

Aldworth School

Western Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 6HA

Inspection dates

22–23 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths but they have not acted with enough urgency to address past weaknesses.
- The leadership of teaching is not strong enough, with many initiatives yet to make a positive impact in the classroom.
- Pupils, especially the most able, do not make enough progress from their starting points in many subjects including English and mathematics.
- The use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is not used effectively enough. Some pupils do not yet receive the support they need.
- The school's assessment systems are not yet providing robust or accurate information for leaders to evaluate their work thoroughly.
- Middle leaders are beginning to improve the quality of teaching in their subject areas. However, a minority of teaching remains less than effective.
- The support from the local authority and the teaching school has not made enough of a difference to the quality of leadership in the school.
- Pupils in key stage 3 are doing increasingly well. However, pupils in key stage 4 are not yet achieving as well as they should in many subjects.
- Leaders are not sufficiently adept in planning for improvement. Too often, planning lacks rigour because targets set are not sharp enough so leaders struggle to measure the impact of their work.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors have transformed the way they work and are increasingly challenging leaders over weak performance.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve behaviour across the school. As a result, pupils' conduct is good.
- Pupils receive good guidance on their next steps. As a result, more pupils than the national and local averages go on to further education and employment.
- The personal development programme is especially effective. Pupils receive good guidance about how to stay safe.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and report that their children are well looked after.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They are smartly dressed and are respectful towards staff and visitors alike.
- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to experience learning outside of the classroom.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use information about what pupils can and cannot do to plan learning that deepens pupils' knowledge and skills
 - effectively question pupils to address more consistently any misconceptions they may have
 - provide pupils with appropriate advice and guidance to help them improve their work
 - learn from the practice of the most effective teachers in the school.
- Rapidly improve the effectiveness of the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently implement the school's strategies to support these pupils in lessons
 - planning more effectively to support all those pupils identified as disadvantaged and not just those who underachieve or have social and emotional needs
 - measuring the impact of the school's actions on the progress of disadvantaged pupils more thoroughly.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that leaders, including subject leaders, rigorously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the areas they lead
 - making certain that leaders take rapid action to address subjects where progress is not strong
 - refining the school's assessment information so that leaders at all levels have useful evidence to evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has taken difficult decisions and has faced significant problems in recruiting staff of good calibre. Nevertheless, he and his leaders are ambitious for the pupils in their care. They have high aspirations for pupils and have overseen a rise in the standards of attainment. However, not enough has been done to tackle the low rate of progress that some pupils make, especially the most able and disadvantaged pupils. Parents are supportive of the school and in particular they value the care and support their children receive.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses in the school but they are not addressing the areas that require further attention precisely or thoroughly enough. In the past, the planning for improvement was too broad and general. Leaders' plans lacked success measures and targets were too vague or inexact. Following advice and guidance, planning has improved. Nevertheless, further work is needed to ensure that leaders at all levels plan effectively to raise standards in their areas.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of leaders' monitoring and evaluation of their work. Recent changes to systems are making a difference in some subjects but are not yet making sufficient impact on the progress of pupils in key stage 4. The school's approach to managing teachers' pay and performance lacked rigour in the past. However, leaders have made changes this year to ensure that the procedures are now more thorough and robust.
- The leadership of teaching is not effective enough. Leaders have introduced many useful techniques and ideas to support teachers to improve their practice. However, these have not been adopted consistently across the school. As a result, there is some variation in the quality of teaching in some subjects. However, those new to teaching report that the support they receive is good. The vast majority of staff are positive about the recent changes made to help them improve their work.
- Assessment information is increasingly well-used by leaders. However, there remain issues with the quality of much of the information provided to leaders at all levels. As a result, leaders are not certain about the efficacy or reliability of the information they receive. Consequently, the actions they take to address underachievement are less effective than they would wish for.
- Disadvantaged pupils lack effective support. These pupils have performed significantly less well than other pupils in the past. Leaders have not used the extra funding suitably to ensure that pupils in key stage 4 make enough progress from their starting points. Leaders are not evaluating sufficiently the effectiveness of additional funding so they can intervene quickly when disadvantaged pupils' achievement drops. However, pupils new to the school have benefited from additional help including a summer school.
- Leaders have recently reviewed the curriculum and it is now meeting the needs of the pupils well. Pupils can study a broad variety of qualifications at key stage 4 that better match their interests than in the past. Pupils have a wide choice of languages they can study as well as a range of options in more technical subjects such as business and computing. Pupils receive good advice and guidance about their futures and

