

# Aldersley High School

Barnhurst Lane, Codsall, Wolverhampton, WV8 1RT

## Inspection dates

5–6 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Leaders communicate high expectations for the academy and have created a caring, harmonious community where every student is known as an individual.
- The academy's focus on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good so that students are being well prepared for their futures and for life in modern Britain.
- The behaviour of students is good. They are polite, courteous and respectful. They look smart and look after the academy buildings and grounds.
- Attendance has risen rapidly over recent years and is now above average.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan well to ensure that students make good progress in lessons and over time.
- Leaders and governors have high expectations of staff and students. Teachers are held to account for the achievement of students and receive ongoing training and support to improve their teaching.
- The gap between the progress of disadvantaged students and their peers is narrowing. This is because extra funding is used creatively to ensure that disadvantaged students catch up.
- The quality of provision in the sixth form is good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all leaders make the best use of the new systems to track students' progress to ensure that they are tackling any underachievement quickly.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent. Students do not always make the necessary improvements to their work.
- Sometimes teachers do not question students in such a way as to make sure they think deeply about their answers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 40 lessons and parts of lessons, eight of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors analysed a wide range of students' work in lessons. They also looked at a range of students' work with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the principal, senior leaders, teachers, and two external consultants working with the school and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors met with four groups of students in addition to observing students' behaviour and talking to them around the academy. Inspectors heard some students read.
- A range of the academy's documentation was scrutinised closely, including: the academy's own checks on its performance, the academy improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, a wide range of policies and arrangements to keep children safe.
- Inspectors analysed 37 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The 22 responses to the staff survey were analysed.

## Inspection team

Denise Newsome, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Timmins	Additional Inspector
Kim James	Additional Inspector
Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Aldersley High School converted to become an academy in January 2013. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is a smaller than average secondary school.
- The proportion of students who have minority ethnic heritages and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are higher than average.
- Over half the students at the school are supported by the pupil premium (extra funding provided by the government for students who are eligible for free school meals or are looked after), a proportion well above average.
- A number of Year 7 students benefit from the nationally funded catch-up programme, which is for students who do not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of their primary schooling.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average at thirteen percent and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average at eleven percent.
- The academy takes in a number of students at different times during the year and the stability of the student population is below average.
- Six students receive all or part of their education at one of three pupil referral units in the area. Three students are placed full time at the Orchard Centre.
- The academy runs specially resourced provision for seven students aged 11–18 who have special educational needs for speech, language and communication.
- The sixth form is part of a consortium of three local schools.
- The school is a stand-alone academy and is not linked to a trust.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure that the progress of all students across all year groups and subjects is sustained, by:
  - making sure that leaders at all levels and teaching staff fully understand the new systems to track progress so that they are able to thoroughly analyse data and tackle any underachievement quickly and effectively.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is outstanding, by:
  - making sure that teachers use the marking policy consistently and always check that students have made necessary improvements to their work
  - ensuring that the questions teachers ask in lessons are challenging so that students think deeply about their work

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have created an academy where students can thrive in an atmosphere of harmony, tolerance and mutual respect. Every student is known as an individual and high expectations and aspirations are integral aspects of the academy. Leaders are passionate about improving outcomes for the young people and the community.
- The academy's leaders have an accurate view of its strengths and they know what needs to be done to improve further. They operate with a sense of urgency which means that necessary improvements are implemented quickly.
- Checks on teachers' performance are thorough and regular and lead to improvement. Teaching that is not good is not accepted and is dealt with quickly and effectively. The management of teachers' performance is robust. Only good performance is rewarded and teachers have access to good-quality support and training to help improve their teaching. Teachers new to the profession feel well supported by the school.
- Senior leaders and leaders in charge of subjects use a range of data to track students' progress and identify if students or groups of students are underachieving. Some leaders are more confident with the analysis of data than others.
- Students make good progress in their lessons and over time, and there are particular strengths in the teaching of English and mathematics. No opportunity is wasted to make sure that students do as well as expected and leaders regularly review students' performance and establish appropriate support to address any underachievement. Students respond well to this support and appreciate what is put in place for them to help them succeed.
- Leaders make sure that there is good use made of pupil premium funding. A wide range of strategies is used to improve students' performance, such as one-to-one tuition. The funding is also used to help students take advantage of opportunities in and out of school where they can have success. The academy makes strenuous efforts to ensure that all students have the same opportunities to be successful.
- The curriculum meets students' needs well and is supported by a wide range of additional learning opportunities. It enables students of all abilities and with wide-ranging needs to gain good qualifications.
- The academy makes good provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their understanding of British values of tolerance and respect are very strong because these are values that underpin the whole ethos of the academy. They clearly know right from wrong and interact well together.
- Staff views of the academy and its leadership are very positive. Several of those who responded to the staff questionnaire spoke of their pride in working there.
- The quality of information, advice and guidance for students is good and reflects the aspirations that the academy has for them. For example, all Year 7 students are taken on a university visit during their first year at the academy.
- Leaders make daily checks on students who are educated in alternative provision. They ensure that their attendance and behaviour are good and that students are making good progress.
- The students with disabilities and special educational needs in the specialist provision make good progress because leaders ensure that they are fully included in main school lessons and are supported appropriately.
- The sixth form is well led and leaders are clear about where improvements still need to be made.

