

Aldercar Community Language College

Daltons Close, Langley Mill, Nottingham, NG16 4HL

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Achievement is inadequate because too few students have made the progress they should in English.
- Some students known to be eligible for free school meals and some students with special educational needs have underachieved.
- Teaching requires improvement as it is not ensuring that students make consistently good progress.
- Marking varies in quality between subjects and teachers. Teachers do not consistently help students to improve their work by giving them high-quality written feedback.
- Best practice is not shared widely enough throughout the school.
- Behaviour requires improvement to make it good because exclusions and the proportion of students who are persistently absent are too high.
- Leadership and management require improvement because the actions needed to improve teaching and achievement, particularly in English, have not been taken quickly enough.
- Governors do not have the necessary information and training to enable them to hold leaders to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have a clear plan for improving the school which is beginning to result in improvements in the quality of teaching and students' progress, including in English.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form is typically good and is securing better achievement than in the main school.
- Disabled students are well supported and this enables them to make good progress.
- Systems for checking students' progress and setting targets are much improved. The school is better at identifying and providing for students who require additional help to achieve their target grades.
- Relationships between students and staff and amongst students are respectful.
- Overall, the number of exclusions has fallen and attendance has improved.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 43 parts of lessons, of which four were observed jointly with the school’s senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students, and representatives of the governing body and local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, performance data, records relating to behaviour and attendance and looked at samples of students’ work. They also looked carefully at the school’s central record of checks on staff.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 14 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered the views of staff, including those expressed in 26 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Nigel Boyd, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Michael Lavelle	Additional Inspector
Jacqueline Pentlow	Additional Inspector
Peter Lawley	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- Aldercar Community Language College is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, students known to be eligible for free school meals and students who have a parent in the armed forces) is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs. This is a unit for students with physical and hearing impairments. At the time of the inspection, there were six students with a physical impairment and nine students with a hearing impairment supported by the specialist unit.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning throughout the school, but particularly in English, to a level that is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - the work set for students is well matched to their different abilities and is always sufficiently challenging
 - teachers do not dominate by talking too much in lessons, so that students get more time to work independently
 - the marking of students' work provides clear and detailed feedback about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress, particularly in English, by ensuring that:
 - the gaps in attainment and progress between different groups of students are narrowed so that they all achieve equally well
 - students who are persistently absent achieve better examination results by attending more regularly.
- Ensure leaders secure more rapid improvement by:
 - tackling inadequate teaching more decisively
 - ensuring there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching and marking across all subjects
 - sharing more widely the good and outstanding practice that currently exists in the school
 - ensuring that the governing body holds school leaders more closely to account for improving

the quality of teaching and achievement.

- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Students' progress in English is inadequate. A significant number of students from different ability groups have underachieved in recent years. Low levels of literacy when students join the school, combined with weak teaching, are the key reasons why this has occurred.
- English results improved in 2012 but were still below the national average. The scrutiny of students' work and lesson observations confirm that most students are now beginning to make better progress in English and are working at levels closer to those expected for their age. Data tracking students' progress and assessments by teachers show an overall improvement in students' performance in English. However, these improvements are in their early stages and not fully secure.
- Students start Year 7 with attainment that is significantly below the national average. In recent years, students have not made enough progress and their overall GCSE results at the end of Year 11 have remained significantly below the national average. The main reason for this has been the inadequate performance in English. Students' perform much better in mathematics and their rates of progress compare well with the national average. Overall, GCSE results improved in 2012 and the proportion of students making the expected rate of progress is now approaching the national figure.
- The school is now better at using data to check on students' progress and to set individual targets. The underachievement of some students known to be eligible for free school meals and some students with special educational needs has been identified and is beginning to be addressed. Good support for disabled students and those with a hearing impairment enables them to achieve well, including those in the specially resourced unit.
- The school makes well-considered use of the pupil premium funding to provide targeted support for students. This includes additional coaching and resources. The targeted support is proving effective in mathematics where students' average point score shows that the gap in performance between those known to be eligible for free school meals and their peers is decreasing. However, the impact in English has been less effective and the gap in performance is narrowing more slowly.
- Students are entered early for GCSE in mathematics, often at the end of Year 10. The school is able to demonstrate that this strategy has a positive impact on students' achievement and allows them the opportunity to try for a higher grade during Year 11 or attempt another course, if appropriate.
- The pass rate for students in the sixth form is close to the national average and students make the progress they should. Students following vocational courses are particularly motivated, engaged and interested and make even better progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good throughout the school and this has particularly been the case in English. The lack of consistency in the quality of teaching over recent years has contributed to underachievement. Teaching in English, and across the school, is improving which is why examination results improved in 2012. Nonetheless, too many lessons still require improvement because teaching fails to take account of students' different abilities in each class. A lack of

challenge is evident in some lessons.

