

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ALDERMAN KNIGHT SCHOOL**

Tewkesbury

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115825

Headteacher: Mr. I.T. Walsh

Reporting inspector: Mr. S. Parker  
13033

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> March – 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003

Inspection number: 249362

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	4 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ashchurch Road Tewkesbury Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL20 8JJ
Telephone number:	01684 295639
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D. Waters
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Alderman Knight is a school for pupils aged four to 16, with moderate learning difficulties. There are currently 80 pupils on roll. The special educational needs of pupils admitted to the school in recent years have become more complex and include specific learning or communication difficulties and medically based conditions. Most of the younger pupils up to the age of 11, have significant learning difficulties. In contrast, many of the older pupils are more able, but have come from mainstream schools and have usually been referred because of their challenging behaviour. A quarter of the school's population is identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). A significant minority of pupils across the school has mild autistic characteristics. There are two pupils of mixed ethnic parentage but none with English as an additional language. The ratio of boys to girls is 3:2. Only 16 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, reflecting the generally more favourable socio-economic character of the catchment area. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and their attainment on entry is lower than that expected for pupils of a similar age. The school has experienced a very long period of insecurity whilst awaiting the outcome of a county review of special educational provision, which will determine its future status or possible closure. It is expected that the situation will be resolved in the very near future.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Alderman Knight is a very good school. Its teachers have high, but realistic expectations of their pupils and, as a result, pupils' achievements are very good. The school is very well managed by the headteacher and provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Very good teaching of a very well planned curriculum enables pupils to learn very successfully, make very good progress and achieve impressive results.
- Extremely high quality relationships and well focused pastoral support are strengths of the school, helping pupils, particularly those with behaviour difficulties, to behave very well and feel confident about their own capabilities.
- Excellent personal, social, health and citizenship education encourages pupils to have very positive attitudes and be very well prepared for their future life when they leave school.
- An effective management partnership between the headteacher, his staff and supportive governors has sustained the school very successfully through unsettling times.
- The school works in a very successful partnership with parents and carers.

No significant areas for improvement were identified.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school had a small number of issues to deal with, following its previous inspection in March 1998, and has been successful in addressing them, especially in relation to development planning and ensuring that courses for older pupils more appropriately meet their needs. In addition to these requirements, and most significant in the context of the school's difficult circumstances, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements have improved markedly across nearly all subjects.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	very good	A
reading	A	A	good	B
writing	B	A	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social, health and citizenship education	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils of all abilities achieve well in the primary department and very well as they get older. They all make particularly impressive progress in their ability to communicate and read. This, in turn, supports them very well in their very significant personal development. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and science up to age 11 and very good progress by 16. Pupils make similarly very good progress across most subjects, but especially in the practically focused subjects of science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, food technology and the newly established manufacturing course. The school is ambitious for its pupils to succeed and sets appropriately challenging whole school targets. Results in GCSE and other accredited courses last year were very good. Pupils make overall better progress in the secondary department because of the structure and content of the curriculum and the high quality of specialist subject teaching. Achievement and progress against a wide range of individual targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs are, however, consistently very good across the school, especially in relation to behaviour.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen, interested and well focused in their lessons. As a result, they become very enthusiastic and successful learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the clearly expressed rules and reward systems. They are invariably polite and courteous to all adults and to each other.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils are successfully encouraged to develop a positive view of themselves and consequently become mature and sensible young people as they progress through the school. They always make the best use of all opportunities provided for them to take responsibility, for example as members of the recently established school council.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are well motivated to come to school. Punctuality is good overall.

