

# Aldworth Science College

Western Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG22 6HA

## Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since its previous inspection, the school has improved significantly, especially in making sure students achieve and behave well.
- Students make good progress in their learning. Standards have risen in English and mathematics particularly, preparing students well for the future.
- Teaching is consistently good and often of high quality. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes and are skilled in helping them to learn.
- The school's promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- The behaviour of students is now good and most have high expectations of themselves. They feel safe and are confident that any bullying will be dealt with quickly.
- The new headteacher and his team have built securely on the growing strengths of the school and have accelerated improvement.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and areas for further development. They challenge and support leaders well.
- Parents, staff and students express high levels of confidence in the leadership of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers make the best use of assessment data to ensure that the progress of students is rapid.
- The quality of written feedback to students does not always match the very best practice in the school.
- The leadership of middle managers has not yet ensured that teaching and learning are outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons, some of which were observed with senior leaders. They also made briefer visits to lessons to look at students' work and at particular aspects of learning. Inspectors also watched an assembly and visited an after-school club.
- Inspectors talked to students around the school and also met with separate groups of students to listen to their views of the school.
- They held discussions with senior leaders, staff, a local authority representative and governors. They considered views of parents (66 responses to the online Parent View and one email) and from staff: 40 responses to the staff questionnaire were received and analysed.
- Inspectors read key documents from the school, including self-evaluation and planning documents, assessment, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding documents and minutes of governor meetings.

## Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Robin Gaff	Additional inspector
Andrew Lyons	Additional inspector
Paula Sargent	Additional inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Aldworth Science College is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is in line with the national average.
- Just over 15% of disabled students and those with special educational needs are supported at school action. This proportion is just above the national average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or with statements of special educational needs, just over 3%, is below the average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.
- A small number of students attend courses at a local further education college.
- The school has resourced provision for physically disabled students, including those with hearing impairments, although there are no students in this category currently on roll.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that students' progress is rapid by:
  - extending effective use of assessment data when planning activities for students, thereby helping them all to make outstanding progress
  - ensuring that teachers give students high-quality written feedback more consistently to enable them to understand how to improve their work
  - ensuring that the best practice in middle leadership is more widely shared to secure outstanding teaching and learning in all curriculum areas.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment when they join this school is broadly average, although that of the Year 11 group who took GCSE examinations in 2012 was significantly below the national average.
- Students' results at the end of Year 11 have improved steadily and standards are now above the national average.
- While overall progress has improved in all subjects, the strongest progress is made in English and mathematics.
- Students are entered for GCSE mathematics in November of Year 11. The school ensures that the time made available after the examination is used effectively so that students can gain the highest grades of which they are capable.
- Students have, in the past, made slower progress in a few subjects but this has been successfully addressed by the school.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that those students who qualify for it make good progress. This has ensured that the average points score for this group is improving rapidly and, although still below that for all students, the gap is closing, especially in English and mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs throughout the school are now making good progress, following steps taken by the school to improve provision for this group of students.
- Achievement in science has been lower than in English and mathematics. Leaders, however, have acted decisively to ensure that students are now making better progress in science.
- The school ensures that all students develop good reading skills. Students are articulate and there is a strong focus on developing their reading and writing skills throughout the curriculum. The standard of handwriting and presentation skills is not consistently high across the school.
- Students who study vocational courses at the local further education college make equally good progress as those who follow all their courses within the school.
- Students are enthusiastic about their learning and are increasingly able to work independently. They also work well in teams, especially in humanities and physical education.
- Inspectors saw some excellent examples of student leadership, including the Young Interpreter group, who give very good support to those students who are learning English as an additional language.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The standard of teaching has steadily improved over the last three years so that most lessons are now at least good. Relationships between teachers and students are strong and there is a very purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Most students enjoy their lessons.
- Teachers know their subjects and their students well. Activities are planned well to help all students, including those with special educational needs, to take the next steps in learning, and lessons proceed at a good pace.
- Teachers use questioning skilfully to help students think more deeply and develop greater understanding.
- Teachers find ways to make learning interesting and use everyday examples to motivate and explain. Students research their chosen careers to help them understand salaries and budgeting in mathematics. In science, students learn about the impact of speed when driving. Students said they particularly enjoyed learning when they could fully participate in activities.
- Teachers adapt lessons well to meet the needs of disabled students and those with special educational needs. Together with teaching assistants, they give them good individual and small group support, enabling these students to make good progress.
- Most teachers made good use of the data and information available relating to student

progress but not all do so in planning activities that enable every student to make maximum progress in all lessons.

