

# Aldworth School

Western Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 6HA

## Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good. Too often, teachers do not routinely plan work that takes pupils' starting points into account. Consequently, pupils do not always make the progress they should.
- Leaders' actions to improve the quality of education since the last inspection have not been sufficiently swift. Recent changes have set the school on the right path but further work is required before standards are good.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they have not used this to evaluate systematically the impact of their actions on pupil outcomes.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning vary. When teachers do not plan work effectively, some pupils lose concentration, and low-level disruption occurs.
- Previously, too many pupils have not made enough progress from their starting points. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those with high prior attainment. Although improving, pupils' progress is not consistently strong.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics in 2018 was particularly weak. While leaders are taking effective action to address this issue, the legacy of a lack of progress means that their attainment is lower than it should be.
- Leaders' planning to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has lacked clarity. As a result, leaders have not used additional funding in an effective way.
- Leaders have not supported teachers well enough to plan for the different abilities in their classes.

### The school has the following strengths

- Following its restructure, the leadership team has grasped what needs to be done to improve the school. They have the capacity to make the required changes. Leaders are focusing on the right things and there are signs of recent improvement in the areas they have tackled.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education. They receive appropriate advice and guidance that enables them to make positive decisions about their futures.
- Middle leadership has been strengthened. Middle leaders have effective plans in place to drive improvement. This has already led to improvements in humanities and science.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and well cared for. They understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders consider pupils' needs and aspirations when deciding on provision.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - leaders quicken the rate of change when making improvements to the quality of teaching and learning by systematically evaluating the impact of their actions on pupils' progress
  - leaders rigorously use the improved information from the school's monitoring activities to identify and support pupils who are not making strong progress from their starting points
  - plans for the extra funding brought in by the pupil premium are focused more sharply and evaluated robustly to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make better progress
  - leaders' administration of safeguarding reflects the strong practice in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils make good progress by:
  - reducing variability in teaching by ensuring that teachers' planning is well matched to pupils' needs and provides them with the right level of challenge
  - ensuring that teachers use well thought-through strategies and intervene with timely support to enable pupils, regardless of their prior attainment, to make good progress
  - continuing to share the best practice that exists in school, for example in humanities, to develop teachers' skills.
- Improve the quality of pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by eradicating low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders' actions have not led to sufficiently secure and sustained improvements in all areas of the school. Although there have been improvements, such as in developing a whole-school culture of high expectation, the work of leaders has not secured rapid enough change.
- Leaders' accurate understanding of the areas in which the school needs to improve has rightly shaped their planning. However, these plans lack sharpness because they do not evaluate effectively leaders' actions in improving pupils' progress.
- While leaders' evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is broadly accurate, they have not used this precisely enough to improve teaching and learning swiftly. As a result, the quality of teaching across the school is too variable. Consequently, too many pupils have not made good progress.
- Previously, senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning was not well enough organised and therefore was not a catalyst for improvement. Current practice is giving leaders better information about what they need to do to improve teaching. Leaders have aligned this closely to teachers' professional development, and while it is proving effective in bringing about improvements in teaching, it has yet to have sufficient impact on pupils' progress.
- Senior leaders' actions in restructuring the leadership team have increased the capacity to bring about improvement. New appointments have added impetus and a fresh desire to accelerate the rate of change. Leaders clearly understand their roles, and consequently, their actions are beginning to bring about improvements. However, leaders know that there is still much to be done.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding has not been effective enough and they have not evaluated the impact of it sufficiently well. Previous strategies have not identified clearly the barriers to learning for these pupils. As a result, in lessons, teachers' support does not address individual pupils' specific needs.
- Leaders' work in tracking pupils' progress has become more effective. Leaders have ensured that pupils' progress data is quality assured rigorously to ensure its accuracy. As a result, leaders are increasingly able to hold middle leaders and teachers to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' use of the Year 7 catch-up funding to support pupils who were behind in their numeracy and/or literacy has been successful. Leaders review programmes regularly, adapt as necessary and have planned further changes to increase their effectiveness.
- Although they receive appropriate information, leaders' oversight of the attendance and progress of pupils attending alternative provision is not strong enough. Leaders acknowledge that this is an area that they must develop rapidly.
- Leaders recognise that difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff and poor teaching in mathematics have had a negative impact on pupils' progress in this key subject area. Through perseverance in appointing and supporting teachers, leaders have begun to strengthen the teaching of mathematics.

