

Alderwasley Hall School

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Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

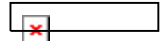
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

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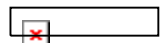
Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

School details

Introduction and summary

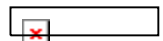


Purpose and scope of the inspection



This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

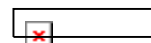


Alderwasley Hall School is an independent residential and day school for pupils aged 5 to 16 years. It provides full-time education for 80 boys and girls who have speech and language difficulties. These are referred by 55 different local authorities. A significant number of pupils also have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), usually with Asperger syndrome or higher functioning autism. Nearly all pupils have a statement of special education need (SEN). The school also provides for 44 post-16 students located at Callow Park, some five miles away from the Alderwasley site. The Adult Learning Inspectorate has very recently inspected this provision. The school was taken over by the

headteacher has been in post for four months. In addition to its educational provision the school also has a team of speech and language therapists who work at a ratio of one to every ten pupils. The school also employs three occupational therapists.

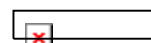
A central aim of the school is to create a happy and caring environment which enables its pupils to learn and communicate with confidence and grow as valued members of society.

Summary of main findings



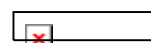
Alderwasley Hall School is re-establishing itself after an unsettled period. It achieves its central aim of enabling pupils to communicate more effectively but it has yet to provide a cohesive curriculum, encompassing the additional needs of pupils with ASD. Generally, pupils make satisfactory progress. The work of occupational, as well as speech and language therapists, contributes effectively to the personal and educational development of pupils. Staff are committed to their work and intuitively care for and care about their pupils. Recent and frequent changes in management have resulted in a lack of focus for their effort but the appointment of a new management team is bringing more structure to the work they do. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory but planning for most subjects lacks detail. The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory. There is too little professional development of staff and along with the changing nature of the school roll this has resulted in a deficit in skills of some staff to meet the increasingly complex needs of pupils. Despite this staff are determined to do their best for the pupils in their care.

What the school does well



- it has a good understanding of the social and language needs of its pupils and provides for this through a well planned English curriculum and language therapy;
- it makes good provision for pupils to receive individual speech and language therapy and also occupational therapy;
- its staff form good relationships with the pupils which encourage them to try their hardest in lessons;
- it provides good personal support for pupils, enabling them to thrive and mature; and
- it offers opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and personality through success in the expressive and performing arts.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations



- develop schemes of work for all subjects to guide teachers' planning and ensure continuity of learning for all pupils, as noted in section 1 of this report;
- put in place a secure framework with which to assess pupils' work and which is used to plan their further progress, as indicated in section 1;
- fulfil the requirements outlined in section 2;
- ensure the admission register is completed with all required details;
- complete more rigorous checks prior to the appointment of all staff, as itemised in

- section 4; and
- ensure that parents and others are provided with the detailed information reported in section 6.

What the school must do to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA, the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

Next steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- put in place better and more focused professional development to support staff in addressing the needs of pupils with ASD.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and includes a range of subjects in line with the National Curriculum, religious education (RE), and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The quality of planning for English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. Planning for subjects, such as history, geography and music is less than satisfactory. The weaknesses in planning for most subjects are that they do not address the whole age-range of pupils for which the school is registered, nor do they provide longer term planning which supports continuity of learning.

The school defines its role as providing for pupils with speech and language disorders and where some pupils have ASD. It appropriately places a strong emphasis on the development of language, literacy and numeracy. It broadly achieves these aims. These areas are enhanced considerably through effective provision for speech and language therapy. Older pupils make good progress in

developing their ability to communicate in a range of situations, with all others making at least satisfactory progress.

The curriculum for pupils with ASD is less secure. Procedures and techniques, which would enable these pupils to make progress similar to that of their peers, are not fully in place. This is attributable to a low base of expertise among staff and uncertain expectations about the capabilities of such pupils.

Schemes of work derived from the National Curriculum used to guide lesson planning are extensive for English, mathematics and science. These also make good use of commercially produced materials. Satisfactory examples of planning exist in other subjects. These include design and technology (DT), RE and art and design. Schemes of work for other subjects, such as citizenship and aspects of the humanities are sparse and do not support the required quality of teaching or continuity of learning.

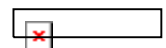
The speech and language therapy department provides effective specialist support to education staff in enabling them to formulate their response to the individual needs of pupils. Therapists often work alongside teachers in classrooms and where they use their particular expertise the gains in pupils' capabilities are substantial. Therapists also take pupils away from lessons for more intensive provision, either on an individual or small-group basis. A negative consequence to this is that these pupils miss the same lesson each week. This impacts adversely on their continuity of learning.