- Leaders make good use of two consultants who they employ to work with the academy to review its work, make recommendations for improvement and check that their actions for improvement are appropriate and timely. Leaders are open to challenge and support and are keen that the academy is the best that it can be.
- Leaders ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

### **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is effective. Governors know the academy well, including the strengths in teaching and what needs to be improved. They ensure that teachers are not rewarded for poor performance and they receive regular updates on the academy's own judgements of the strengths and areas for development in teaching. This information contributes to their decisions on whether teachers are rewarded for their performance. They ask for and regularly receive data about students' attainment and progress which they analyse and interpret for themselves. Their understanding of the academy's performance enables them to challenge senior leaders. For example, when there were concerns about results in the sixth form some time ago, governors requested regular updates on performance across all subjects and required change where necessary. They monitor the way that pupil premium funding is used and expect detailed information about the impact of the use of the funding. They are passionate about making sure that all students have equality of opportunity and, for example, encourage students, especially disadvantaged students, to attend university. They award a bursary which pays for the first year of university fees for any disadvantaged student who gains a place at a top university. Governors visit the academy regularly in order to check that improvements are happening at the right rate. They meet monthly to ensure that the academy's budget is managed effectively and that any additional funding is being spent effectively.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. They are polite, courteous and respectful. Students are an asset to the academy. Their good behaviour in lessons and their improving attendance contribute well to the good progress they make. Students come to lessons ready to work and respond promptly to teachers' instructions.
- Students' pride in the academy is shown by the way they dress smartly and look after the buildings and the academy site. There is almost no litter. They move around the academy in a calm and orderly fashion and are punctual to lessons.
- Attendance has improved and the numbers of students away from the academy for long periods of time has fallen. Attendance is currently on track to be above the national average this year. The improvements have come about as a result of the school raising awareness of the importance of attendance with parents and acting quickly if a student's attendance become a cause for concern.
- There have been no permanent exclusions from the academy and fixed term exclusions have fallen.
- Some students are referred to places where they can attend either part time or full time and receive more support in order to help them make progress. The academy makes regular checks on these students' attendance, behaviour and progress and, for example, sends teachers from the academy to work with the students in the alternative provision so that they can achieve well. As a result, the attendance, progress and behaviour of these students is good.
- Students report that behaviour is almost always good in lessons and around the academy. They are clear about the sanctions applied for any misdemeanour and say that these are well understood by everyone and applied consistently. They report that almost no lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Students in the special provision for students with disabilities and special educational needs behave well and show positive attitudes to learning. Adults who support them in lessons know them well and relationships are good which contributes to their good behaviour.

- Behaviour in the sixth form is good and students are positive role models for younger students.

### Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders make sure that access to the academy is secure and staff are closely checked prior to appointment. Policies to keep students safe are appropriate. Staff training is up to date.
- The academy ensures that students attending alternative provision are kept safe.
- Students show a very good understanding of different types of bullying. They are taught in assemblies, on 'enrichment' days and in 'nurture time', about how to identify bullying and what to do about it. They say that there is almost no bullying at the school but if there is any bullying then they are confident that it is swiftly and effectively dealt with by the staff.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers stretch and challenge students in their learning. Teachers have high expectations that students work hard and no time is wasted. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons which are varied and interesting. There are excellent relationships between teachers and students and teachers model the values of respect and tolerance.
- Students are keen to learn and do well and this is reflected in the work in their books. It is neatly presented and shows that they have made an effort and have pride in what they are doing. Students' responses in lessons and evidence from checking work in their books indicates that they are being well prepared for the next stages in their education.
- Teachers promote good literacy skills in lessons. A new initiative of teaching literacy through religious education lessons is working well. Daily 'nurture time' is used very effectively to promote literacy and numeracy skills where appropriate for certain students.
- Teachers plan learning to stretch students of all abilities. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics lesson with a number of students with special educational needs, the teacher was expecting students to complete C grade GCSE work which was highly ambitious given their starting points. Students all responded well to this high expectation and made good progress as a result.
- Teaching is consistently good in English, including teaching of literacy and reading and, in mathematics, and it is occasionally outstanding. As a result, students are making good progress and are being well prepared for the next stages in their education
- Students know and understand their target grades and are clear about what they have to do to improve. They speak very highly of the quality of teaching that they receive and are full of praise for the work that teachers do to make sure that they do well.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported well to make good progress. The support of other adults in the classroom is good because they know what they have to do to help a student to make progress. There are good relationships between them, the student and the class teacher.
- Students in the special provision are taught alongside their peers for most of their lessons and are supported by other adults so that they do well. They benefit from some small group teaching which helps develop their speech, language and communication skills.
- Homework is set regularly and there are two after school lessons each day. In one, students are helped to catch up or improve work or revise for examinations or do homework. The second one supports a wide range of additional learning opportunities.

