

# Inspection of Alderwood School

Belle Vue Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU12 4RZ

---

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

---

The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The ambitious amalgamation of three predecessor schools into an all-through school has been successful.

Pupils are proud to attend Alderwood School. They feel they belong here. Alderwood is a safe and happy school. Pupils like being at school and they attend regularly. Leaders, governors and staff are united in their aspiration for pupils to 'be the best they can be'. The vast majority of staff, parents and carers are full of praise, particularly the way that pupils transfer from one school site to the next. They appreciate the improvements in the secondary school.

Across all three school sites pupils' behaviour is consistently calm and positive. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to teachers and show respect for each other. Inspectors were impressed with how sensibly pupils behave around the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are friendly and supportive. Pupils told us that bullying only happens very rarely and staff are good at sorting out any problems.

Pupils learn to be responsible citizens. Junior pupils were involved in a successful campaign to remind drivers to slow down when passing the school. Pupils know that their opinion matters to leaders. They had a say in the name of the school.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The executive headteacher, ably assisted by the heads of the primary and senior schools, has effectively shaped a united community. Staff from the school's three sites work together well to share expertise. This has led to improvements throughout, but most notably in the secondary phase. However, leaders and governors know there is still room for improvement.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. Well-planned and interesting activities enable children to develop their early learning skills quickly, both indoors and outdoors. Staff provide helpful support to develop children's vocabulary. Children are busy, happy and settled. They play and cooperate well together.

The teaching of reading is well planned. In the primary school, pupils are read to every day. High-quality texts are carefully selected to capture pupils' imagination and provide a springboard for learning in other subjects. The phonics programme is clear, and teachers know exactly which sounds to teach each week. Most pupils read books that are well matched to their phonic ability, including weaker readers in key stage 3. Leaders know that occasionally pupils' reading books are not matched precisely enough to their ability.

The mathematics curriculum in key stage 2 is really strong. Knowledge and skills are carefully planned. In lessons, teachers skilfully ensure that pupils build on prior knowledge and understanding. Pupils become fluent mathematicians and achieve

highly.

In key stage 2, the curriculum beyond mathematics and English interests pupils and encourages them to learn. However, in the 'foundation' subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills are not built as securely over time as they are in mathematics and English.

Science in key stage 1 is a strength. Pupils learn key ideas in a well sequenced way which build on what they already know. They also use scientific vocabulary well to explain their thinking. Subject leaders are building on this excellent practice to improve science teaching in later key stages.

Pupils' transition from Year 6 to Year 7 has improved. Teachers on the senior site have a good understanding of the standards pupils achieve by the end of Year 6. This has led to higher expectations at the start of senior school. However, leaders know that the key stage 3 curriculum needs to provide greater depth and breadth, and improvements are under way, with more planned for September.

In key stage 4, more pupils than in the past are taking subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. Strengths in the teaching of modern foreign languages have increased the proportion of pupils opting to continue with French and German. Overall GCSE results improved last year but remain below national comparisons.

Older pupils are benefiting from stable staffing and better teaching across the curriculum. However, remaining inconsistencies in teaching mean that the impact on pupils' learning is variable across and within subjects. Leaders know that standards must continue to rise.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive helpful support. Learning is sensibly planned and adjusted appropriately to meet pupils' specific needs. Most pupils with SEND know more and remember more over time. However, sometimes, especially on the senior site, learning is not always so well organised. Leaders have identified this and are working well to ensure that pupils with SEND consistently receive effective support.

Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Some older pupils have benefited from support to help them improve their behaviour.

Personal development throughout the school is characterised by a determination to offer pupils a rounded experience which goes beyond the taught curriculum and prepares them to be resilient, happy and secure in their future lives.

Senior leaders are passionate in wanting the best for everyone. Committed, knowledgeable governors echo their determination that every child will be prepared to lead a successful life. Leaders and governors support staff well-being and workload well.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture where the well-being and safety of pupils is given the highest importance. Pupils are confident that there are trusted adults they can speak to if they are worried about something. Well-trained staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Leaders use their expertise and knowledge about individual pupils very well when assessing levels of risk and deciding on appropriate next steps. The pastoral teams provide well-targeted support in school and work effectively with agencies to help pupils and families get the support they need.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Across the school, teachers, subject leaders and teaching assistants show a range of subject specific expertise. Some are very knowledgeable, while others are less secure. Additionally, some teachers with strong subject knowledge do not teach as effectively as others. As a result, curriculum plans and teaching do not consistently help pupils acquire knowledge cumulatively. This limits the achievements of some pupils, especially in key stage 4. A more systematic approach to staff training, including pedagogical content, is necessary.
- In key stage 2, the knowledge and skills pupils need in English and mathematics are coherently planned and sequenced so that pupils know more and remember more over time. However, pupils do not always remember key knowledge associated with science and the foundation subjects. Leaders need to continue to improve the planning of these subjects so that knowledge and skills are sequenced in a logical order and delivered in a way that helps pupils remember what they have learned. This planning needs to include pupils with SEND. It is clear from the actions that leaders have already taken to develop the curriculum that they are bringing this about. For this reason, the transition arrangement has been applied in this case.
- In Years 7 to 9 pupils are missing some of the intended learning from the key stage 3 national curriculum. Leaders have rightly recognised this, and it is clear from the work that has already started that they are in the process of increasing the breadth and depth of the key stage 3 curriculum. Here too the transition arrangements have been applied. Leaders need to continue with this important work with increased urgency.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116234
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122302
<b>Type of school</b>	All-through
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1379
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	James Scarlett
<b>Executive headteacher</b>	Clare de Sausmarez
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://infant.alderwood.hants.sch.uk">http://infant.alderwood.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 October 2017

## Information about this school

- Alderwood School was formed in April 2017 through an amalgamation of three schools: Belle Vue Infant School, Newport Junior School and The Connaught School. The school remains on three sites.
- On amalgamation, Belle Vue Infants was the lead school. When it was last inspected it was judged to be outstanding, so Alderwood School retained that grade. When they were previously inspected, Newport Junior School was judged to be good and The Connaught School required improvement.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher. There is a head of school for the primary phase, comprising the infant and junior schools, and a head of the secondary school.
- A small number of pupils carry out part of their learning at Farnborough College, Rowhill School and Place2learn.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with senior leaders, subject leaders, special educational needs coordinators, teachers and support staff.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics, science, history and modern foreign languages. We discussed the curriculum design with subject leaders, carried out a series of lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers, about the curriculum.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The school's single central record was reviewed. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, scrutinised documentation, including a sample of case files, and spoke to pupils and staff.
- The lead inspector met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with, and had a telephone discussion with, representatives from the local authority.
- We met with pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally about the school. There were 45 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- We took account of the 235 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, and 33 additional free-text responses. An inspector spoke to some parents on the infant site at the start of the second day of the inspection.
- We considered the views of 114 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey.
- An inspector had telephone discussions with some of the alternative providers used by the school.

## **Inspection team**

Theresa Phillips, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Prince	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Bauckham	Ofsted Inspector
James Freeston	Ofsted Inspector
Colin Lankester	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020