

Aldercar High School

Daltons Close, Langley Mill, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG16 4HL

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and lower-attaining pupils do not make enough progress.
- Variations in the effectiveness of teaching, and between and within subjects that were apparent at the time of the previous inspection are still apparent.
- The students' progress in the sixth form varies too much between types of courses and subjects.
- The pupils' attendance is well below average. In particular, levels of absence and of persistent absence are too high among disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The levels of fixed-term exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities remain too high, despite notable improvements since the previous inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has galvanised the school into action. Important and worthwhile changes are being implemented rapidly.
- Improvements are increasingly evident, including in the progress made by the pupils, because senior and other leaders have responded well to the challenges set by the headteacher.
- The school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils well. Its work leads to the pupils developing a good sense of fundamental British values and increasingly mature attitudes to life in general.
- The pupils are cared for well, including in the sixth form. They feel safe at the school. The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those attending the hearing impaired unit integrate well in lessons and in the life of the school.
- The school is calm and orderly. Predominantly, the pupils are amicable, show respect for the school environment and conduct themselves sensibly around the site.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work with parents to improve the pupils' attendance, particularly among disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Develop ways and means to support and to improve the behaviour of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that these groups feature less prominently among the fixed-term exclusions than they do now.
- Ensure that all subject and other leaders check on the effectiveness of actions that they take to improve the attainment and progress of the pupils, comparing it more stringently with the progress of other groups, and take further action to remedy any underachievement, based upon what they find, with particular regard to lower-attaining pupils, disadvantaged pupils, and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and in the sixth form.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The leaders and the governing body pay insufficient attention to how the progress of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities compares with that of other pupils. They are not clear enough about what the information available indicates about how well the pupils are doing.
- The leaders do not evaluate incisively enough the impact of the school's use of funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities on the progress made by these pupils.
- Similarly, the leaders and the governing body have not evaluated sharply enough the impact of how the school uses the pupil premium. The approaches taken have not resulted in sufficient improvements in the progress made by disadvantaged pupils.
- The same is true for how the school has used the literacy and numeracy catch-up funding for pupils in Year 7 who have fallen behind. The impact of the actions being taken by the school is not clear.
- The headteacher's frank and realistic evaluation of the school's effectiveness is providing a solid basis for work that is now leading to increasingly rapid improvement at the school. In large part, the staff and the pupils acknowledge and appreciate his visibility around the school and his openness.
- The subject and other leaders feel increasingly able to contribute to the improvement of the school. The headteacher has provided them with the appropriate tools and opportunities to do so. The leaders responsible for previously underperforming areas are 'stepping up to the plate', along with their colleagues.
- The headteacher has introduced several practical and well-conceived ways of working that are bringing greater coherence among, and more-focused actions by, subject and other leaders.
- Simple initiatives to assist the teachers in planning learning, such as the 'Five Pillars of Aldercar', are starting to reduce the variations evident in the effectiveness of the teaching, though only recently. Other techniques to improve the impact of the feedback given to the students are, similarly, starting to take effect, but are not fully in place.
- The management of the teachers' performance is linked to the national standards for teachers and reflects the school's development needs closely. Decisions about pay increases depend upon evidence of successful performance.
- The school is outward looking and the staff are increasingly being given opportunities for professional development and provided with suitable support, so that they are able to contribute to the improvement of the school.
- The school's curriculum is developed and adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. The leaders have analysed the curriculum carefully and identified provision that has, in the past, hampered the pupils' attainment. Such provision is being removed for the next academic year.
- The school makes good, extensive provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Its approach to careers education, information, advice and

guidance is well thought out and contributes to the school's success in helping the pupils into further education, employment or training.

- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved since the previous inspection. As a result, these pupils are integrated into lessons and so receive greater benefit from the subject expertise of the teachers. The pupils are now beginning to make better progress than previously.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has ensured that the school meets its duties around safeguarding, including having a governor responsible for children in public care.
- The governing body is kept well informed about the work of the school and augments its knowledge through regular contact with the school's leaders.
- It has not been exacting enough in challenging the school's leaders about the differences between the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils in key stages 3 and 4, and in the sixth form, and about how additional funding is used to improve pupils' achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The staff understand and use the school's simple and straightforward systems for reporting any concerns. The pupils are also aware of what to do if they have a concern, either for themselves or for another.
- The staff receive regular training and updates on safeguarding matters and are alert to a broad range of potential concerns, from things that may affect a pupil's behaviour to possible signs of radicalisation.
- The school works well with external agencies to get appropriate support for the pupils, when it is needed.
- The school's work makes a major contribution to the pupils' feeling cared for and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The teaching does not consistently support the learning of lower-attaining pupils well, even in subjects where, more generally, the pupils do reasonably well. The feedback and guidance given to these pupils does not help them sufficiently to increase their learning. The teachers do not pick up quickly enough, or often enough, when these pupils are struggling.
- The teachers do not take the particular learning needs of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities carefully into account often enough. In such circumstances, those pupils do not learn enough.
- The pupils also make slower progress when teachers do not deal with misbehaviour and inattentiveness effectively. On such occasions, the teachers do not respond effectively to what is happening with the pupils' learning.
- Predominantly, the teachers have good subject knowledge. In the most effective

examples found by the inspectors, the teachers use their knowledge well to plan appropriately challenging activities. They use their knowledge also to question the pupils incisively and in depth, extending learning and drawing the full range of pupils skilfully into genuine and thought-provoking discussions.

- When the pupils received feedback which made them think more deeply, or extended the range of their learning, they made solid gains in that learning. This tended to be more the case with the most able pupils than with other groups.
- In addition, when the pupils were given purposeful opportunities to respond to the teachers' feedback and guidance, the pupils made faster progress.
- Generally, the teachers foster good relationships with the pupils. That makes the pupils feel secure and willing to take risks, which helps them to learn.
- When the learning needs of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were taken fully into account, these pupils made secure gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. For example, when the teaching assistants are enabled to challenge the pupils and to provide carefully constructed and purposeful support, they prompt the pupils' learning well and the pupils benefit fully. This does not happen consistently enough.
- The pupils who are part of the hearing impaired unit benefit noticeably from the support that they are given in lessons by signers.
- The pupils who are part of the hearing impaired unit and the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are integrated into lessons well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The attendance of the pupils is below average. It is not improving consistently, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Levels of persistent absence are well above average and very high among disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils who have transferred into the school part-way through the school year.
- The pupils feel safe at the school, including the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those attending the hearing impaired unit. This is the result of effective work by the leaders and the staff at the school.
- The school has clear mechanisms for supporting pupils who need additional help. The mechanisms are understood well by the pupils.
- The school can point to some notable successes with individual pupils whose attendance is exceptionally low, for example through the work of the recently formed inclusion centre. Many of these pupils join the school part-way through the academic year, often with very poor attendance records. When the school is able to work effectively with the pupils' parents, these pupils' attendance often increases

dramatically, albeit from the very low levels.

- The school works well to challenge stereotypes and to promote tolerance of difference. Very careful and, locally at least, pioneering work by the school to support the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils has resulted in predominantly mature and respectful attitudes among the pupils towards the differences between people.
- The pupils take on board the messages from the school's work to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including, for example, ways to keep themselves healthy and about the safe use of social media.

Behaviour

- The levels of short-term exclusions are still clearly above average.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are still much more likely to be excluded than other pupils at the school.
- When the pupils, particularly the lower-attaining pupils, are unclear about what they should be learning, or are given confusing and conflicting instructions, their behaviour deteriorates. They show a lack of resilience and confidence as learners, become overly demanding of attention, call out, and begin to chatter. Such behaviour is not always managed skilfully by the staff.
- The standards of presentation in the pupils' work are mixed and do not show a consistent sense of pride in what they are producing.
- Recent changes have led to improvements in the pupils' behaviour. Exclusions have reduced notably over the last two years, including among disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- A recently introduced behaviour policy has led to fewer instances of misbehaviour. For example, fewer pupils are now being sent to isolation.
- Bullying is dealt with effectively. As one pupil explained to the inspectors, 'It would be foolish to say that it never happens, but the teachers deal with it consistently.'
- Instances of racist and homophobic bullying, or the use of derogatory language, are few.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The disadvantaged pupils make notably less progress than other pupils at the school. As a result, their attainment is well below that of their peers. The school's use of the pupil premium has not had sufficient impact on these pupils' progress.
- The pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and lower-attaining pupils also make notably less progress than other groups at the school. The pupils attending the hearing impaired unit make progress similar to their peers.
- The pupils' progress varies too much, both within and between subjects, because of the variations in the impact of the teaching. While the pupils make reasonable progress in some subjects, they do not do so across the full range of the curriculum.
- The pupils do not make enough progress in English.

