

# Aldworth Science College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116427
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	357963
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Emma Ing

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>	Comprehensive
<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>	708
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Bob Lock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Churcher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Western Way Basingstoke Basings RG22 6HA
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 33 lessons and saw 31 teachers. ♦ Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the college at work. ♦ They looked at students' attainment over three years, the college's tracking data, the college improvement plan and minutes of the governing body. They considered 239 responses to the questionnaire completed by parents and carers, 100 responses from the students' questionnaire and 71 responses from teaching and support staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the college's work. It looked in detail at the following areas.

- Progress and attainment in English and mathematics and the capacity of the school to ensure that standards in these areas are rising.
- The support given to those students who have particular learning or emotional needs. The extent to which teaching builds on students' existing knowledge and skills.
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## Information about the school

Aldworth Science College is a small school. It gained specialist status in science in 2002 and became a Leadership Partner School in 2008. Amongst other awards, the school has gained Healthy Schools status, Artsmark, Sportsmark and Investors in Families. There is an on-site nursery, which is not managed by the governing body of the college.

Most students are White British, but there are a few from other backgrounds and 35 students speak English as an additional language. The college takes a relatively high proportion of its students at times other than the start of Year 7. The school has special provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and is able to accommodate students who use wheelchairs and who are hearing impaired. ♦ A slightly higher-than-average proportion of students have a statement of special educational needs. The most common needs relate to moderate or specific learning difficulties, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autistic spectrum disorder.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This rapidly improving school currently provides a satisfactory education. Most aspects of its work are good and some are outstanding, but the college's overall effectiveness is satisfactory because behaviour is only satisfactory.

Students feel exceptionally safe and are happy at the college. ♦ They know that they are very well cared for and appreciate the dedication which all staff show to their well-being. They have responded well to the college's work with them about how to live safely and healthily, and many actively promote healthy lifestyles and safe practices. The college has worked highly effectively within the local and college community to promote community cohesion and to enable parents and carers to support their children's education and learning. These sides of their work are all outstanding. The college is also very active in partnership with other schools and education providers to develop a wide range of curriculum options to meet the abilities and aspirations of students. It works well with outside agencies to ensure that the particular needs of individual students are met.

Students make good progress from below-average starting points. ♦ Teaching is generally good across the college and is based on good planning and varied and engaging activities. The planning of learning outcomes and feedback to students are sometimes not sharp enough and teachers do not always use assessment data well enough to meet all learning needs. This particularly affects students with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities, as their targets are insufficiently personalised and often not broken down into small steps, which limits their progress to some extent. The college meets its targets in its specialist subjects; science results have been consistently above average for some years. ♦ In English and mathematics, results have been below average, but leaders have worked successfully to ensure that attainment in these subjects is now in line with national averages and that progress matches the good progress made in other subjects across the curriculum.

Most students behave well both in lessons and around the college. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors and engage readily in their learning. However, in a minority of lessons, not all students are actively taking part in the learning and in a very small minority of lessons and occasionally around the school, learning or the calm of the environment is disrupted by poor behaviour.

In addition to improving outcomes for students in English and mathematics, improvements have been secured recently in many other important areas such as attendance, relationships with parents and carers and the positive impact that the college has on the community. The staff are cohesive and united around a shared vision. ♦ They are very well supported in their professional development. ♦ Whilst the school's self-evaluation and

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monitoring of its progress in some of its work lacks rigour and has not allowed for sufficient benchmarking with other schools around the country, these processes are well embedded across the college and planning is strong. ♦ For these reasons, the capacity for further improvement is good.

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

- Further increase the rates of progress and personal development of all students by:
  - consistently using strategies to improve the participation of those students who remain disengaged and ensure behaviour improves around the college.
  - ensuring that all lessons are tightly focused on learning outcomes.
  - consistently using assessment information to ensure that every student is set work that is closely matched to their personal need, making sure that students get regular feedback about how well they are doing and precisely what they need to do to reach the next level or goal.
- Refine the school's self-evaluation processes to ensure that monitoring and evaluation are systematic, based on wide-ranging evidence of the impact of provision on outcomes and the use of benchmarking against other schools nationally.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Students are making good progress in their learning. In many lessons, they actively participate in the work, are enthusiastic and make strides in their learning because teachers are good at creating opportunities for them to succeed. In these lessons, students are reflective about their own and others' learning and progress. ♦ They contribute well to discussion and evidently enjoy the range of different learning experiences available. However, the behaviour of students overall is satisfactory because in some lessons, behaviour is satisfactory rather than good and, in a very few, disrupts learning. This is reflected in the relatively high proportion of students that are excluded for fixed periods each year.

Students who are learning English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are doing well. ♦ Although the numbers are very small, making it hard to generalise, the evidence suggests that students who are eligible for free college meals, like those with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties, are not making quite such good progress as the rest of the cohort. The college welcomes those who arrive mid-year and has good induction processes, enabling them to make good progress in line with others.

Attainment in science is above average and overall attainment is in line with the national averages. One significant feature of this college is that a very high proportion of students leave having gained formal qualifications. ♦ Last year, most students gained 5 A\*-G grades at GCSE.

