

# Inspection of Aldworth School

Western Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 6HA

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

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

Aldworth is a friendly and welcoming school. Relationships between most staff and pupils are positive, and pupils talk confidently about specific staff who they feel support them particularly well. Pupils value the range of extra-curricular activities available to them, including sports clubs and a recent musical production.

A minority of pupils do not consistently meet leaders' expectations for behaviour. In lessons, pupils are mostly settled and attentive to their learning, but behaviour can be more unsettled at social times. Pupils report hearing disrespectful language around the school site, and some younger pupils report feeling intimidated by groups of older pupils. However, most pupils say that they feel safe. If bullying happens, it is mostly dealt with effectively. However, not all staff deal with incidents consistently well, and sometimes this means that pupils do not always report their concerns to staff.

Pupils access an increasingly ambitious curriculum that has been well planned in a number of subjects. However, there is inconsistency in how well teaching meets the needs of all pupils. As a result, not all pupils make the expected progress through the planned curriculum.

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

In most areas of the curriculum, leaders have thoughtfully identified the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. They have constructed increasingly ambitious curriculum plans to consider the intended learning for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In subjects such as English, mathematics and music, these plans are successfully implemented in the classroom. However, there is inconsistency in how well this is achieved across the curriculum as a whole.

In some subjects, teachers use a range of strategies to gauge what pupils know. In these subjects, teachers adapt their teaching effectively to address any misunderstandings. However, in other subject areas, teachers do not consistently use assessment well enough to check that pupils understand what they need to before moving on. In other areas, while teachers check what pupils have understood after each unit of work, there is no process for acting on this information. Leaders are in the process of collating specific planned activities that staff can use to help them make sure that gaps in knowledge are addressed effectively. Currently, however, not enough pupils are supported to remember their learning over time.

Leaders have recently improved their work to support pupils with SEND. They now identify more quickly those pupils who may be in need of extra support, and leaders share strategies with teachers to help them to adapt their learning activities.

However, these adaptations are not yet consistent in lessons across all subject areas. This means that some pupils with SEND are not making the progress they should in some areas of the curriculum.

Those who join the school struggling to read fluently receive effective support to help them to catch up with their peers. Leaders have worked to prioritise reading across the school and have plans to develop this further. However, this wider practice is not yet embedded.

Leaders have developed a system of behaviour expectations for staff to use. Lessons are mostly settled and focused. However, not all staff apply these expectations consistently. This means that pupils feel their experience in school varies depending on which members of staff they are with.

Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This hinders their learning. Leaders' actions have not yet improved attendance quickly enough, particularly for those with SEND.

There is a strong personal development offer, which is thorough and well designed. Leaders have thought carefully about ways to involve pupils in activities beyond the classroom. These include a range of different clubs, including sports, as well as choir, chess and song writing. Pupils also enjoy trips, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and are proud to earn positions of responsibility. There is also a well-considered careers programme, and pupils are informed about an increasingly wide range of career options.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an effective culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff receive appropriate training, which is regularly updated, meaning that they know how to identify and refer any pupils who might be at risk. They know their pupils well, and there are detailed records kept of any concerns. However, the organisation of some records could be more efficient, and improvements to some processes were made during inspection. Concerns are acted on quickly, and leaders liaise well with external agencies as needed.

Leaders complete appropriate checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with children. Governors know their safeguarding responsibilities and hold leaders to account.

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

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

- In some subject areas, the planned curriculum is not implemented consistently or effectively. This means that pupils receive a varied quality of education across different areas of the curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are confident and have secure knowledge of what they need to teach and in what order so that all pupils can achieve well.
- Teachers' use of assessment is not consistently effective. Pupils are not supported as well as they could be to know and remember more over time. Leaders need to ensure that all staff know how to respond to assessment information so that pupils are helped to understand and remember learning they have not yet secured.
- There is too much variation in how robustly staff follow the school's agreed approach to promoting positive behaviour. As a result, pupils feel that there are varying expectations of behaviour across different areas of the school. Leaders need to continue to embed their behaviour policy and ensure that all staff follow the expectations consistently and insist on the same high standards of behaviour.
- Rates of persistent absence are too high. As a result, pupils miss out on important learning and do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders need to redouble their efforts to ensure that pupils attend school more regularly.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116427
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10257082
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	885
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Maureen Bax
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Rice
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aldworth.hants.sch.uk">www.aldworth.hants.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 July 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been many changes to staffing and leadership, including the headteacher, since the last inspection in 2021.
- The school currently uses seven alternative providers, two of which are registered.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, as well as representatives from the local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages, mathematics, history, physical education and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors held meetings with safeguarding leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. They scrutinised the single central record and sampled safeguarding records.
- Inspectors spoke to several alternative providers used by the school and with school leaders about their use.
- The inspection team also took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and governor minutes.
- The inspection team spoke with pupils about their experience of the school. Inspectors took account of pupil, parent and staff views through conversations and responses to Ofsted's surveys.

## Inspection team

Marian Feeley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Foster	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Potten	Ofsted Inspector
Paul James	Ofsted Inspector

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