- The weaker lessons and the very small amount of inadequate teaching seen during the inspection failed to capture fully the interest of the students and they became passive. In these lessons, there was insufficient challenge and teachers talked for too long. As a result, there was too little focus on students' learning and their progress. There were not enough opportunities for students to take responsibility, use their initiative and work independently.
- The school has correctly identified improving the quality and consistency of marking and feedback as a priority. Teachers' marking and feedback is not always good. Some work, in different subjects, is marked regularly and students are provided with helpful comments on what they need to do to improve. However, other work, often within the same subject area, is not marked regularly or receives no more than a tick. Where marking is of this standard, students do not know how to make their work better and reach higher grades.
- There is some good and, occasionally, outstanding teaching in the school. Teaching in the sixth form, and in some subjects, is consistently good. However, this is not shared well enough to help other teachers improve their own teaching skills.
- In the better lessons observed, teachers had high expectations of what the students could achieve. Students were provided with opportunities to work in pairs or small groups on challenging and well-structured activities which, often, helped to develop their speaking and listening skills. These lessons had a clear purpose and proceeded at a fast pace. In these lessons, teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge.
- Virtually all teaching is characterised by positive, respectful relationships. Strong support is provided for students with disabilities, which enables them to integrate well and make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because levels of persistent absence and exclusions are high, particularly of those students known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs. Behaviour is getting better and, consequently, exclusions are reducing because students are now more engaged in lessons as the quality of teaching improves.
- Attendance has shown some improvement and is currently close to the national average. Strengthened procedures to tackle persistent absence are having a positive impact and the proportion is reducing.
- Some aspects of students' behaviour and safety are good. There are respectful relationships between students and staff, and amongst students. Students receive good care and support.
- Inspectors saw no unacceptable behaviour during the inspection. In lessons, students' attitudes to learning match the quality of teaching. Where teaching was less than good, students were compliant but often became passive and lost interest in the lesson.
- Students say they feel safe in school. Although bullying occurs occasionally, students know who to report it to and most are confident that it will be treated seriously. Students have a keen awareness of bullying in all its forms. During the inspection, school prefects were preparing a

presentation on bullying to perform in assemblies.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders have not secured the required improvements in achievement and teaching quickly enough, particularly in English. However, they have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved and how this can be achieved. The school has an accurate view of its performance and has identified the right priorities for the future. Recent developments are already having a positive impact and demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further.
- Systems to track students' progress and identify those who are not making enough progress are now more effective, and this is helping to secure improvements in achievement. The progress of different groups of students, including those for whom the school receives the pupil premium, is now being tracked carefully. If students fall behind, support is provided to get them back on track. Consequently, they are now beginning to make better progress in all subjects, including English. This was confirmed by inspectors during lesson observations.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching regularly. They are able to identify when students are not making enough progress and how this can be remedied. Training, support and, more recently, robust challenge is provided for teachers to improve their practice. The management of teachers' performance is now more rigorous and appropriately linked to salary progression.
- Subject leaders are increasingly clear about their responsibility for holding teachers to account for students' progress. Some are more able to do this than others and their ability is often reflected in the improvements made by students in their subject areas.
- The range of subjects and courses has been designed to meet the needs, interests and aspirations of the students. Helpfully, course arrangements have been reviewed recently to enable students to spend more time studying English and mathematics, with the aim of raising achievement in these key subjects.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well by, for example, providing a good range of trips, visits and special events. There are many after-school clubs and activities which are very well attended.
- The school's safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has identified the school as causing concern and is providing good support to help improve teaching and achievement, particularly in English. As a result, the English department is better able to identify weaknesses and is taking appropriate action to address them. However, much still needs to be done to make sure that the quality of teaching in English is consistently good or better.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors demonstrate a good awareness of the school's priorities. They know the challenges ahead and the areas for development in governance. Governors feel the need for training and better information from school leaders to enable them to be in a stronger position to offer support and challenge to the school. Not enough time is spent discussing key issues such as students' achievement and the quality of teaching at regular governing body meetings. The governing body knows how pupil premium funding is spent but does not provide enough

challenge to senior leaders on the impact of the spending or on future priorities. The governing body is aware that the quality of teaching is not good but has not challenged school leaders well enough over time to ensure that salaries paid match teachers' performance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112939
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	405440

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	783
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	174
Appropriate authority	The Governing body
Chair	Steven Atkinson
Headteacher	A W Cooper(Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2011
Telephone number	01773 712477
Fax number	1773531969
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