

Inspection of a good school: Aldersley High School

Barnhurst Lane, Codsall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV8 1RT

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

Aldersley High School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy being at Aldersley and make the most of their time in school. They are keen to meet leaders' expectations in lessons and take pride in the work they produce. The majority of pupils attend 'Period 7' enrichment opportunities. They value the choice of activities, such as chess, orchestra and debating.

Pupils are clear about teachers' high expectations of their behaviour in lessons. They get on well with their learning and are supportive of each other. However, sometimes, their behaviour outside of lessons falls short of leaders' expectations.

Most pupils feel safe in school. They know who they can talk to if they have any concerns and are confident that any issues will be dealt with effectively. Discrimination is uncommon and pupils do not accept it. Pupils usually treat each other respectfully.

Pupils know that leaders listen to them. The updated student leadership structure, involving more than 100 pupils and students, means pupils have a say in important decisions. They are proud to be part of how the school has recently improved.

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

Leaders believe that there should be no ceiling on what any pupil or student can achieve. They have designed a curriculum journey that runs from Years 7 to 13 that is ambitious for all. Where appropriate, leaders carefully adjust the curriculum offer to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to help pupils understand their learning. Pupils appreciate how their knowledge booklets and examples of 'what a good one looks like' help them to remember what they have previously learned and how to apply their learning. Teachers are prompt in responding to pupils' gaps in learning or misconceptions. Pupils enjoy the range of learning activities they experience and usually achieve well

Sixth-form students value the feedback they receive on how to improve their work. This helps them to progress well.

Leaders have prioritised the importance of reading and developing pupils' wide vocabulary. They assess pupils' reading skills and provide appropriate interventions for pupils who are not yet fluent, confident readers. Leaders are making good progress with developing a school-wide culture where 'everyone is a reader'.

Leaders use a wealth of expertise to identify accurately the needs of pupils with SEND. The support and adaptation provided for pupils who access 'The Ladder Centre' and the 'Horizon' programme is very well thought out. Pupils receive a bespoke package of learning and support that encourages personal growth. Some teachers demonstrate excellent practice in adapting learning to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. However, at other times, teachers are less effective in adapting the way the curriculum is implemented to meet the individual needs of these pupils.

Pupils talk about how behaviour has improved recently. Leaders' work on behaviour has led to substantial improvements to behaviour in lessons. This is helping pupils to learn better. The recently introduced 'Oasis' space supports pupils in understanding their behaviour choices and gives them strategies to be more successful in future. This is helping leaders to rapidly reduce the number of suspensions pupils receive. However, some pupils do not conduct themselves appropriately at social times. This means that the atmosphere does not always feel as calm as it should.

Pupils' personal development is strong. Leaders want every pupil to leave with the confidence and skills to be successful in the wider world and contribute positively to social change. This is realised through a broad range of enrichment opportunities as well as the wider curriculum. Many pupils achieve success in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Pupils plan fundraising activities to support their chosen local charities, such as through bag packing at the local supermarket.

Pupils' learning about careers and their next steps is carefully mapped. It is woven throughout the curriculum and wider activities, including work experience. They receive high-quality guidance and know all future options available to them. Sixth formers learn techniques to support their academic study. Consequently, almost every student moves successfully into education or employment when they leave school.

Trustees and leaders have a shared vision for the school. They take staff workload into account without compromising on what is best for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are very aware of the possible risks faced by pupils. They ensure that both staff training and how pupils learn about keeping themselves safe reflect local issues. They carry out all necessary recruitment checks before adults work with pupils.

Staff receive frequent training around all aspects of safeguarding and ensure that any concerns about pupils are quickly passed on. Leaders respond promptly and act to secure the help pupils need.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves and each other safe through the comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education programme, assemblies and form times. Leaders have made sure that this learning covers important topics such as online safety and consent in an age-appropriate way.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At times, teachers do not adapt learning to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEND as well as they could. This means that some of these pupils do not have a consistent learning experience to enable them to be as successful as they could be. Leaders should ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are consistently met so that they achieve well.
- Leaders' expectations of behaviour are not consistently met by pupils at social times. Some pupils behave inappropriately. A few pupils are unhappy about others' behaviour in communal spaces. Leaders should ensure that their high expectations of behaviour outside of lessons are clearly understood by all and the systems to support good behaviour are consistently applied by staff.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2014.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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

Unique reference number	139138
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10282681
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,321
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	191
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Jim Inglis
Headteacher	Matthew Winzor
Website	www.aldersley.aatrust.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018

Information about this school

- Aldersley High School is part of Amethyst Academies Trust, which comprises four academies.
- The headteacher was appointed in February 2023.
- The school uses two registered and two unregistered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Key stage 5 students attend 'Amethyst 6th', which is shared sixth-form provision for students from schools within the multi-academy trust. The Amethyst 6th centre is based on the school site.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors focused on the following subjects: English, mathematics, design and technology, and history. Inspectors examined the curriculum, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about the way these subjects are taught. This included Amethyst 6th lessons. They also looked at lessons in other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also checked.
- Inspectors talked to staff and leaders about safeguarding arrangements. They examined how leaders made employment checks on staff and scrutinised safeguarding records. They also asked how incidents reported by pupils are recorded and analysed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors had meetings with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They met with trustees. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

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