

Aylesford School and Sixth Form College

Tapping Way, Warwick, Warwickshire CV34 6XR

Inspection dates

17–18 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors lead and manage the school effectively. They are committed to providing pupils with a high standard of education.
- Middle leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have clear plans to bring about change and make further improvements.
- Pupils' outcomes in the secondary phase are good. In 2017, pupils' progress by the end of key stage 4 was at the national average. Current secondary pupils are making strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Primary-aged pupils are now making very good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is effective. It is particularly strong in the early years, primary phase and sixth form.
- Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good. Pupils in all phases behave very well in lessons and around school.
- Pupils feel very safe and parents and carers confirmed this. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Children get off to a good start in early years. They settle very well into school life and make strong progress due to the effective teaching in this well-led provision.
- The sixth form is effective. Almost all students achieve the qualifications they need to go on to their chosen courses in higher education.
- Staff support pupils very well in both their learning and in their welfare to enable them to make a success of their education. All groups of pupils do well.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium promotes healthy lifestyles for pupils very effectively.
- Leaders and governors do not have a sufficiently developed strategic overview of Aylesford Academy as an all-through school.
- Until recently, disadvantaged pupils in the secondary phase have not made the same progress as others in the school or nationally.
- Some key administrative support in the primary phase has not kept up to date with current personnel requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - there is greater strategic oversight of Aylesford as an all-through school, sharing the good practice taking place between the phases
 - administrative staff keep up to date with current personnel requirements, particularly in the primary phase, so that all staff have accurate records.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by making sure that all teachers continue to support disadvantaged pupils, particularly in the secondary phase, so that they achieve the progress of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's effective leadership has led to marked improvements in the quality of teaching and better outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in all year groups and in most subjects.
- There is a relentless focus on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils. Leaders monitor teaching closely and take action where necessary. Leaders know where teaching is strong and where it requires further improvement. Leaders hold teachers to account through the setting of challenging targets, and support them through an extensive bespoke training programme.
- Newly qualified teachers feel well supported, and commented on the ever-open door for advice. The vast majority of staff who responded to the survey for this inspection agree that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. They consider that leaders' use of professional development helps to improve teaching.
- The curriculum is planned specifically for the needs of the pupils in school and has a strong link to their development as responsible and caring citizens. Mathematics and humanities subjects are particular strengths in the school. Leaders have also ensured that pupils enjoy a rich array of extra-curricular activities, for example street dance, a forest school, ultimate frisbee, trampolining and badminton.
- Year 7 catch-up funding is used well to support pupils who were below the expected levels in reading, writing and numeracy at the end of Year 6. The provision of a small additional mathematics group in Year 7 ensures that pupils make rapid gains in their learning. Most have caught up with the expected standard for their age during the academic year.
- Leaders are now better skilled in identifying the barriers to learning for some pupils in the school who are disadvantaged. Until recently, these pupils, particularly in the secondary phase, have not achieved the same outcomes as their classmates. Raised expectations of what disadvantaged pupils are able to achieve and improved teaching in all areas of the school mean that these pupils are now making good progress, both academically and personally. Leaders also provide enrichment experiences for disadvantaged pupils and their families as well as academic, social and emotional support.
- Leaders give careful attention to pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. The coordination of provision is based on a close understanding of the pupils who require extra support, and the funding is spent wisely. Staff review interventions regularly to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Leaders pay close attention to the opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all subject areas and in assemblies, tutor times and special events. Teachers address citizenship topics creatively through their subjects so that pupils gain, for example, an understanding of respect and tolerance for others' views and opinions when using social media.