A particularly successful aspect of the curriculum is the opportunity for pupils to take part in the expressive arts. Opportunities for them to use their acting and musical skills enhance their personal confidence and sustain the progress they make in communication skills. Notable examples of this were seen in a video production in which pupils had to use their computer skills alongside their acting abilities.

The new management has recently amended the format of lesson plans and these now include clearer cross-curricular links. Some subjects include development plans, which are used effectively to identify future subject requirements to enhance pupils' learning. These documents, however, are not linked closely enough to the professional development of staff and the wider needs of the school curriculum.

Careers guidance is satisfactory and older pupils have opportunities of work place experience. Comments by these pupils suggest they enjoy such opportunities. Provision is not yet embedded in the planning of work-related learning for younger pupils.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory in most lessons. In just over one-third of lessons the quality is good or better. The best lessons are those where teachers communicate their enthusiasm for the subject and use this to build up highly effective and engaging relationships. For this reason pupils put considerable effort into their learning and achieve well. Poor behaviour in such sessions is never a distraction because pupils are carried along by the pace and interest which the teacher generates. Only in one example did the teaching not provide the quality of that seen more generally. This could be attributed to a lack of subject knowledge and unfamiliarity with the group of pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress.

For the most part teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. However, subjects, such as DT, are taught by staff who do not have the necessary expertise. This is difficult not only for the teacher but also does a disservice to the pupils who are not challenged to the levels they have previously experienced under the guidance of appropriately qualified staff.

The expertise and qualifications of teachers and therapists in the field of speech and language development is good and the school is successful in providing this as one of its central aims. However, the school has been slow to respond to the more complex and changing nature of the pupils' needs. Staff expertise in treatment of ASD is insufficient and there is too little specific provision for pupils with this disorder. The professional development of some staff in this regard is under emphasised.

The common form of lesson planning, recently introduced by the school management, brings a unity of style to the teaching. This helps pupils in their understanding of the format and expectations of each lesson. These plans are most effective where teachers have analysed the content of what is to be learned and provide a range of activities to support this. For example, a PSHE lesson about bullying began with a thought provoking film about the plight of a victim. Complementary discussion brought home to the pupils the anxiety and fear that this causes. The questions used and the ways in which they were framed enabled every pupil to contribute to the general understanding that bullying was wholly unacceptable.

In the majority of lessons pupils are encouraged to behave responsibly. The protocols for this are clear to all pupils. Most accept that it is appropriate to put up their hand in order to gain attention and that it is polite to listen to the replies given by others. Older pupils and those who have been at the school for the longest time are very mature in their approach to learning. They have very good levels of confidence that enable them to ask questions about anything they do not understand. This considerably enhances their achievement within lessons. Evidence of this was seen within English lessons and other PSHE lessons.

Teachers and therapists work alongside each other in some lessons. For the most part this relationship is positive and pupils gain much by the different emphases, which they bring to learning. Weaknesses exist in this arrangement where therapists are not used according to their professional strengths but take the role of support assistants. This further relegates the role of support assistants who then infrequently become involved in supporting pupils' learning.

Lessons are usually one hour long. Evidence suggests that for many pupils this is too long and they are unable to sustain their concentration. Some teachers implicitly acknowledge this by providing 10 or 15 minutes of 'free time', in which pupils engage in activities unrelated to the lesson. This results in at least one hour each day of lost time for many pupils.

Assessment of learning is weak. It is insufficiently embedded in the process of teaching and learning. Despite the length of lessons assessment is often glossed over in the rush to get to 'free time'. In many instances teachers told the pupils what they had taught, rather than asked them what they had learned. The best practice, such as that in an English lesson for older pupils, invited comments from pupils on how well they felt they had achieved. Pupils' opinions were accurate and honest and pride in their achievements was increased when the teacher was able to agree. The school is aware that assessment procedures are weak and that they are not always used to determine the next steps in pupils' learning. Outcomes, in the form of record-keeping are also weak so that reports provided to parents are not always based on objective evaluations of evidence gained over time.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

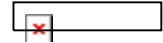
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- prepare and implement an appropriate curriculum policy set out in writing and supported by plans and schemes of work for all subjects (paragraph 1(2));
- enable teachers to gain a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure these are taken into account in the planning

- of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d)); and
- implement procedures to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use this information to plan teaching so that pupils make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The school makes generally good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. Provision, however, is uneven. There is a clear ethos of care throughout the school in both the residential and education settings. This is seen in the curriculum provision and in the wider contributions to pupils' personal development. The school is non-denominational but Christian values are evident.