- Despite pupils with SEND not making good enough progress historically, leaders are now ensuring that the spending of funding for these pupils is being planned more effectively. The early impact of this is encouraging and reflects leaders' determination in ensuring that pupils benefit from a wide range of interventions and support.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have developed a curriculum that is suited to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils can choose from an increasingly wide range of subjects to study in key stage 4. That enables them successfully to take the next steps in their education, training or employment. However, the proportion of pupils who take the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is low.
- Middle leadership is strong. Senior leaders have successfully sought to recruit and develop effective middle leaders. They have an impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress through careful monitoring and well-planned actions to support teaching staff. As a result, leaders' capacity to sustain improvement is better than in the past.
- Leaders have worked to improve pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have designed a curriculum that enables pupils to make positive choices, stay safe and understand the importance of responsible behaviour.
- Approximately two thirds of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, would recommend the school to others. Several parents took the time to respond to the free-text section of the questionnaire. Many of these comments were positive; however, two fifths expressed some concerns. These concerns centred mainly on the high level of staff turnover, poor communication and the quality of leadership and management of the school.
- Newly qualified staff and trainees are supported well through individual and whole-school training programmes. They feel that training is tailored to their individual needs and see themselves as part of the school community.
- Pupils enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities. They talked positively about their experiences in participating in these activities, and highlighted to inspectors the impact that this has in building a sense of community.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors' support for the headteacher in the successful restructuring of the leadership team has increased the school's capacity to improve. Their increasingly 'hands-on' approach and visits to the school ensure that they are more ably supporting leaders in securing improvement.
- Governors' determination in their desire for the school to improve is resolute. They share leaders' ambitions. The lack of sharpness in leaders' plans in evaluating the impact of their actions has, however, hindered governors' ability to hold leaders to account. Governors have been too slow in demanding the required incisiveness in leaders' strategic planning.
- Governors' scrutiny of leaders' work has enabled them to have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They now analyse information given to them more closely. Scrutiny of the minutes of governors' meetings confirm that they are providing more rigorous challenge to school leaders.

- Governors are not yet doing enough to ensure that the pupil premium is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. They realise that the progress made by these pupils is not strong enough but have not provided the necessary impetus to leaders to accelerate this.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders undertake the necessary checks when recruiting staff and maintain effective records. Governors monitor these arrangements and ensure that all procedures and checks are in place.
- Leaders ensure that staff are trained regularly in all aspects of safeguarding. Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously and understand fully the procedures for reporting concerns about the welfare of pupils in school.
- Leaders are committed to developing and maintaining an open safeguarding culture where staff can, and do, report concerns and share information. Leaders have invested in staff and systems to support their work to keep children safe. As a result, issues are raised in a timely manner, and staff work well with families and outside agencies to secure support for vulnerable pupils.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They know who to speak to should they have a concern, and are confident that they will be listened to and taken seriously. Pupils feel safe at school, a view which is echoed by parents.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable. While strong teaching does exist, variation, both within and between departments, is still evident. For example, teaching in science and history has improved since the last inspection but requires further improvement in mathematics.
- In some instances, teachers' planning does not meet the needs of pupils' abilities in the class. Sometimes pupils find the work too difficult and some pupils find it too easy. Consequently, this hinders pupils' progress. In these instances, teachers sometimes fail to offer the timely support necessary to prevent them falling behind, which hinders their progress further.
- Teachers' ongoing assessment of pupils' progress is not always secure. Teachers do not always assess pupils effectively to ensure that they have made secure progress before moving on. This results in pupils not being able to articulate and explain previous learning. Consequently, pupils are unable to draw effectively on this when required in subsequent lessons.
- Parents and pupils have rightly reflected their concerns about the negative impact of fluctuations in staffing on the continuity of teaching and behaviour of pupils. Leaders acknowledge the impact of this and have been determined in their efforts to both recruit effective teachers and use professional development to improve the skills of existing teachers. Both of these strategies are having a positive impact in improving

the consistency of teaching.

- Not all teachers use homework effectively. The quantity and quality of homework is dependent on the individual teacher, and some pupils are missing out on opportunities to develop their learning further.
- Teachers' understanding of the specific needs of pupils is not yet secure. They recognise which pupils are disadvantaged and use teaching strategies to try to support them. However, these strategies are not sufficiently refined to overcome the specific barriers to learning for these individual pupils. As a result, while the progress of these pupils is improving, teaching is not as effective as it could be.
- In many instances, teachers' high-quality questions check pupils' understanding effectively. Such questions stimulate pupils' curiosity and facilitate deeper thinking. By strengthening pupils' thinking, pupils are increasingly resilient to failure and show tenacity in their work. Conversely, at times, teachers' questioning is superficial, and leaders rightly recognise that further improvements are required.
- Pupils are confident in asking for help and support. They often discuss their learning with their peers and are confident in explaining their learning to others. As a result, lost learning time is reduced and pupils make more progress.
- Teachers' determination in wanting pupils to achieve well is a recurrent feature in lessons. Pupils work productively alongside teachers in an atmosphere of mutual respect and common purpose.
- Leaders, rightly, are making consistently high levels of challenge a priority for pupils of all abilities. Teachers have responded well to this, but sometimes lack the skill or confidence to reshape tasks and explanations to provide challenge at an appropriate level. As a result, some pupils find their work overly difficult and make less progress.
- Leaders' actions in improving the quality of learning are becoming increasingly effective. For instance, in mathematics, leaders have created a culture in which teachers plan jointly and share expertise and ideas regularly. Consequently, pupils' ability to apply their learning to solve more complex problems is improving. However, this practice is not sufficiently widespread.
- Teachers' use of feedback to enable pupils to improve their work is evident where teaching is strongest. For example, in history and geography pupils use feedback to regularly improve their work following assessments. When this is done with rigour, this enables pupils to make strong progress.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Requires improvement**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development requires improvement.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and are safe. They understand the different forms of bullying that can take place and are confident in reporting it. Leaders' records confirm that bullying is rare and has declined. Pupils agree. However, some told inspectors that when bullying does occur it is not always dealt with effectively enough.
- The majority of parents who responded to Parent View think that their children are

safe and well looked after. One parent commented: 'I have only positive views about the values and ethos demonstrated by the school. My children are safe and happy in their education; staff are genuinely interested in my children's progress.'