- Leaders provide teachers with high-quality resources and information, and organise guest speakers so that pupils receive guidance on, for example, the benefits of sport contributing to healthier lifestyle, and stress management. Leaders promote British values well through lessons, form periods and the wider curriculum.
- Pupils are advised well for their next steps in their education, training or employment. All pupils who leave school at 18 go on to further education, training or employment, and a high proportion secure places in universities.
- The effective use of the PE and sport premium encourages primary-aged pupils to be more active and to improve their skills in a range of sports.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed that the school is well led and managed and that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Some administrative requirements for primary sector staff are not reviewed often enough and kept up to date, resulting in occasional inaccuracies in staff details. Leaders, including governors, acknowledge that Aylesford School as an all-through school still lacks a robust and thorough strategic overview, reflecting all phases as one school and preventing much good practice, taking place in different phases, from being shared for the benefit of all sectors.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly knowledgeable and offer a wealth of experience and expertise to the school, for example in finance and safeguarding.
- Governors are very supportive of leaders. They are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses in the school and overall pupil outcomes. They are prepared to challenge leaders, for example by not accepting excuses for the poorer performance of the disadvantaged pupils in the secondary phase.
- The governing body plans for the future of the school strategically, and ensures that it remains financially viable. Governors are rigorous in ensuring that leaders meet all their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding.
- Governors are highly active in the life of the school through visits, learning walks, meetings with staff, consulting with parents and pupils, and attendance at special events.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders place a high priority on safeguarding and the welfare of pupils. Pupils reported that they feel reassured by the gates and fences, and feel safe in all parts of the grounds. Parents who spoke with inspectors and those responding to Parent View agreed overwhelmingly that their children feel safe in school.
- Designated leaders are well trained for their roles. Records of incidents are kept accurately, and arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff are appropriate. Risk assessments carried out, for example on forthcoming trips, are comprehensive.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in the subjects and age groups that they teach. They know what pupils should learn in order to reach or exceed the expected standards for their ages. Teachers use this knowledge to build pupils' skills and understanding systematically.
- Teachers often use thoughtful questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to challenge them to think more deeply. Inspectors observed this on a number of occasions. For example, in an English lesson in Year 9, the teacher used questions skilfully to introduce new knowledge and information concerning aspects of persuasive writing. This quality of questioning helps pupils develop secure understanding and skills.
- Teachers in both secondary and primary phases ensure that pupils have opportunities for extended writing, not only in English but in other subjects such as modern foreign languages and humanities.
- Teachers manage their classes well. They have high expectations of pupils' conduct and behaviour. Classrooms are calm, orderly environments and pupils are on task. Instructions are clear, and little time is wasted in lessons, which move at a brisk pace. Lessons are free from incidents of low-level disruption.
- Additional adults are deployed well, for example when pupils were solving equations in small focus groups in a key stage 5 physics lesson. The support enables pupils, including those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, to access tasks and enhance their learning.
- Guided reading lessons in key stage 1 support pupils to apply the phonics skills they have acquired to tackle new and less familiar words.
- A large majority of parents responding to Parent View said that their children are taught well in school.
- Teachers explain clearly to pupils what the lesson is about. Most ensure that pupils stay focused on the intended learning throughout. Teachers do this by identifying whether pupils are finding the work too hard or too easy. They then provide additional support or inject extra challenge as necessary to ensure that pupils achieve well.
- Until recently, and particularly in the secondary phase, some teachers have not had sufficiently high expectations for disadvantaged pupils, preventing them from achieving the outcomes of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning, as they want to do well. They value the praise they receive from their teachers, as this helps to build their self-esteem and enables them to understand how to be successful learners.

- The school caters for pupils' physical and emotional well-being well. It encourages pupils to make good food choices, and extra-curricular sporting activities promote healthy lifestyles. The breakfast club provides a positive start to the day by ensuring that a nourishing meal is on offer.
- Pupils benefit from planned events to raise their awareness of safety matters. For instance, pupils learn to keep safe while using social media. Additionally, pupils in key stages 3 and 4 learn about life choices and the dangers of drug misuse.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take. Incidents of bullying are few, and pupils said that any incidents that do occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils said that this helps them to feel safe at all times and in all parts of the school site.
- Leaders make sure that the small number of pupils who attend alternative provision are looked after well. The school monitors these pupils' progress closely. They receive a programme of activities, support and tuition, which helps them to overcome difficulties and develop a more positive attitude to their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to learn, and show interest and enthusiasm for their work. They listen and respond well to each other, share materials generously and provide mutual support. This attitude begins early at the school. For example, in the early years outdoor area, children were observed taking turns and helping each other to walk across a plastic tightrope on the ground.
- Pupils move around the building in an orderly fashion. They are polite and courteous, holding doors open for visitors.
- Incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour were conspicuous by their absence in all phases in the school.
- A majority of parents responding to Parent View said that the school makes sure that their children are well behaved. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that behaviour is outstanding throughout the school in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Pupils are very proud of their work and their achievements. They were keen to show inspectors examples of their writing or talk about their own initiatives, for example raising money for several charities including the British Heart Foundation.
- Overall attendance is above the national average. To maintain this, leaders implement a wide range of strategies to support those individuals and groups of pupils who are persistently absent from school. Initiatives to support those disadvantaged pupils with poor attendance are beginning to have a positive impact.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Evidence seen in pupils' books and school tracking data demonstrate that pupils currently in primary and secondary phases are making good progress across a range of subjects and year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Slower progress in recent years was caused by dips in the quality of teaching. Well-considered actions quickly remedied this. Public examination results in 2017 showed that Year 11 pupils had made progress broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally. They made particularly strong progress in mathematics.
- Overall, in 2017 disadvantaged pupils made poor progress compared to that of other pupils nationally. Leaders have taken a range of actions, including teacher planning and having higher expectations of what disadvantaged pupils are capable of achieving, to make sure that current disadvantaged pupils make better progress. There are early signs that the plan is proving successful.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in their mainstream classes. As a result, they make strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are making good progress.
- The school's first outcomes in phonics, based on the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 1, were below average. However, current school information indicates that there is a rapidly improving rising trend because the quality of phonics teaching has improved, and evidence seen during the inspection confirmed this. All pupils who left in 2017 have gone on to further training, education or employment. A significant proportion of sixth-form leavers secured places at universities.