Staff encourage pupils to treat each other with respect and they enhance this through the quality of their relationships with them. They work hard to generate self-confidence in pupils and ease their attempts at communication. Pupils are listened to and they can also record their concerns through the school council. Pupils' behaviour is generally good.

Although a wide range of issues are encompassed within the RE and PSHE programmes, there is not, as yet, coherence in this provision. There is insufficient coverage by pupils of the multi-cultural nature of society and the institutions which underpin this. Despite this there are other aspects of the provision which are outstanding, for example, those parts of the PSHE programme which encourage respect between pupils as well as co-operative working. A dynamic assembly for younger pupils used a variety of effective strategies to get pupils to consider the fairness of trade. It encouraged them to express preferences for food and merchandise based on the sources of the raw materials and their health value.

Opportunities to consider ethical and moral issues are provided frequently within the curriculum. Evidence for this emerged in a mature discussion with Year 10 pupils about their feelings and attitudes to characters and situations in the novel 'Of Mice and Men'. The emphasis on awareness of others and personal responsibility is evident throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged constantly to think of the impact their actions have on others. They are required to accept personal and community responsibility at all levels of school life. The school council for example, was instrumental in the development of a healthy food policy which pupils wrote in collaboration with the kitchen manager.

There are many opportunities, both within the school and residences for pupils to participate in activities which develop their communication skills and raise self-esteem. These include musical productions, a carol service, involvement in local arts events and partnerships with local businesses and other schools. The school places a strong emphasis on inclusion opportunities and is active in developing external links. Therapists as well as teachers provide a regular programme of visits, both locally and further afield to enable pupils to become more independent and ready to face the world in which they will live.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets most of the requirements for registration.

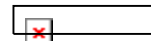
What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in

- England (paragraph 2(d)); and
- assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions (paragraph 2(e)).

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



Pupils are cared for well. It is clear that all staff consider this as a priority. All partners within the school community indicate their appreciation of the high quality relationships which exist between staff and pupils. These bring considerable benefit to pupils' progress and personal development.

The school has a comprehensive range of policies. Some of these are very new. It is necessary to ensure that all pupils and staff are aware of the expectations which these place upon them. The school management has responded positively to recommendations of recent inspections. There is now a strong emphasis on coherent risk assessment and an acute awareness of health and safety issues. The provision for this is good. The school has installed a sophisticated and comprehensive fire detection system and has backed this up with appropriate emergency evacuation drills and checks of fire equipment.

The school has clear First Aid procedures and there are sufficient qualified First Aid staff to have the required number available at all times. Accidents and other incidents are properly logged and recorded. There is a school nurse in regular attendance. However, his expertise is not fully used in aspects of the curriculum such as health education and drug awareness.

Most pupils are resident in the school and the personal support given to them is of high quality. The arrangement, which has pupils living in house groups, provides very good levels of attention paid to the needs of individuals.

Attendance registers are duly completed but the admission register does not contain all the required information.

The school has not yet written an access plan which complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 and which would be implemented over the next three years.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all but one of the regulations.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply fully with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

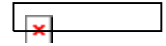
- ensure that the admission register is completed in all details (paragraph 3(9)).

What does the school need to do to comply with the DDA?

In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA the school should:

- devise a three-year plan to improve the accessibility of the premises.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The present headteacher has been in her post for just over four months. She has assembled a senior management team who are working hard to ensure success for the school. The head teacher has a clear strategic vision for the school and is currently putting procedures in place to achieve this.

The staff group is a blend of those who are relatively new to the school and those who have been at the school for some time. Not all of these have expertise appropriate to the needs of the growing number of pupils with ASD. Performance management processes are under-developed and because of this the professional improvement of staff skills is disjointed and unfocused on the requirements of the curriculum and particularly of those pupils with ASD.