The exceptional quality of very productive relationships right across the school helps pupils to believe that they can succeed. For many pupils who come to Alderman Knight later in their school careers, after failing in local mainstream schools, this is a very new experience, to which they respond enthusiastically.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The great majority of teaching is at least good and mostly very good, especially in the secondary department, so that the quality of teaching continues to be a strength of the school. This is reflected in pupils' very good overall achievements. The teaching of literacy, not just in English lessons, but across all subjects, is particularly successful. This is because the National Literacy Strategy has been very well adapted for the needs of the pupils. Similarly effective application of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a beneficial impact on the teaching of mathematics, which is at least good and often very good throughout the school. The teaching of science is good overall and of a particularly high standard in the secondary department. Teachers' use of information and communication technology in all subjects is impressive. The principles of the Key Stage 3 Strategy are influencing the teaching of older pupils and subject teachers have become more effective at meeting the diversity of pupils' learning needs in their classes. This has, in turn, led to significant improvements in a number of subjects. Teachers in the primary department are approaching the challenge of the increasing complexity of pupils' difficulties, especially those with autism, thoughtfully and productively. Very good teaching of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) enables them to develop confidence and maturity. The school's team of exceptionally skilled and committed learning support workers (LSWs) makes a very significant contribution to this overall success, through the close and productive working partnerships with teachers.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall. Improvements since the last inspection have made learning opportunities even more relevant for older pupils. As a result they are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives, through good college links, careers guidance and work experience. A wide range of educational visits, residential experience and links with the wider community also support pupils' learning very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There is a very strong sense of a community that values each individual, and in which all adults provide pupils with strong role models of how to value each other. The school is a calm and supportive environment, where pupils are helped to develop an understanding of right and wrong and citizenship. The curriculum is particularly successful in supporting pupils' personal development, and their appreciation of the richness and diversity of the world around them.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school has an appropriately well structured approach to safeguarding and promoting pupils' wellbeing through good administration of child protection and health and safety. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting personal development, good behaviour and attendance are very effective.



The school plans its curriculum very well for most of its pupils and is now developing the primary curriculum further, in order to meet the more diverse needs of the youngest pupils being admitted. There is a very good working partnership with parents, who are very supportive and appreciative of all that is done for their children. Arrangements for finding out how well pupils are progressing in their learning are good overall and, in some subjects, very good. Although much work has been done on developing a new format for IEPs, it is not clear what purpose these documents serve in the context of the school's overall good assessment practice.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The day to day management of the school is very effective. The headteacher provides strong leadership, which has ensured that the very high standards at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Senior and other key staff perform their delegated tasks very well. They are, however, not always afforded the opportunity to be fully involved in developing the future role and direction of the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors are appropriately involved in the monitoring of standards and have a close and productive working relationship with the headteacher in school improvement planning. The governing body has been a very strong advocate of the school, both locally and nationally, during its recent period of considerable uncertainty.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. Evaluation of standards of pupil achievement is very good, based on both national standards and against school targets. School developments are very well monitored, but evaluation of the impact of developments is not as good.
The strategic use of resources	Learning resources are well used across most of the school. At the primary stage, however, the organisation of the timetable inhibits best use of the available appropriate resources and staff skills. All specific grants are well spent on their designated purpose.

Very efficient organisation and administration help the school to run smoothly. The school is well staffed and appropriate, ongoing training and professional development is offered to everyone. The success of this whole school approach is evident in the high quality of the education provided. Accommodation is good and has benefited from recent improvement work for science, information and communication technology, food technology and art. There are good quality resources for teaching and learning. Appropriate actions are taken to ensure that the principles of best value are achieved.

#### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Their children enjoy school because the teaching is very good.</li> <li>▪ Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>▪ The school is well managed and staff are always available and helpful.</li> <li>▪ They are kept well informed about the school and their children's development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Arrangements for homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully supports parents' very positive views about the work of the school. Inspectors do, however, agree that the levels and type of homework are not always appropriate and that

arrangements are sometimes inconsistent and not always clear. However, the homework club that runs after school, is very successful in supporting pupils who find it difficult to work at home.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Very good teaching of a very well planned curriculum enables pupils to learn very successfully, make very good progress and achieve impressive results.**

1. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school, sustaining and improving on the high standards that were seen at the last inspection. During the inspection, virtually all teaching was at least good, over half was very good or excellent and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. The best teaching was seen in the secondary department, where subject specialists taught with particular skill. All pupils achieve well in the primary department and very well as they get older, because of this consistently high standard of teaching. Very good results in GCSE and a wide range of other accredited courses are testament to the impact of this teaching. In the context of the school's difficult circumstances, which have included the threat of closure, resulting in the loss of experienced and knowledgeable staff, this is an impressive achievement.
2. The very good curriculum for older pupils has benefited from improvements since the last inspection. Recognising the changing needs of pupils, with many joining the school late on in their career, staff have developed more relevant learning opportunities for young people who have experienced failure in basic skills elsewhere. As a result they are engaged by, for example, the new manufacturing course, which they perceive as being more relevant for their future careers. The National Strategy to support younger, secondary age pupils' learning has been thoughtfully adapted, building on earlier good work with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. As a result, these key skills, together with competencies in ICT, are very well promoted in all subjects across the curriculum.
3. Younger pupils in the primary department are coming to the school with much more complex learning difficulties than previously. Whilst the school is currently providing a generally effective education for them, individual staff are adapting learning opportunities and their own teaching approaches imaginatively to accommodate these changing needs. In these circumstances, co-ordinated change will be required to the way the curriculum is planned and provided for pupils across both Key Stages 1 and 2. This would most likely utilise the foundation curriculum framework for the youngest children, focusing particularly on helping the increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders to develop an understanding of routines and communication and learning skills. However change is effected, it would certainly involve restructuring the timetable from its current rigid subject focus and consideration of how best to utilise existing resources and staff skills.
4. Particular emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' literacy skills, giving them the confidence to read out loud and for pleasure, to communicate successfully in varied situations and to write capably. This, in turn, helps them to succeed in