- The vast majority of pupils value the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education lessons they receive. Leaders have coordinated an effective programme that enables pupils to make positive decisions and keep themselves safe. However, due to a lack of continuity in staffing, some pupils have not fully benefited in this important aspect of their development.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training. They benefit from an organised programme of external speakers and in-school careers advice. As a result, they are well informed about their choices and make successful transitions into placements when they leave the school.
- Leaders' use of alternative provision is beneficial for the small number of pupils that access it. They have frequent contact with the external provider. However, leaders' record-keeping and monitoring in checking the personal development, behaviour and welfare of each pupil is not robust enough.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A number of pupils and parents highlighted pupils' poor attitudes towards learning. These attitudes were also seen by inspectors in some lessons. When teachers do not provide work which is well matched to pupils' needs, some pupils do not concentrate or put in the required effort. This hinders their progress, and in a minority of instances, pupils then disrupt the learning of others.
- In most cases pupils work hard; however, when there is poor behaviour, staff do not always manage this consistently well. Some staff do not feel well-enough supported by leaders in dealing with pupils' misbehaviour.
- Pupils move around the site in a calm and orderly way, and behaviour at social times is generally good. Most pupils are polite to each other, staff and visitors, and the school is a calm and welcoming environment. As a result, the vast majority of pupils respect their school and its surroundings.
- Following a fall in attendance, leaders have acted strategically to redress this decline, and attendance has subsequently improved. Leaders' actions are more cohesive and they are developing wider strategies aimed at improving attendance further. For instance, the school's bespoke alternative provision is being used well to support the attendance of pupils who have been persistently absent.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In 2018, pupils' progress was below the national averages in a range of subjects, including mathematics, English, science and modern foreign languages. The outcomes at key stage 4 are indicative of the variable progress pupils make across the curriculum. This reflects further the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and

learning.

- The progress of the most able pupils declined in 2018. Leaders have responded by focusing on developing subject curriculum within key stage 3 and working to raise the level of challenge in lessons. Consequently, pupils' work shows that the progress of these pupils is improving but is not yet securely good.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils was below that of other pupils nationally in 2018. Leaders' actions are resulting in emerging improvements in some subjects. There was little difference between the progress inspectors saw in the work of some disadvantaged pupils compared with non-disadvantaged pupils' work. However, leaders' lack of sharp focus continues to hamper the progress of these pupils and does not support teachers in overcoming pupils' barriers to learning.
- In 2018, pupils with SEND made less progress than pupils nationally across a wide range of subjects. Leaders' actions, through the introduction of relatively new systems and improved planning, are now supporting these pupils, and their progress is improving.
- Despite marked weaknesses in historic outcomes, pupils are now making stronger progress throughout the school. Leaders' work on improving the key stage 3 curriculum is making a positive difference. Leaders' increasingly robust tracking of pupils' progress indicates that improvements in progress are being made, for instance in humanities.
- In the previous academic year, a relatively large number of pupils entered the school during key stage 4. Due to a legacy of poor progress, and despite a range of interventions, many of these pupils did not achieve as highly as they should have. However, the school was successful in ensuring that they made a successful transition to the next stage of education, employment or training.
- Tutors' use of tutor-time sessions to ensure that pupils read widely is not always used purposefully. Pupils do not consistently use this time well, and tutors do not challenge pupils to read appropriate texts. As a result, the impact of the sessions is limited.
- Through effective support and guidance, the proportion of all pupils securing appropriate places for their next steps in education, employment or training has remained consistently high.



## School details

Unique reference number	116427
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10101632

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

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	971
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Bax
Headteacher	Denis McCabe
Telephone number	01256 322 691
Website	<a href="http://www.aldworth.hants.sch.uk/">www.aldworth.hants.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiries@aldworth.hants.sch.uk">enquiries@aldworth.hants.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 March 2017

## Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized 11 to 16 secondary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is just below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly above the national average.
- A small number of pupils attend local alternative provision at the Ashwood Academy.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 41 lessons across a range of subjects and year groups. Several of these visits were undertaken jointly with members of the school leadership team.
- Inspectors visited four tutor-group sessions.
- Inspectors analysed 117 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors also took account of the responses from staff to the online questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised pupils' work in detail.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, while moving between lessons and at break and lunchtime.
- A wide range of documentation was considered by inspectors, including: policies; curriculum information; safeguarding and child protection records; information about pupils' attendance and behaviour; the school's improvement plan and own evaluation of its effectiveness; minutes of local governing body meetings; subject programmes of study; and information about pupils' achievement.

## Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lankester	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Davies	Ofsted Inspector

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