The human resources department of the school takes on the responsibility to check staff suitability for their post. Some staff, incorrectly, have not been checked to enhanced levels with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). This applies to both residential and education staff. Evidence of medical checks on staff, prior to the confirmation of their appointments, are also not in place in all cases.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

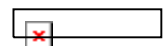
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that all staff are checked with the CRB to the enhanced level (paragraph 4(b));
- prior to the confirmation of staff appointments, ensure that all staff provide medical evidence of their fitness to undertake their roles (paragraph 4(c)); and
- in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of children in boarding accommodation, they should comply with Standard 27 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools (paragraph 4(d)).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school buildings are generally well maintained. They are clean and free from graffiti and litter. The quality of fittings in the school is good. Classrooms are appropriate in size and effectively support the teaching and learning processes. There is a good range of specialist facilities, which enable pupils to receive age-appropriate access to the curriculum. These include computer suites, a technology facility, music room and small library. Pupils also use a swimming pool located at the site for post-16 pupils some five miles away. Externally there are good play areas which cater for the needs of all ages.

Residences are clean and comfortable. The recent inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection identified several areas within this accommodation that needed addressing. Much work is proceeding to deal with these concerns.

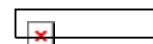
Pupils' work is displayed throughout the school. In all examples considerable care has been taken

in the presentation of this, showing how it is valued. Some of this work has been completed to a high standard.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



A significant number of parents have been unhappy about the unsatisfactory quality of information provided to them. Their concerns are justifiable. The school has now begun to address these concerns though there remain a number of outstanding issues.

The school's regular survey of parents' and carers' views on its provision invites comments on the quality of its reporting. One in five of respondents to the questionnaire, sent out prior to the inspection, believe they are not kept well informed of their child's progress. The school provides information to parents about the progress of pupils in a number of different ways. It provides annual written reports for every pupil which provide summaries of work covered and key achievements in each subject. Care staff provide frequent informal feedback to parents on pupils' behaviour and general attitudes, through e-mail or telephone. Therapists also provide regular information on pupils' achievement of therapy targets. The contrast between the frequency of the latter two sources of information and that of education progress underpins the dissatisfaction mentioned by parents. Parents' indicate they are confident in approaching the school for information although a significant minority felt that when they did their requests were not dealt with adequately.

The school's management has responded to parents concerns by producing a regular newsletter and updating the information contained on its website. The school prospectus is being revised but the current version still does not contain all the required information. It does it make clear to parents the range of information to which they are entitled. The reports do not always keep parents fully informed of the all round progress of their child. Parents also expressed concerns about not always being informed about incidents in which their child might have involved, particularly where this concerned poor behaviour.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

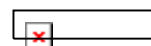
- provide particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils who may use English as an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f));

also, make clear to parents of pupils and of prospective pupils that they may request;

- particulars of policies relating to bullying, child protection, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (paragraph 6(2)(h));
- details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(2)(j));
- information relating to the number of staff employed at the school, including

- temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)); and
- where a pupil, who is registered at the school is wholly or partly funded by the local authority, provide an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil and submit this to the local authority and on request to the Secretary of State (paragraph 6(7)).

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints



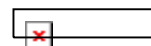
Responses to the questionnaire sent to parents and other carers prior to this inspection indicated that almost one-quarter of them did not know about the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. Until recently the school's procedure for dealing with complaints has been unsatisfactory.

With the appointment of the present headteacher the school has revised its complaints procedure. This now complies with requirements. A policy with appropriate procedures is now in place but at this stage no formal complaints have been dealt with using this new procedure.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



| | | | |
|--|---|-----------|----------|
| Name of school: | Alderwasley Hall School | | |
| DfES ref number: | 830/6016 | | |
| Type of school: | Residential and day special school for pupils with speech and language difficulties | | |
| Status: | Independent | | |
| Age range of pupils: | 5-16 years | | |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed | | |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils): | Boys 68, | Girls 12, | Total 80 |
| Number of boarders: | Boys 50, | Girls 8, | Total 58 |
| Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need: | Boys 67, | Girls 12, | Total 79 |
| Annual fees (day pupils): | £23,307 | | |
| Annual fees (boarders): | £58,000 | | |
| Address of school: | Alderwasley Belper Derbyshire DE56 2SR | | |
| E-mail address: | info@alderwasleyhall.com | | |
| Telephone number: | 01629 822586 | | |
| Fax number: | 01629 824050 | | |
| Headteacher: | Mrs Veronica Jenkins | | |
| Proprietor: | Mr Terry F Lee/Senad Ltd | | |
| Lead Inspector: | Mr Tom Smith | | |
| Dates of inspection: | 28 February - 3 March 2005 | | |

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