consequently all pupils in 2016 went onto further study or employment.

- The programme to develop pupils' understanding of the challenges and opportunities of life in modern Britain is especially strong. Pupils receive good advice and guidance about what it means to be a responsible citizen as well as how to manage everyday risks. As a result, pupils are tolerant of others and have a good sense of right and wrong. They are confident in managing the perils of social media as well as knowledgeable about the dangers of radicalisation. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in additional activities, including residential trips abroad as well as after-school clubs.
- The local authority has provided some support to the school, in the main focused on supporting leadership in English. The headteacher has also brokered support from a nearby teaching school to provide support for middle leaders. However, this support has not improved leadership quickly enough. Further support is required to ensure that leaders can rapidly address the weaknesses that remain in the school.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium is used effectively. There are good systems in place to support these pupils. The vast majority of those pupils eligible for extra help are making good progress in their reading. The appointment of a new special educational needs coordinator has brought significant additional expertise to this area of the school's work, particularly in relation to improving pupils' engagement in their learning.
- Strategies to improve pupils' reading in Year 8 are also having a significant impact, with leaders becoming increasingly adept in tracking pupils' improvement over time.
- In the past leaders recognised that standards of behaviour were not high enough. Consequently, leaders took decisive action to improve this aspect of their work. Leaders have improved the quality and expertise of the staff who lead on behaviour management. They have also successfully prioritised key issues such as reducing exclusions and tackling bullying.
- There are very good links with the local alternative provision, which provides useful support to the school to manage pupils who struggle without additional help and guidance. Over three quarters of pupils who attend alternative provision return to school and reintegrate successfully. As a result, the ethos and culture within the school is much improved.

Governance of the school

- The governors have made significant changes to the way they work. They have made the most of the opportunities to restructure and refresh their work following the renaming of the school in 2013. In the past 18 months they have appointed a new chair of the governing body and successfully filled vacancies with people who have the most suitable skills. As a result, they are much more tenacious and challenging than in the past. They regularly visit the school to review the work of leaders. They scrutinise achievement information adroitly and are well aware of the weaknesses in the progress of different groups.
- Governors exercise appropriate oversight of the systems to reward pay and performance. They are especially rigorous in their appraisal of leaders' pay and rightly challenge the awarding of additional pay when performance does not warrant this.
- Governors are committed to improving their practice; they have taken part in training

and regularly review whether they have the right expertise to support the school. Where governors have identified gaps, they rapidly address these with training or seek additional support and advice.

