

Aldercar High School

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

Inspection dates

25–26 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
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 good school

- The headteacher provides clear, effective leadership.
- The headteacher and the leadership team ensure that pupils are safe, behave well and make good progress. Leaders have the determination and capacity to improve the school further.
- Leaders have begun to use the pupil premium funding much more effectively following the review. For example, in key stage 3, leaders have successfully improved the progress that all disadvantaged pupils make.
- The effective middle leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school. Their actions ensure that their teams know what they need to do to improve the school further.
- As a consequence, pupils' progress has improved and continues to do so in Year 10 and in key stage 3.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The enhanced resource facility for pupils with hearing impairment provides opportunities for these pupils to be fully integrated into all aspects of the school.
- The provision for students with SEND in the sixth form provides a secure base for learning. The students are able to move onto high-quality courses or training in the next stage of their education.
- The quality of teaching is becoming more consistently good. Most teachers use assessment information to plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. However, some teachers do not always plan lessons that build on prior learning and this can inhibit the progress pupils make.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and considerate of the feelings of other people in the school.
- Pupils benefit from high-quality careers advice and guidance. This helps them to make informed decisions about the next steps in their education.
- Governors now have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school. They provide challenge and support. Their engagement has helped the school to improve.
- There is an appropriate programme of personal, social and health education. However, it is not taught consistently across the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that all teachers, especially those who teach English, plan for and provide a consistently high level of challenge for pupils, particularly from the start of Year 7
 - ensuring that development planning and monitoring of student progress in the sixth form are focused more precisely on raising attainment and securing better retention.
- Improve consistency in the teaching of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) so that it is taught effectively to better prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.
- Improve the consistency in the way in which safeguarding records are maintained by using the new recording system to ensure that all records and chronologies capture the school's effective actions and decision-making.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and the leadership team are working well together in order to evaluate the impact of their actions. They have introduced a number of new initiatives and, as a consequence of their robust quality assurance programmes, they have a clear understanding of what has worked and what needs further development.
- The school development plan clearly articulates what needs to be done to further improve the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders have high expectations. They strive to improve the quality of teaching and learning through introducing a consistency to whole-school planning using five pillars lesson plan.
- Senior leaders hold middle leaders to account with greater rigour. Middle leaders have welcomed the opportunities and support provided to develop their teams. However, there is still some work to be continued, especially in English, to ensure that all middle leaders are having the same positive impact on progress.
- The overwhelming majority of teachers welcomed the opportunities for staff training and their practice has improved. Leaders target training effectively on those areas that require additional support in order to improve. However, there are not sufficient opportunities to share best practice in order to continue to improve progress for pupils.
- Work is now monitored with much greater scrutiny. Teachers now feel that they are clear about what is expected of them. As a consequence, staff morale is high and teachers say that they are proud to work at the school. However, there is a need to ensure that new systems, especially in behaviour management, are consistently applied.
- Leaders have ensured that the majority of pupils receive a good education at key stage 3. The broad and balanced curriculum provides pupils with the opportunity to build core knowledge and deepen their understanding throughout the first three years in the school.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's use of the pupil premium funding is now much better spent.
- The external review of funding has ensured that leaders and governors are more confident that the funding is focused on the specific needs of disadvantaged pupils.
- The additional funding for pupils with SEND is used well. The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has a clear understanding of the individual pupils' needs. These are shared with the staff. The SENCo's strategic and operational leadership means that teachers are more confident in being able to provide for pupils in lesson. Pupils are making much improved progress.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View are positive about the school.

Governance of the school

- The majority of the governing body are new in post since January 2018 following a review of governance. However, this is a team of experienced governors who are or have been on governing bodies at other institutions.
- Governors ensure that they are thoroughly informed about the school's performance. They hold senior leaders to account, both challenging them and supporting them.
- Governors scrutinise information provided and ask probing and pertinent questions of leaders. Where there are major developments that may affect the school governors will hold additional meetings to ensure that they are not distracted from their core purpose.
- Governor link visits to the school are now much more focused on helping the school to improve. The more regular interactions with the leadership team ensure that governors are up to date with the operational matters in school. This then helps to give greater clarity to their strategic role in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding lead is supported by the recently formed safeguarding team. Members are aware that they need to meet more regularly as a team to better share information. However, all actions are undertaken in a timely manner.
- Staff training is carried out and updated annually. Staff know about safeguarding. The school's reorganised approach to training from the new team provides better opportunities to help embed teachers' responsibilities.
- Staff know how to report concerns about pupils' well-being and act promptly when they have concerns.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know that they have someone to talk to if they need support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The five pillars of Aldercar provide the planning structure with which teachers are able to plan work in a more consistent way. When used effectively, this helps teachers know what to prepare for, based on assessment data, to better meet the needs of pupils.
- Middle leaders are now given more support to take greater responsibility for learning in their areas. They are held to account more rigorously by school leaders through line management meetings and focused reviews of provision. As a consequence, the majority of faculty leaders are clearer about how to hold their teams to account.
- The teaching of mathematics and science is rapidly improving. Heads of faculty understand where there are areas of need and know how to meet these needs. Leaders know that this best practice needs to be shared across all faculties and they have the capacity to support those areas that need development to come up to the standards of the most effective teams.
- Teachers now more skilfully use questioning to help pupils to develop their thinking

