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20 July 2021

Paul Jenkins  
Headteacher  
Aldworth School  
Western Way  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire  
RG22 6HA

Dear Mr Jenkins

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Aldworth School**

Following my visit to your school on 8 July 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the monitoring inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.**

### **Context**

Together with the executive deputy headteacher, you were seconded from a local school to work at Aldworth School in January 2020. You were appointed as the headteacher. Additionally, a new head of school has been appointed and will be starting in September 2021. Since the previous inspection in June 2019, four new

assistant headteachers have joined the leadership team. Three governors have joined the governing body.

## **Main findings**

You and your leadership team are determined to make the changes that are needed to make Aldworth a good school. You are ambitious for all pupils and passionate about promoting the school's motto of 'building bright futures'. Increasing numbers of staff share your high aspirations. You have been steadfast in maintaining a rapid pace of improvement, despite the challenges of the last year caused by the national pandemic.

Pupils are now remembering more of what they learn and developing their understanding across subjects. Leaders' carefully constructed training is supporting teachers to focus more on improving their planning and meeting the needs of pupils. You are currently providing opportunities for teachers to talk about the best ways to structure pupils' learning. Teachers have found this approach useful and are becoming increasingly adept at ensuring pupils remember subject knowledge.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are more positive. Over the past year, far fewer pupils have been removed from lessons due to poor behaviour and the proportions of pupils who were excluded for a fixed term have declined. In the lessons I visited, pupils were focused on their work, respectful and attentive. Many staff feel that pupils' behaviour has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

You recognise that teachers require guidance about the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have developed ways to share pertinent information about these pupils. Teachers are supporting pupils more effectively. However, this strategy is evolving.

Reading is a priority. You have well-considered plans to support the weakest readers. Some staff are due to have training in teaching phonics so that they can better support these pupils. You are beginning to promote a love of reading across the school and have found solutions to improve pupils' literacy. For example, leaders created a 'mobile library' that could be used in each year group because pupils were not able to use the main school library.

Pupils in Year 11 have finished their examination courses. You did not require them to attend school after the summer half-term holiday. Leaders have still kept in touch with these pupils. Vulnerable pupils in Year 11 are asked to 'check in' with the school by contacting an allocated member of staff each week. You have provided online learning for Year 11 pupils focused on preparing them for their next stages of employment, training, or education.

Governors have an accurate understanding of their responsibilities and the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use meetings with leaders and school visits to

monitor leaders' actions. Governors check on the skills and expertise that they have in order to gain an understanding of the areas where training is needed.

You are ensuring that leaders are building stronger relationships with parents. High proportions of parents are confident that you and your team are leading the school well. Staff are improving their communication with parents. They feel better informed about their children's progress. Parents have an increasingly positive view of the school.

### **Additional support**

You have found the local authority's support helpful. Local authority officers' close work with leaders regarding improvements in English and the provision for pupils with SEND has been well received. You appreciate the local authority's clear evaluation of the improvements that you have made so far.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, other senior leaders, staff, governors, and a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's improvement plan. I visited lessons with a senior leader to observe learning and met with a group of pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Harry Ingham  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**