- Governors have questioned leaders over the use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils but recognise that they have not delved deeply enough into reasons why this funding is less well used in key stage 4. They acknowledge that an external review would help them scrutinise leaders' work more effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are good systems in place that ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for. Those staff with additional responsibilities are trained appropriately. All staff in the school receive high-quality induction to the school's safeguarding procedures and there are regular updates for staff throughout the year. As a result, staff take the appropriate action when circumstances demand it.
- Leaders and support staff in the school work especially effectively with external agencies to support those pupils and families who need additional help from time to time. Governors exercise good oversight of this area of the school by checking the policies and practices in the school at least twice a year.
- Parents report that their children are safe and well looked after. Pupils feel safe; they are happy to confide in staff when they have a concern and are confident that staff take appropriate action.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- A minority of teachers have not adopted the most effective approaches to raise standards. In some lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able pupils. Many teachers have improved how they plan for and assess pupils' work but weaknesses remain across the school, including in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers' planning is too variable. Evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work revealed that often teachers plan effectively for the different abilities of the pupils in their groups. Some use the school's 'go further' approach effectively to stretch the most able pupils and they question pupils skilfully so that pupils have to think deeply about topics and address any misconceptions which pupils may have. However, senior leaders do not provide enough opportunities for other teachers to benefit from the advice and guidance of the most skilful practitioners to help improve the quality of teaching overall.
- The majority of teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan learning that interests and motivates pupils. For example, teachers in modern foreign languages promote high levels of engagement because they use good systems to break down learning and know how to support pupils to learn new vocabulary and grammar effectively. Pupils in physical education work hard because teachers provide clarity about the steps pupils need to take to develop key skills and attributes. Where teaching is weaker, staff are less confident about planning the next steps in learning because they lack sufficient subject knowledge.

- Teachers are not using the school's assessment system consistently well. In a few lessons, marking and feedback does not provide useful guidance for pupils to understand what they have done well and how they can enhance their work. However, when effective feedback is provided, pupils routinely act on the suggestions made and improve their work.
- Teachers know who the disadvantaged pupils are and are increasingly using similar strategies to develop pupils' social and emotional resilience. However, teachers are not using these ideas consistently and have a lack of understanding about other effective strategies to support these pupils. As a result, not enough disadvantaged pupils are making the progress expected or catching up quickly enough, especially in key stage 4.
- Teaching assistants in lessons usually provide helpful support to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They provide useful guidance and check these pupils' work appropriately. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities respond well and are increasingly doing better in classes. The advice and guidance from the special educational needs coordinator is used increasingly effectively by all teachers to plan more skilfully for the needs of these pupils. However, teaching assistants do not always have a clear idea of what learning is planned to be taught and therefore their effectiveness is sometimes limited.
- Parents are positive about the quality of teaching and the progress their children make at Aldworth. They value the information they receive and are increasingly supportive of the school, attending workshops and clinics in greater numbers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- In lessons, pupils work well together and are eager to offer their views. They are confident and self-assured when sharing opinions. There is a strong sense of mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils are tolerant and respectful of others. For example, they have recently established a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender group for pupils after school. They especially value the personal development programme which gives them helpful tips about how to manage issues such as sexting and the other associated risks of social media.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership skills. These include taking up roles as mentors, sports leaders and members of the students' council. They appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in other activities, including trips overseas.
- Attendance is improving and is now close to the national average. The attendance of groups is also improving because there are good systems in place to track and monitor attendance.
- Pupils report that the advice and guidance they receive to move onto their next steps are very useful. In the past, they reported that earlier advice on careers would be helpful. As a result, school leaders have introduced a more comprehensive programme which starts in Year 7. Consequently, pupils are confident about the choices they make.

- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. The vast majority of parents also agree that their children are well looked after.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and in the vast majority of lessons work hard and try their best. However, there are a few occasions when pupils lose focus and do not achieve their best. Pupils have a good understanding of the rules to ensure good behaviour. The vast majority of pupils follow these well.
- Pupils are proud of their work and the standard of presentation is improving across all the subjects. When they receive useful advice, they act on this and commit to refine their work. Pupils are increasingly confident when tackling more challenging work when they are given the opportunity.
- When moving around the building, pupils conduct themselves well and wear their uniform smartly. They take care of their environment and enjoy the free time they have. Pupils welcome visitors and are keen to share their views of the school.
- Leaders have good systems in place to support pupils who need extra help in managing their behaviour. They have established new approaches that ensure the interventions for these pupils are very effective. Alternative provision is used especially well so that the number of exclusions has dropped significantly. As a result, those pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion are increasingly doing well.
- Pupils report that bullying rarely takes place and when it does occur it is dealt with effectively. Pupils are confident to share their concerns with staff, especially the pastoral staff who support them because these staff know their emotional and social needs well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the past, pupils achieved less well than others nationally but in 2016 pupils' attainment improved to close to the national average in the majority of subjects. However, in 2016 pupils made less progress from their starting points than similar pupils nationally. This was especially the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have taken action to address the gaps in achievement, but current information shows that attainment and progress are not improving rapidly enough. This is especially the case in key stage 4 where not enough pupils are on track to meet the targets set for them.
- Leaders have revamped the way they assess and set targets for pupils. The system is currently developing and many leaders are not confident enough in using the new approach to test the progress made by groups within their subjects. Leaders recognise that more work needs to be done to improve the quality of information as well as make more use of opportunities to check the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' progress.
- In English, pupils did not achieve well in 2016. Too many pupils, especially the most able, did not gain the highest grades. Leaders have taken urgent action to address