All students feel very well cared for and exceptionally safe. They trust their teachers and enjoy good relationships with them. Those who are vulnerable are well supported and helped to develop confidence and play a full role in the life of the college. Students

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demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Many have been ambassadors for health promotion both within the college and beyond. The students benefit well from the wide range of opportunities to grow emotionally, spiritually and socially, and to consider moral and ethical issues, considerably assisting their learning and development. Student leadership is beginning to develop well and many contribute to the wider community and to the college in a wide variety of ways.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well structured to help students to develop skills and knowledge. ♦ The learning activities that teachers devise are varied and interesting. Relationships in the classroom are often excellent and students know that they can ask for help. Teachers' planning is generally good, but assessment is not consistently used to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual students are addressed, for example by setting them different activities or asking them different questions. Some teachers help students to understand exactly what they need to do to achieve the next level in their work, sometimes enabling them to assess their own and peers' work for themselves, but this good practice is not consistently evident.

The broad and balanced curriculum is flexible and can meet the needs of each different cohort of students extremely well. Excellent collaboration with local schools enables the

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college to offer a wide variety of academic and vocational courses in Key Stage 4, including diplomas and young apprenticeships. There is a good range of extra-curricular provision and good take-up across most groups. Trips aimed at broadening horizons and raising students' aspirations are well organised and are having some success.

There are strong systems in place for care and support. ♦ Students who are identified as vulnerable are nurtured carefully and their progress tracked. ♦ A wide range of interventions helps students reach their potential. The college has highly effective links with different welfare agencies to support those with complex needs and has worked effectively to build excellent relationships with parents, enabling them to support their children's learning well. However, the college continues to exclude for short periods a relatively high proportion of its population. The data suggest that over the college year, many students are excluded more than once.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The determined leadership of the headteacher and her colleagues has secured significant improvements in provision which are making a positive difference to the young people they serve. They are aware of the importance of maintaining high expectations even for their most needy students. They promote equality and tackle discrimination well. The college's self-evaluation however lacks rigour and is not benchmarked against those schools that are achieving the best for students nationally.

Staff feel valued by leaders and know what it is that the college is trying to achieve. Planning for improvement is strong. Safeguarding is effective; staff are alert and responsive to the emotional needs of students and good systems are in place to ensure that any concerns are properly followed up. The college works extremely well in partnership with parents to secure strong support from them for the students' learning. Leaders have a good knowledge of the needs of the local community, following a careful audit, and have developed a wide range of effective strategies in partnership with voluntary and business groups to support local families and promote community cohesion. The college offers a wide range of courses for local adults to build confidence and develop their skills for work and parenting.

The governing body is well organised and governors enjoy good relationships with the college staff. This enables governors to have a good overview of what is going on and to give strong strategic leadership. Governors challenge the college well; however, their

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monitoring of the impact of their policies is less secure and lacks systematic and rigorous evaluation.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed strong satisfaction with the college and the education that it provides. A few were concerned that the college does not promote healthy lifestyles. The comments written about this suggest that this view was largely connected to parents' views that college dinners are not particularly healthy. ♦ The inspection team broadly agrees with this, but notes that the college council has been working with the caterers on this issue and overall judged students' awareness, understanding and pursuit of healthy lifestyles to be outstanding. Several parents commented that they felt that there was some bullying at the college. ♦ Inspectors followed this up with a wide range of students who said that there was very little bullying and that if any arises, it is dealt with very effectively by the college.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aldworth Science College 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 239 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 708 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	40	134	56	7	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	87	36	142	59	4	2	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	91	38	131	55	6	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	87	36	135	56	6	3	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	96	40	133	56	4	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	24	147	62	21	9	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	20	151	63	27	11	3	1
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)	76	32	135	56	6	3	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	72	30	146	61	9	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	27	135	56	17	7	8	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	23	137	57	19	8	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	124	52	99	41	6	3	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	119	50	109	46	4	2	3	1

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.**



17 November 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Aldworth Science College, Basingstoke RG22 6HA**

Thank you for welcoming us, sharing your views with us and allowing us to observe you around the college when we visited to inspect recently. It was a pleasure to converse with many of you and to see you learning.

We judged that many aspects of your college are good and outstanding, but that overall the education provided is satisfactory because whilst many of you behave well, taken as a whole, student behaviour is satisfactory. The college has developed excellent partnerships with agencies and educational providers to secure good support for you all and a rich and interesting curriculum.

You make good progress. ♦ Your progress in science is very good and you do well in this subject. ♦ Your progress in English and mathematics has improved recently and in these subjects and overall, your attainment is now in line with national averages. ♦ You are learning to be responsible and morally upright citizens and are developing leadership and other skills. We noted that a small minority of you disagreed with the statement that 'behaviour is good in my school' in our questionnaire. Our inspection findings agreed with this perception and would urge you all to support your teachers in making sure that learning is never interrupted. ♦ We found that you have an excellent understanding of how to be safe and live healthily and that you are putting this into practice very well.

You told us that your teachers care for you, help you when you need it and teach well. ♦ This is an accurate description of the college. It was evident that teachers make their lessons interesting and nearly always make sure that you are learning well. We have suggested that this would be even better if all teachers consistently helped you understand what you need to do and how to improve your work, by carefully matching the work they set you to your individual needs.

We judged that your college leaders have demonstrated convincingly that they have good capacity to improve and that they lead the college well, but they need to improve the ways they review the school to see how well it is performing.

Yours sincerely

Emma Ing

Lead Inspector

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