- Students know their targets and understand how to improve their work so that they can meet them. Inspectors found, however, that the good, and sometimes outstanding, practice in teachers' marking is not consistently used across all lessons and subjects. While oral feedback to students is usually well focused, the quality of written comments is variable and does not always give students sufficient guidance in improving their learning.
- Inspectors observed outstanding progress in a maths group in which students led the learning, teaching others high-level skills, and also in a history lesson, which promoted students' spiritual and moral development extremely effectively as they learned in detail about the execution of King Charles the First.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good; students know how to behave well so that everyone can learn. They understand the systems for maintaining good behaviour and adhere to the school rules.
- Students value the popular and motivational rewards system in which they can earn prizes for achievement, behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Inspectors noted the respectful relationships now evident in the school. Students confirm this improvement and have referred to the positive changes introduced by the new headteacher.
- School leaders deal quickly and effectively with the small minority of students who occasionally behave less well than the great majority. This has resulted in a significant drop in the number of fixed-term exclusions as students have improved their behaviour.
- Students say that they feel safe in school, and parents agree. Students are not worried about bullying and confirm that teachers deal quickly with any occurrences.
- Students understand the importance of respecting one another and there are only very isolated incidents of prejudice-based bullying, for example, relating to differences in race or religion. Students know that the use of discriminatory or insulting language is unacceptable.
- The school ensures that students know how to keep safe in life and inspectors observed how much they learned from an informative assembly on e-safety.
- The behaviour of students attending the local college is good and their progress, safety and attendance are monitored carefully by the school.
- Attendance overall has improved over the last three years and is now above average.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher and leadership team are providing strong and clear leadership and the school is in a good position to continue its improvement. In particular, senior leaders demonstrate integrity and wisdom in their leadership. Their high expectations for all staff and students permeate the school community. Students are aware of and respect these high expectations and, consequently, develop high expectations of themselves.
- Middle leadership is strengthening and there is some very good practice in departmental monitoring and improvement, which has contributed to the overall rise in students' achievement. This is not yet consistently the case, however, across all subject areas.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and comprehensive. The headteacher has ensured that policies, plans, systems and procedures within the school are all focused on school improvement.
- Systems for monitoring teaching and learning have become more rigorous so that standards of teaching have improved.
- The way in which leaders set and review targets for staff is robust, with a strong focus on students' achievement.
- Staff training has helped teachers to raise achievement. Innovative practice has been introduced, such as the successful use of teachers as Advocate Coaches, who use their expertise and experience to support others in improving students' learning.

- The curriculum allows all students to follow their interests as well as to gain the qualifications they need for further education or training. There are good opportunities for students to study vocational courses in school or at the local college. All are guided in their choices well.
- The curriculum is resourced very well. For example, there is a room dedicated to computer animation which is very popular with students. Numerous visits, opportunities to be creative and to perform, to reflect and be inspired, and to develop a range of working and interpersonal skills, all enhance the regular curriculum and are greatly valued by students.
- After-school clubs are not only enjoyed by students but they also extend a range of skills, including those of the most able. For example, a STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) club, well led by a teacher with engineering expertise, enabled students to design a system to drop an egg from height without it breaking.
- Safety is highlighted in practical lessons and leaders have taken steps to ensure that students are kept safe on site through additional security fencing and CCTV coverage.
- The special unit provides high-quality support for disabled students, and has helped to enable them to achieve well.
- The local authority, working closely with the school, is helping to improve teaching in modern language lessons so that levels of motivation and progress have increased.
- Leaders and staff within the school have established a strong ethos in which there is respect for all and a strong focus on enabling equal opportunities for every student.
- There are examples of very good promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the school, including opportunities to learn about life in modern, multicultural Britain.
- Parents and carers, staff and students all expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school's performance and their responses overall reflected a great deal of confidence in school leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and recognise both the improvements already made and areas for further development. There is a wide range of experience and expertise within the governing body, including in finance. To help governors keep up to date, there is a governor who takes the lead on training. Governors demonstrate a genuine interest in how well students are achieving and understand how to use school and national achievement data, so that they can compare the school's performance compared to that of other, similar schools. This has enabled them to ask more searching questions and hold leaders to account. They regularly look at records of teaching, so that they know how good it is and understand how it is improving. They also have a good understanding of the new performance management system, and ensure that teachers only receive pay increases in keeping with the quality of their teaching. Governors manage school finances well, ensuring that expenditure is focused on school priorities. They know that pupil premium funding has been used well to help entitled students to improve their progress in English and mathematics. Governors ensure that the school is safe and that it meets statutory requirements for safeguarding, child protection and recruitment procedures.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116427
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405647

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	806
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bob Lock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Denis McCabe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15–16 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 322691
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