weaknesses identified and work seen in books shows that more of the most able pupils are on track to succeed. Systems to support pupils who need to catch up are far more effective than in the past. However, there remains further work to do to ensure that all staff assess pupils' work accurately and plan well to ensure that the most able pupils' progress is accelerated.

- Outcomes in mathematics in 2016 improved significantly when compared with results in 2015. However, pupils still made less progress from their starting points than similar pupils nationally. Current information shows that leaders have more work to do to ensure that pupils in Year 11 achieve well. Inspectors found that pupils gain a secure understanding of the key skills and concepts in mathematics but are not yet developing sufficient mastery of topics studied because the quality of teaching is variable across the subject.
- Pupils' progress in science was broadly in line with the national average in 2016. However, work in books showed that too few of the most able pupils achieve well, especially in physics. Current information also showed that too few pupils who study single science are on track to achieve a good grade. Leaders acknowledge that teaching in science is not sufficiently well-planned and assessment is not used well enough. Leaders are addressing this, though the impact is not yet apparent.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is recognised as a priority for leaders. They have established some school conventions to address this but these are not yet consistently used by all staff. As a result, the most able pupils in key stage 4 are not making as much progress as they should. However, current information shows that pupils in key stage 3, and especially in Year 7, are making stronger progress from their starting points than in the past.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in the school. In 2016, pupils who received additional support or who had an education, health and care plan made good progress in the majority of subjects. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator has further improved the systems in place so that these pupils continue to make good progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils did not achieve well in 2016. Leaders have identified the progress of disadvantaged pupils as a main priority. Current information shows that disadvantaged pupils in key stage 3 are making better progress than in the past. However, pupils in key stage 4, especially in Year 10, continue to do less well than similar pupils nationally. Leaders have not evaluated the impact of the interventions in mathematics and English effectively enough so they are not clear about which strategies make the most difference in helping these pupils catch up.
- Reading is well established in the school. There are good systems to promote reading and useful support for pupils who need additional help to catch up. The library is well used and there is a range of activities that promote pupils' reading including the Hampshire Book Award and World Book Day. Consequently, pupils who arrive with lower than average reading scores make good progress following targeted intervention.

School details

Unique reference number	116427
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024667

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	957
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greg Mendelsohn
Headteacher	Denis McCabe
Telephone number	01256 322691
Website	www.aldworth.hants.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@aldworth.hants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is an average sized 11–16 secondary school which has grown rapidly since 2012.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for additional pupil premium funding is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend the local alternative provision at the Ashwood Academy.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with staff, including newly qualified teachers, leaders and governors. The inspectors also spoke to the school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors, along with leaders, visited 49 classes across all subjects and year groups in the school. The inspectors looked at books in lessons, including those of pupils who are disadvantaged or are high achieving.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally at breaktime and reviewed the 128 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey. There were also meetings held with different groups of pupils from a variety of year groups, including student leaders, disadvantaged and most-able pupils.
- Inspectors analysed the 205 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as the 98 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- Inspectors checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding, behaviour, minutes of meetings, staff appraisal, monitoring and self-evaluation.

Inspection team

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Ann McCarthy	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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