subjects across the curriculum where these skills are required. This was well illustrated in many lessons, including mathematics, science and ICT, where teachers took their responsibilities for consolidating pupils' literacy skills very seriously, often focusing very well on the specialist vocabulary of their subject.

5. The teaching of English as a subject is impressive, particularly for secondary age pupils. This was exemplified in a lesson for 12 year olds, focusing on verbs. Pupils were motivated by the teacher's enthusiasm and carried along by the lesson's structure and pace, which was the result of thorough and detailed planning. The teacher shared the aims of the lesson with the pupils, who were consequently clear about what they would be learning. This ensured that they could contribute straight away in the introductory activity, which referred to previous work on missing verbs in a list of instructions to make a cup of coffee, and helped them to 'tune in' and experience immediate success. The main part of the lesson involved a variety of well crafted activities, carefully planned to help all pupils participate at their own level of ability. The LSW was very effective in her supportive work with two lower attaining pupils; and computers were very well used, both to explore the 'instructions' element of the lesson and to word process finished work. The plenary at the end was used very effectively to recap and reinforce what pupils had learned and to complete the merit form, which graded pupils' behaviour and effort. This same strong format was used well in most of the lessons seen for the majority of subjects, to similarly good effect.
6. Teachers' specialist subject knowledge is very good. They are eager to share that knowledge, and their own enthusiasm, which in turn excites and motivates pupils to make very good progress in their learning. This is particularly evident in mathematics, science, design and food technology, the expressive arts and physical education. In some ways, it is even more impressive in ICT and art, where the subject co-ordinators, whilst not being originally trained specialists in their subjects, have built on their own interests and developed considerable expertise over time. In ICT, which is now an appropriately resourced subject, pupils' very good achievements are the result of well structured lessons, in which the teacher successfully enables all pupils to develop their own skills at a pace that suits their own learning styles. A very able and knowledgeable LSW makes particularly valuable contributions through her direct teaching, using powerpoint presentations, and sensitive individual support. The wide range of very high quality work in art, displayed sympathetically around the school, is a clear product of inspirational teaching that has encouraged pupils to believe that they can 'do art'. Particularly noteworthy are the influences of African and Aboriginal cultures, the work of famous artists, such as Escher, Rousseau and Van Gogh and the exciting use of ceramics, fabrics, silk painting and weaving. Pupils' reflective and very thoughtful use of sketch books to develop their ideas has contributed to overall high standards in GCSE coursework and results.
7. Throughout the year, pupils go on very relevant educational visits, which utilise community facilities to good effect. They also have the opportunity to experience well-organised and valuable residential education. A number of the older pupils pursue their particular interest in expressive arts and perform successfully at local festivals. All pupils are well prepared for their future studies and, where possible, employment, because they receive good careers guidance, work experience opportunities and attend college links.
8. The school's well expressed teaching and learning policy informs everyone's practice very effectively. All staff are reflective in the way they approach their responsibilities and take full advantage of the many training and professional development

opportunities, which are the result of careful planning to meet their identified needs. Educational partnerships in Denmark, Norway and the Czech Republic, through a collaborative European Union project, have made an important contribution in this respect. There are very clear links between performance management activity, the monitoring work done by all staff with curriculum responsibilities and the well thought out involvement of governors, through their curriculum committee. Members of the committee review the work of subject co-ordinators and link this with their careful analysis of individual pupil performance. They recognise the potential value of this approach for even more evaluative work in the future. Teachers are consequently well prepared to plan their work with pupils thoroughly and effectively. They are well informed about how well pupils are progressing and what their particular individual needs are. This information comes from overall good and, in some subjects such as design and technology, very good assessment information. As a result, teaching approaches are very well adapted and any necessary support is very well focused. There has been considerable recent development work on the format of IEPs to take better account of guidance in the new Code of Practice. It is, however, not clear what their purpose and function is in the context of teachers' already high quality subject specific planning and assessment strategies. The current IEPs are not addressing the 'additionality' of pupils' needs, nor providing teaching guidance or assessment opportunities outside the existing well-differentiated curriculum provision.

