

# Astley Sports College and Community High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106269
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	336648
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernard Campbell HMI

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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	821
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr J Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Eamon Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Yew Tree Lane Dukinfield Cheshire SK16 5BL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in classes and observed 32 lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and local authority representatives. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 187 parents and carers, 10 staff and 150 students.

- students' attainment, learning and progress, in the past and currently, especially in English and mathematics
- the extent to which inadequate teaching has been eradicated and teaching improved
- the extent to which patterns of attendance and behaviour demonstrate that students' needs and interests are being met
- the effectiveness of the leaders and managers in bringing about improvements.

## Information about the school

This school is a specialist sports college. It is smaller than the average secondary, with fewer than average students from minority ethnic heritages, though the proportion is increasing. The proportion eligible for free schools meals is higher than average. Approximately one third of the students are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is well above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. At the previous inspection in February 2009, the school was given a notice to improve. A new headteacher was appointed in the Spring of 2009 and two deputy headteachers were appointed in September 2009. Assistant headteachers, who are subject leaders for English and mathematics, were appointed in January 2010.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****4****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The headteacher, with effective support from senior leaders, has begun to have a significant impact in tackling key issues for improvement following the February 2009 inspection. However, inadequate teaching has not been eradicated and actions have not been carried out with sufficient speed and impact to achieve this within the required timescale. The governing body has had too little impact on the direction and pace of improvement.

The proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes including English and mathematics at grades A\* to C remained low in 2009. The school's data show that attainment in English, mathematics and science is on track to rise in 2010. The progress made by students between Key Stage 2 and GCSE improved substantially in 2009 and was satisfactory from their low starting points. No groups of students made slower progress than others. There is also an improving trend in the progress made by students in English and mathematics. However, these improvements are not secure due to the inconsistent quality of teaching and learning, especially in mathematics and science.

Taken overall, teaching is inadequate because it has had insufficient impact on students' achievement. Nevertheless, most teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory; in a few lessons it was outstanding and was inadequate in a small minority. In these inadequate lessons, students quickly became restless and disengaged from work because tasks were too easy; assessment information was not used to plan challenging tasks that help them to improve. The resulting poor behaviour was not challenged effectively by the teacher.

Students' behaviour is inadequate overall, although most students behave well and the school is orderly and calm. However, in a very small minority of lessons there is persistent low-level disruption and students talk among themselves rather than getting on with their tasks. In addition, there are instances of disrespectful behaviour and challenge to teachers' authority. The majority of students who completed the questionnaire disagreed with the statement, 'behaviour is good at my school'.

School leaders have introduced new systems for managing behaviour and the number of exclusions has dropped. However, there are insufficient rewards for good behaviour and there are inconsistencies in the confidence and skill with which teachers apply the

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school's behaviour policies. The leaders have brought about a rapid and major improvement in attendance and a reduction in persistent absence through the consistent and thorough application of strategies.

Despite improvements since the last inspection, inadequate behaviour and teaching have not been eradicated. For this reason, the school's capacity to improve is judged inadequate. In other respects, the capacity to improve is stronger. The new headteacher has a clear vision and is purposeful, reflective and decisive. Capacity has been strengthened by the appointment of effective senior and middle leaders. Recently established systems of performance management and self-evaluation are robust and are based on accurate and detailed assessments of students' progress. Expectations of students' progress have been raised and are communicated effectively to staff and students. Leaders are working collaboratively and energetically, between themselves and with external partners, and understand what needs to be done to make further improvements.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Eradicate inadequate teaching through rigorous monitoring and prompt action so that all teaching is at least satisfactory by the start of the autumn term 2010.
- Improve the management of behaviour in lessons by ensuring that:
  - - systems for rewarding good behaviour are effective and that all teachers follow agreed procedures for managing behaviour in lessons.
- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that:
  - - students' progress improves from satisfactory to good
  - - all teachers consistently use assessment information effectively in order to plan learning that meets students' needs and interests.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****4**

Although students make satisfactory progress overall, their achievement is inadequate because improvements in learning in English, mathematics and science have not been secure, rapid or sustained enough to raise attainment above a low level. In addition, inadequate behaviour hampers students' learning and progress in a few lessons.