- While the pupils' attitudes and general demeanour stand them in good stead for life in modern Britain, they have been hampered in doing so until very recently by below-average attainment resulting from not making good progress.
- Currently, the pupils are making better progress than previously, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The improvements are recent, however, and have not been sustained.
- The pupils make reasonable progress in mathematics, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The most able pupils make reasonable progress, including the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who go on to further education, employment and training is average. It has improved steadily, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, who now go on to make positive choices in these areas as often as other pupils.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- The progress made by the students varies too much, as it does in the main school. While the students make reasonable progress on some courses, on others they do not. That is the case across the range of courses, academic and vocational.
- The leaders have not focused effectively on improving the academic progress of the students.
- As in the main school, the effectiveness of the teaching varies too much. The teaching in the sixth form does not provide sufficient challenge for the most able students.
- At the moment, the individualised study programmes provided for the students do not enable all of them to work towards qualifications at an appropriate level. This has had a negative effect on students' achievements.
- For example, the sixth form does not provide sufficient opportunities at level 2 to meet the needs of the students; the leaders have set out plans to rectify this matter by next academic year.
- Most of the students who retake GCSEs with a view to improving their grades in English and mathematics do not succeed in doing so.
- The students are often unable to explain how the comprehensive range of enrichment activities and opportunities available to them contribute to their learning and development. This includes opportunities to support the life and work of the main school and to learn about fundamental British values.
- In the most effective teaching, the students respond well to the teachers' questions, are helped to take risks that help them to learn, and are encouraged successfully to interact with each other. The teachers use good subject knowledge to devise imaginative and creative opportunities for the students to learn, which get a strong response from the students.
- The students feel nurtured in the sixth form. This is something that, understandably and justifiably, they value greatly. It contributes significantly to their sense of safety and well-being.

- The inspectors found examples of some inspirational work with students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities that enabled students, who would otherwise struggle to do so, to express feelings and to discuss emotions.
- The sixth form meets the requirements of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Mostly, the students complete the courses that they start.
- The students are helped to go on to a good range of opportunities after the sixth form, including apprenticeships.

School details

Unique reference number	112939
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10019545

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	639
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Shephard
Headteacher	Jon Crone
Telephone number	01773 712477
Website	www.aldercarhighschool.co.uk
Email address	info@aldercarhigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets the government's current floor standards.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. The proportion of disadvantaged students in the sixth form is similar to that in the main school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average for the 'SEN support' group; it is much higher than average for pupils with a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan. More than one sixth of the students in the sixth form have special educational needs and/or

disabilities.

- The school includes specially resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. It hosts a unit for eight deaf and hearing-impaired pupils.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school has experienced considerable turbulence with staffing since the last inspection. Significant progress has been made and the school has a full complement of staff for September 2017.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2016.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons throughout the school and in all classes. They carried out other visits to classrooms to look at particular aspects of the school's work and scrutinised examples of the pupils' and students' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders and other staff at the school, including from the hearing impaired unit, and with members of the governing body.
- They spoke with pupils in groups, in lessons, and around the school.
- The inspectors checked the 26 responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and looked at the text comments submitted by those parents.
- The inspectors looked at inspection questionnaires returned by the staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records relating to safeguarding, records relating to the pupils' behaviour, the school's information about the pupils' attainment and progress, and other information about the work of the school.

Inspection team

Clive Moss, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Robinson	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Long	Ofsted Inspector
Sian Hampton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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