skills. For example, in Year 8 geography, pupils were questioned in order to check that learning was secure before they were challenged by the teacher.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to provide a solid foundation for learning. Where lessons are well planned, teachers provide clear explanations and demonstrations to help pupils to better access learning. This was seen clearly, for example, in the post-16 enhanced resource provision providing a clear structure for learning.
- The majority of teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. They are using assessment data to plan more challenging lessons. However, where lessons are not fully stretching pupils, and teachers have not taken into account learning from key stage 2, then pupils are not able to make expected progress.
- Teachers care about their pupils, who value this across all phases and provisions within the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally very positive.
- The school has implemented a new approach to assessment and feedback. This still needs time for teachers to be fully secure in how it is used in order to help pupils know what they need to do to improve subject-specific areas for development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders are providing support for pupils who are struggling with mental health issues. PSHE lessons are used to promote healthy and safe lifestyles and pupils could speak confidently about keeping themselves safe.
- Pupils are aware that there are different reasons for bullying. Pupils say that, on the rare occasions that bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils are confident that they will be listened to and trust that staff will take appropriate action.
- Pupils understand diversity. They are aware that different people have different beliefs and cultures. However, while pupils understand, they do not always have the vocabulary to fully articulate their opinions.
- Pupils' transition from primary schools is well led. There were multiple opportunities to visit the school and there was a focus on meeting the pastoral needs of the pupils. However, the school is aware that it needs to better use prior attainment from key stage 2 so that teachers can plan more challenging lessons that will help pupils to settle into work more quickly, especially in English.
- Pupils receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. Pupils take part in the wide range of activities available to them. This ensures that they are ready for the next stage of their learning.
- Destinations for pupils with SEND are very positive. Vulnerable pupils are prioritised for careers advice.
- Pupils whom inspectors met during the inspection spoke very positively about their experiences at school. Pupils wear their uniform with pride. Work is well presented in

books.

- There are a small number of pupils who attend alternative provision. Their well-being and progress are carefully monitored by the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Conduct around the school is good. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere on corridors between lessons. Pupils socialise well together during their breaks. For example, many pupils welcomed inspectors and other visitors who were on site. They spoke to them courteously as well as holding open doors.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons and move promptly to lessons after breaks. Pupils bring their own equipment to lessons and this helps lessons to start purposefully.
- Leaders have introduced new strategies that have begun to improve behaviour in the school. Exclusions for poor behaviour have been declining as have permanent exclusions. The overall figure has reduced to below that of similar schools. Exclusions for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND have been high but are now reducing.
- In lessons, the vast majority of pupils are successfully engaged in their learning. However, some low-level disruption in lessons went unchallenged and this leads to inconsistent progress, especially in Year 7.
- The leadership of the management of attendance has been strengthened since January 2019. The effective strategy for monitoring attendance has been effectively implemented and there is now a sharper and more strategic approach to monitoring and improving attendance. Attendance is now improving and is close to that of similar schools. However, the school is aware that there is still more to do.
- Attendance is particularly improving rapidly for those groups who had previously had high levels of persistent absence.
- The school has identified that some groups of pupils have had a significant impact on attendance. A structure has been put into place that helps pupils better engage with learning and, as a consequence, the attendance of these groups is beginning to improve rapidly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. In 2018, pupils' overall progress was broadly in line with the national average. This consolidated the progress made the previous year.
- Inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work shows that progress is good across a broad range of subjects. This is especially so in mathematics, science and geography.
- Pupils with SEND have their individual learning needs identified and well met. Accordingly, their progress accelerates through key stage 3 and is generally good across a broad range of subjects. They move on to further education or training. The SENCo's strategic leadership means that leaders have a secure understanding that

funding to support pupils with SEND is targeted effectively.