Early years provision

Good

- The majority of children enter the Reception classes with skills that are typical for four-year olds.
- The very good quality of teaching that children receive means that most have achieved a good level of development, and they are ready for the demands of the national curriculum by the time they begin Year 1.
- Children settle quickly into school life and learn to behave appropriately because adults create clear routines for them to follow. Children soon learn what to do and follow instructions willingly.
- Teachers work in close partnership with parents to establish what children can and cannot do when they start school. Staff use frequent, detailed assessment effectively to build a picture of children's growing skills. Teachers use this information carefully to plan activities and experiences that systematically build children's understanding.
- The early years pupil premium is used well to boost children's personal, social and emotional skills. This gives them the confidence they need to learn.
- Children are safe, happy and well cared for in the early years classes. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met. They feel secure in the trusting relationships they make with the adults around them. This security helps them take risks and learn new skills quickly.
- The early years provision is effective because it is led well. Leaders have an incisive knowledge of what is working well and what could be even better. They are ambitious

in their pursuit of excellence.

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Leadership in the sixth form is good. Leaders have a sound grasp of students' achievements, the strengths in the sixth form and areas that need development. Action planning shows that leaders deal with weaknesses swiftly.
- In response to students' needs, leaders have introduced business and sport vocational courses. This means that students now have a wide range of options to choose from. These courses have been popular with students.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress. Across a range of subjects, both academic and vocational, school records indicate that current students' progress is in line with that of other students nationally with similar starting points. In some subjects, in the past, students have made weaker progress. Leaders have identified these areas and implemented effective actions to improve current students' attainment and progress.
- The post-16 curriculum is well considered and meets students' needs effectively. The range of non-qualification activities is impressive and effectively prepares students for life in modern Britain. Each of these activities is carefully chosen to build students' confidence, work readiness, financial knowledge, health and well-being. The majority of students engage in regular sporting activities, and all have access to an array of support for their studies and personal needs.
- Teaching in the sixth form is effective. Teachers and students engage in thoughtful dialogue in lessons. Students become highly motivated, reflective and independent learners.
- Behaviour and personal development are very good. Students are becoming more fully integrated in the life of the school. Attendance rates are high and behaviour is of a very high standard.
- As a result of leaders making sure that courses are suitable for students, retention in the sixth form is very high. The very small number who need to retake GCSEs in English and mathematics do so successfully.
- The majority of students go on to higher education after their time in the sixth form. All students in 2017 went on to education, apprenticeships or employment. This is because leaders provide effective advice and information about the range of opportunities available to them.

School details

Unique reference number	137770
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10048279

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	931
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Lyttle
Headteacher	Steven Hall
Telephone number	01926 747100
Website	www.aylesfordschool.org.uk
Email address	steve.hall@aylesford-elearning.net
Date of previous inspection	26–27 September 2012

Information about this school

- Aylesford School and Sixth Form College became an all-through school with the addition of the primary phase in September 2015. At the time of the inspection, there were pupils of primary age in early years and key stage 1 only.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils in the school are White British and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- The school makes use of alternative provision for a few pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion at Positive About Young People, an organisation recommended by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is close to the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all phases and observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and PE. The headteacher and senior leaders joined inspectors on most of their classroom visits.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' workbooks covering all the subjects they learn.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading. Inspectors met groups of pupils in key stages 1, 3, 4 and 5 to gather their opinions of the school. There were no responses to the Ofsted online survey of pupils' views.
- Inspectors met several leaders, including those with responsibility for specific subjects.
- The lead inspector met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection. Inspectors took account of the 82 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of 55 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and took evidence from a range of sources on the work of leaders and governors to promote pupils' outcomes and well-being. Inspectors examined safeguarding information and records relating to attendance, behaviour and welfare.

Inspection team

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