Students have an inconsistent experience of learning. They really enjoy lessons that are practical, inspiring and involve them in tasks using a range of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). They rise to the challenge because they can see what they need to do to be successful. They develop their thinking skills well and articulate their ideas through well-structured dialogue and questioning. On the other hand, in a few lessons they learn little. They are bored by repeating the same activity each lesson, such as copying down information and answering questions written on the board. In some lessons, learning is limited by the misbehaviour of others. Although the very large majority of students surveyed said they learnt a lot, only half

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said they enjoyed school.

There has been a consistent year-on-year improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE passes at grade A\* to C, although the percentage of pupils reaching this important threshold is still significantly below the national figure. For the first time in recent years, the 2009 results in mathematics showed that the progress made by Year 11 students from Key Stage 2 was satisfactory. However, students made inadequate progress in English. Lesson observations in English, and school assessment data, show that students in all year groups are now making good or satisfactory progress, as a result of improved teaching and curriculum planning. Teachers' assessments show that Year 9 students made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics in 2009. However, they underachieved in science and attainment was low.

The progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory and improving. Over the last three years they have underachieved in English and mathematics. However, the literacy programmes run by the school have had a positive impact, particularly at Key Stage 3 where students have improved their reading ages and are closing the gap on the levels expected for their age.

The large majority of students who completed the questionnaire say they feel safe and those interviewed said that adults listen to their concerns. They were confident that any bullying would be effectively dealt with. Students understand the need for healthy lifestyles. They enjoy the opportunities for extra-curricular sport and feel encouraged to eat healthily. Younger students are well-informed about the risks of drugs, but some older students said that they lacked opportunities to discuss sexual health and substance abuse. Students' influence on school life is increasing through the growing range of leadership roles they take on in school and in sporting and other activities in neighbouring schools and the local community. A minority of students reported that they would like teachers to take more interest in their views.

Attendance has improved very quickly and markedly. The rate of persistent absence has also reduced by half, although it is still a little above the national average. Students are well-informed and supported in making choices about their next steps at age 16. The proportion not going on to education, training and employment is broadly average. Students' literacy skills are improving as a result of the whole-school focus on developing these skills. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that students make the rapid progress that is needed to make a substantial difference to their attainment. Inadequate teaching and consequent inadequate learning and progress arise from weaknesses in planning lessons and the management of students' behaviour. In the best lessons students make good progress because teachers use assessment information very effectively to set demanding tasks for all of them. Students have many opportunities to work independently and think things through for themselves. In these lessons, attitudes to learning are very positive.

The school's assessment system is reliable and provides accurate information on what students know and can do. In the most effective lessons, teachers make exceptionally good use of this information to ensure that students are stretched in their learning. A small minority of teachers do not use this information effectively and often set work which students find too easy. The marking of students' work is satisfactory. It is carried out regularly, and there are several examples of good practice in different subjects. Students say they know what they have to do to improve, but inspection evidence shows this is not consistent across all subjects.

The curriculum is broad and balanced with an appropriate range of academic and vocational opportunities that meet the full range of students' needs. The vocational programme for foundation level students is recognised locally as a model of good practice. Cross-curricular provision in ICT and literacy is beginning to be firmly embedded, though numeracy is not as well developed. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are well attended by the students.

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Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The management of attendance by support staff has led to greater consistency in work with individual students and their families. This has resulted in dramatic improvement in attendance and reduction in persistent absence. The needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effectively met through the school's learning and support centres. Well-organised arrangements help students to make choices and support students who experience breaks in their schooling. The school has been effective in reducing the number of exclusions for inappropriate behaviour. However, poor behaviour persists in a very small minority of lessons.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Despite concerted action to improve teaching both through formal procedures and by coaching and support for individual staff, inadequate teaching has not been eradicated. The school's regular monitoring of the quality of teaching has indicated improvement but has also acknowledged continuing weaknesses. Professional development opportunities have enabled staff to learn from good practice in their own and other schools and as a result, they have extended the range and quality of teaching, learning and assessment activities. Both students and staff are positive about the improvements. However, a very small minority of teachers have not made enough improvement to the quality of learning in their lessons.