- Work in all subjects is regularly marked but there is too much variation in how thorough teachers are in their feedback to students. In the best marking, there is an ongoing dialogue between the teacher and the students in their books, which is enabling students to make good progress. This good practice is not consistent across subjects and even within subjects between different teachers.
- Some teachers are very skilled at questioning students to elicit well-thought-out answers to questions posed in order to assess understanding. In these lessons, students are helped to make good progress. In some lessons, teachers ask questions which only expect very short answers and they rush on, which means that students do not get a chance to fully demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Students in the sixth form benefit from teaching that is mainly good.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Students enter the academy with attainment that is below average. Examination results for 2013 show that the proportion of students achieving five GCSE subjects grades A\* to C including English and mathematics was broadly average, representing good progress.
- In 2014, the proportion of students making good progress in English matched the latest national comparison. In mathematics, progress was good, but did not match that in English.
- Students attain above-average results in art and design and English literature. Results improved in weaker subjects in 2014, particularly history and geography.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress relative to their starting points. The students who are part of the specialist resource provision are also making good progress because of the good support they receive in lessons in the main school. Their work in small groups also helps them do well. They are achieving as well as their peers with similar starting points...
- The proportion of disadvantaged students making expected progress in English was close to national averages in 2013 and the gap narrowed in 2014. The gap between the progress of disadvantaged students and their peers in the academy in mathematics was wide in 2013 but this gap reduced further in 2014. In English, on average, disadvantaged students matched the achievement of other students in the academy and were a quarter of a GCSE grade behind their peers nationally. In mathematics, students were, on average, two thirds of a GCSE grade behind their peers in school and three quarters of a grade behind their peers nationally.
- The academy's most recent results show that more able students achieve well. All of them gained the top grades in English and mathematics.
- The additional funding to help those Year 7 students who need to catch-up in English and mathematics is used very effectively. The academy provides extra lessons in English and extra staffing in mathematics so that class sizes are smaller. As a result these students are making good progress.
- Students new to the academy and those who are at the early stages of learning English benefit from a well-organised programme to help them settle into the academy. They undertake a 10-week programme of extra lessons to ensure that they are able to do well in the main academy lessons. These students make good progress.
- Students read widely and can talk about books and texts that they have read and enjoyed. They enjoy using the library to read. Some pupil premium funding has been used effectively to reward disadvantaged students for reading more often.
- Students who are being educated at other places continue to be supported by the school. Where it is helpful for their progress, teachers from the academy teach them at the places where they are based.

They are making good progress because of the provision the school has made for them.

- Students are well prepared for the next stage in their education, employment or training because the teaching is good. Work in books shows that they are making good progress in lessons and over time.
- Attainment in English and mathematics fell in 2014. However, the academy's data on progress in English and mathematics shows that expected progress in English was the same as the national average for 2013. Expected progress in mathematics was slightly below the national average. Robust tracking data which is validated for its accuracy using standardised assessments at regular assessment points indicates that 2015 performance will exceed 2013 in English and be similar to 2013 in mathematics which represents good progress.
- The academy no longer enters students early for their GCSE examinations. This strategy has been revised following the 2014 examination results.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students do especially well in the vocational subjects.

### **The sixth form provision is good**

- Students enjoy their time in the sixth form. Their behaviour is good, they are smartly dressed and they display good attitudes to learning. They set a very good example for the younger students.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress because of the mainly good teaching that they receive. They benefit from teachers' strong subject knowledge and from a good range of academic and vocational subjects on offer. The quality of marking is too variable, as it is in the main school.
- The curriculum that the academy offers as part of a consortium with two other schools is broad and ensure that students have a range of courses to choose from when they enter the sixth form.
- Achievement across subjects is variable but has improved over time. Students do well in vocational subjects. A recently established six-week summer induction period for students has ensured that the courses students have picked are the best ones for them. This has helped make sure that more students complete two years in the sixth form.
- Attendance in the sixth form is good because students enjoy their learning and benefit from good teaching and support.
- Leaders and teachers instil ambition and aspiration in the students, who are keen to do well and are aiming high. All of the students spoken to want to go to university and increasing numbers are realising their ambitions. There is good guidance provided by the school to help students make decisions about the courses they want to take in the sixth form and about their progression after their time in the sixth form.
- The leadership of the sixth form is good because leaders know what needs to improve in relation to teaching and achievement and they have the right actions in place to make these improvements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139138
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	444790

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	792
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	154
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jim Inglis
<b>Principal</b>	Nicola Davis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 556868
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