer sessions well to extend pupils' thinking and learning skills. They plan activities that are well-matched to the needs of learners, providing appropriate pace and challenge. Information and communication technology is used well to add interest and to motivate learners. Pupils say they enjoy lessons where they can work in groups, discuss ideas and where they are encouraged to think for themselves. Clear targets are set and opportunities to evaluate their work against expected standards contribute to pupils' awareness of what is expected of them to improve. A proportion of teaching is satisfactory. In these lessons there is insufficient pace and challenge to ensure that pupils make good progress. In some lessons pupils are not fully engaged and there is a low level of

misbehaviour. There is sometimes inconsistency in the quality of marking and assessment which does not help pupils improve their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Since the last inspection, a broad range of subjects have been made available, ensuring that pupils' needs and interests are well met. Specialist status provided the strong focus on developing vocational courses. The introduction of a new catering course and the reintroduction of a business studies course have provided popular options for pupils in Key Stage 4. The personal, social, and health education programme includes a scheme of work on economic intervention and enterprise to support the economic well-being of the pupils. This programme is enhanced by contributions from businesses within the local community. In Key Stage 3 a study skills course, Learning2Learn, is having a positive impact. The needs of the higher attaining pupils are well met through the curriculum in the 'Challenge in Lessons' strategy. There are a wide variety of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, including cheerleading, foreign and residential visits, and sports and arts clubs that enhance pupils' enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support at the school are good. Staff provide booster and revision classes in addition to the many extra-curricular clubs. Pupils are appreciative of this support and it contributes to their good progress. Supervision of learners around the school is well-managed. Pupil progress is tracked carefully. The effective use of individual targets for pupils helps to enable them to understand how they can raise their performance. Parents, carers and pupils are kept informed about current attainment, projected targets and progress. Guidance about future courses and careers is good. Pupils at risk of underachieving are identified early and support strategies put in place. The Pastoral Support Centre provides very good support for pupils who are at risk of exclusion. The school works well with parents and other agencies such as the Youth Support Service to re-engage learners back into school life. Strategies to improve attendance are having an impact. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and meet government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the senior management team share a clear vision which, together with the use of challenging targets, is raising standards. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and good progress has been made in tackling issues raised at the last inspection. Strategies to raise achievement are having an impact. This illustrates that there is good capacity to improve. Staff and parents have contributed to the more focused improvement plan. Resources have been provided for staff to develop their skills through professional development. The role of the middle managers has been developed and they monitor pupil progress in their subject carefully and are held to account. There is good collaboration between subjects to raise standards. The school's arrangements for promoting community cohesion and equality of opportunity are good. The annual languages festival brings learners together from a wide variety of backgrounds. The school has links with schools in

Europe and is developing links with India. Specialist status is well-managed and external links strengthened. Supporting the teaching of modern foreign languages in local primary schools helps smooth transition for pupils. The governing body is committed, supportive and developing in the role of challenging the school. Finance is monitored well and the school gives good value for money.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School 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 school 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 ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to your school recently. We would particularly like to thank those of you who talked to us. We enjoyed meeting you and getting to know your school. You will be pleased to hear that we judged your school to be good. Here are a few examples of the good things we found during our visit.

- Your school is well-led and managed.
- More of you are achieving five higher level GCSEs.
- You say you enjoy school and feel safe.
- If bullying occurs you are confident that it will be dealt with effectively when reported.
- You enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities the school provides.
- The curriculum has been developed and contributes to raising standards.
- The staff provide good care, support and guidance.

We have asked the school to make sure that:

- they increase the rate at which you make progress in mathematics and English
- you all enjoy high quality teaching consistently
- there is good behaviour in all your lessons.

You can help your school do even better by continuing to work hard, attending regularly and behaving well.