- Leaders have correctly identified that catch-up funding needs to be targeted at improving literacy rates. There is a programme of accelerated reading to help address this. However, there is a need for better strategic leadership so that the school is aware of where there is evidence of impact so that pupils can access the curriculum more successfully.
- Following a review of how the pupil premium funding is used, leaders now have a better understanding of strategies that have a positive effect on progress. This is especially evident in key stage 3, where disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of where pupils achieve well and where there is a need to improve outcomes more rapidly. For example, outcomes in science were below average in 2018. The appointment of new staff, including a faculty leader, has brought drive and clarity to the faculty, resolving the issues that led to some groups of pupils underachieving. Work in Year 10 books demonstrated good work. In mathematics, improvements implemented have been sustained and pupils are making better than expected progress. However, there are still some areas of inconsistency across faculties that are beginning to be addressed.
- Overall, the most able pupils make good progress. The appointment of the new headteacher has seen an improvement at key stage 3 as the school begins to raise aspirations. The school has clear programmes in place to support pupils through key stage 4. However, there are still occasions when pupils who had low prior attainment are not expected to work as hard as they could. As a consequence, these pupils do not, as a matter of routine, make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The proportion of pupils entering sustained education, employment or training at the end of Year 11 is above the national average.

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- There is a new head of sixth form in place and she has identified what the school needs to do in order to improve provision and is beginning to implement change.
- Too many students were not completing their studies and retention rates were well below average. This was because too many students were on courses that were not suitable to their needs.
- The school has begun to rectify this area. All students are now interviewed by the headteacher and the head of sixth form. This has ensured that pupils are following suitable qualifications. The retention rates, while still below average, are showing improvements.
- Leaders provide for a range of qualifications that are responsive to the identified needs of the students. They offer a combination of academic and vocational qualifications.
- For the last two years, student outcomes at the end of Year 13 have been too low. From their different starting points, students have made progress that is below that of other students nationally.

- Current outcomes for students, while indicating improvements, remain too far behind those of their peers.
- The provision for those who need to retake GCSE examinations in English and/or mathematics has been variable in the past. Although pupils make good progress in English, this has not been consistently the case in mathematics since the last inspection. Current provision has been adapted to better reflect needs of students, reflecting leaders' actions elsewhere in the school.
- Careers advice and guidance for the sixth form is very effective. All students have the opportunity to undertake a work experience placement. Visits are arranged to a widening variety of higher education institutions in order to raise aspirations. Consequently, all those who complete their studies have progressed to further education, employment or training.
- Students said that they enjoyed being in the sixth form. They felt that their teachers knew them well and were willing to offer support and challenge. They felt that the monitoring of their progress was very effective and where students were falling behind, strategies were put in place to support them.
- The school are aware that while tutors know students well, there are aspects of their personal development and welfare that need to be refined. Support for students who are struggling with mental health issues is effective and students welcome the support that they receive.
- The enhanced resource centre for students with SEND is very effective. Students who would not normally access sixth-form provision have a bespoke curriculum at level 1 designed for them. Students thrive in this centre and they are prepared well for their next steps in education, training or employment. They go on to high-quality, valuable placements more confident and able to engage in their education.
- Students are given opportunities to develop their leadership skills and build their confidence. Students work with younger pupils as subject champions, encouraging them to better participate in their subjects. The student council has real responsibility. Dialogue between students and the sixth-form leadership team has helped to identify areas for development in student welfare.

School details

Unique reference number	112939
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10087347

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	567
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alix Round
Headteacher	Clare Hatto
Telephone number	01773 712 477
Website	www.aldercarhigh.co.uk
Email address	info@aldercarhigh.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- The school is a community school within Derbyshire local authority.
- The school is in an area of above-average deprivation.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage.
- Pupil prior attainment was below national average for all year groups.

- The school uses Amber Valley and Erewash Support Centre (AVESC) and Tailor Made Programmes as alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of teaching and learning mainly at key stage 3 and in a wide range of subjects. Inspectors also visited registration sessions and watched an assembly.
- Inspectors looked carefully at pupils' books during lessons. As there were no Year 11 lessons, inspectors carried out an extensive work scrutiny in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and Spanish.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, faculty leaders, teachers, other members of staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account the 41 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and the 36 responses to Parent View. They reviewed the 18 free-text responses to Parent View.
- Inspectors spent time observing pupils moving around school at different times of the day, including at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally around the school and held formal discussions with groups of pupils across all phases.
- A wide variety of documents were scrutinised, including information relating to attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils' progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and learning, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and minutes of governors' meetings.

Inspection team

Paul Sweeney, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jo Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Anderson	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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