Leaders have introduced rigorous and effective procedures to ensure accountability between managers and staff and more aspirational targets for students. These have begun to inform the review and action planning process carried out by middle leaders to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum.

The governing body has recently acquired greater knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is aware of the need to hold the school to account but has not demonstrated effective challenge and support in tackling key weaknesses. The school has a robust plan to overcome the budget deficit.

The school has evaluated its safeguarding systems well and has acted to make effective improvements. The school has good records of safeguarding information. Systems for communicating this information within the school and with other agencies are strong. Case studies show that students are referred promptly to a range of agencies and appropriate action is taken. The monitoring of the performance of different student



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groups is carried out with care in order to ensure equality of opportunity with the result that no particular group makes slower progress in relation to others.

Effective links with hard-to-reach parents and carers are developing. Communication about students' progress and attendance has improved. After listening to the views of parents and carers, the school has increased the ways of contacting them, for example, by using text messages. The school has started literacy and numeracy evenings for Year 7 students and their parents and carers. As a result, these parents and carers said they felt more equipped to support their child's learning.

A partnership with an outstanding school makes a good contribution to teachers' professional development. The school works well with local community groups which has a positive impact on students' social development. Through the extended school provision, community sports activities are provided throughout the year. Community cohesion is actively promoted within the school through the curriculum and the student council. The school works well with faith groups in the area to raise students' awareness of different cultures and faiths. School visits and a link with Slovakia contribute to raising students' awareness of the global community. The impetus behind the sports specialism has faltered and currently the specialism has limited impact on the school. Plans are being developed to reinvigorate the specialism.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The responses of most parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire were positive. Most said their children enjoy school and a very large majority were confident their

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children are kept safe. A small minority were unhappy with how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors agree that this is an area for improvement. A few were also critical about the quality of some mathematics teaching. Inspectors also agree that this is an area for improvement. The school has recently taken further actions to tackle this priority. A few parents and carers were also concerned about the impact of supply teachers. The inspectors agree that learning has been affected in the past by staff absence and the use of supply teachers. Rates of staff absence have significantly reduced this school year. A few parents also wrote comments about the positive impact of the new headteacher. This is a typical comment: 'The new headmaster is trying to implement changes which will take a while to be effective. I believe he will change the school for the better.' The inspectors agree with this view.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Astley Sports College and Community High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 183 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 821 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	17	132	72	13	7	5	3
The school keeps my child safe	36	20	134	73	10	5	3	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	28	102	56	26	14	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	23	109	60	21	11	7	4
The teaching is good at this school	31	17	122	67	21	11	6	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	15	106	58	37	20	5	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	15	121	66	21	11	3	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	14	120	66	14	8	5	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	17	114	62	24	13	7	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	18	99	54	26	14	18	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	10	118	64	34	19	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	31	17	115	63	22	12	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	23	106	58	20	11	9	5

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



6 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Astley Sports College and Community High School, Dukinfield, SK16 5BL

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that your school requires special measures in order to improve the quality of teaching and behaviour and to ensure that improvements in progress and attainment are secure. These were the things we found out about your school.

- Your attendance has improved dramatically and fewer of you are persistently absent.
- You are making satisfactory progress in most subjects.
- Teaching is improving and you enjoy the lessons that are interactive and practical.
- The headteacher and staff are working together effectively and you and your parents and carers are pleased with the improvements that are being made.

To help the school to make significant improvements, we have said that senior leaders and governors must be more effective in tackling weaknesses and should:

- eradicate inadequate teaching
- improve the management of behaviour by making sure there are rewards for good behaviour and that everyone follows the rules for good behaviour
- raise attainment in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that:

you increase your rate of progress and

teachers use information about what you know already to make sure

lessons consistently meet your needs and interests.

Other inspectors will visit your school in the future to see how it is improving. I hope you will all play your part in behaving well and working hard to make your learning more enjoyable so you can all achieve greater success.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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