9. The highly successful partnership between teachers and the team of outstandingly competent LSWs is a very important part of the support that pupils are given. It is often the key to ensuring that pupils with the most challenging difficulties are included successfully in all learning experiences. LSWs also make a significant contribution to the range and diversity of learning experiences offered to pupils, particularly outside the normal school day. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, a Key Stage 3 summer literacy and numeracy school during the last week of the vacation and the wide ranging out of hours homework, learning and extra curricular activities all owe their continued value and success to the energy, drive and commitment of these staff.

**Extremely high quality relationships and well focused pastoral support are strengths of the school, helping pupils, particularly those with behaviour difficulties, to behave very well and feel confident about their own capabilities.**

10. The school has increasingly had to admit pupils with identified emotional and behavioural difficulties after they have experienced failure in mainstream schools, often well into their secondary education. These pupils have not only been very successfully integrated, but have, in many instances been transformed by the experience. One father, talking at the pre-inspection parents' meeting, recounted that the headteacher at his son's first school had suggested that the boy was unlikely ever to achieve very much. This parent, like many others, was very thankful that his child had gained a place at Alderman Knight, where 'staff recognised his potential and helped him to succeed'. These sorts of significant changes in pupils' behaviour and achievement are the result of two aspects of the school's culture.
11. Excellent relationships are consciously nurtured between all staff and pupils. Pupils pick up the fact that they are valued as individuals and, consequently, learn to be respectful and mutually supportive, often finding ways of helping each other. Teachers and LSWs know their pupils exceptionally well and this knowledge helps them to provide caring and practical support through a well structured and realistic pastoral system. During the inspection, for example, one pupil was finding the whole experience of school and the classroom very difficult to cope with – but he was at least there, because he recognised its potential value. Everyone he came into

contact with each day knew about the situation because of very effective communication and managed him subtly and appropriately. He went unwillingly into lessons and sat silent and apart. The breakthrough came in a science lesson, when an LSW sensitively picked up his disguised interest in what was going on. Her very well timed intervention drew the pupil into the lesson and he quickly achieved its objectives, going on to the next lesson suddenly believing that he could, after all, succeed. As the result of this sort of wide ranging, team support, pupils find school a positive experience, which they come to enjoy. Such an atmosphere, combined with encouragement and reward, has ensured that attendance has improved in recent years.

12. Within this caring pastoral ethos, more challenging behaviour is equally well managed. Staff have been provided with appropriate training and the school has developed a wide range of extremely effective organisational and educational approaches. There are well expressed values, policies and rules on behaviour, that are clear and accessible; and which pupils understand and accept, importantly, because they are logically linked to the classroom experience. The review activity at the end of each lesson, linked straightforwardly to long term rewards, encourages pupils to look objectively at their own behaviour and effort and the implications for their learning. As a result, behaviour throughout the school and in the wider community is very good. Pupils make the effort to be polite and courteous to all adults they meet - and try very hard to be the same with each other.

**Excellent personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) encourages pupils to have very positive attitudes and be very well prepared for their future life when they leave school.**

13. Throughout the school, all staff take every opportunity to help pupils deal with their own difficulties positively and productively. Younger pupils, particularly those with social and communication needs, are provided with very well structured and focused programmes, using a wide range of effective techniques. This, in turn, enables them to become more involved with the learning opportunities that they are given. As they get older they are encouraged to think about their rights and responsibilities, how best to develop an understanding of the difficulties they will encounter as they approach and go through adolescence and how they might cope better in challenging social situations. There is a clear policy to make school a sociable place, so that, for example, lunchtime, which staff and pupils share, is a civilised occasion, providing opportunities for conversation. This helps pupils to learn the conventions of relating appropriately to adults in authority, whilst recognising that they are people with whom they can have a straightforwardly friendly relationship. Shared activities, such as residential opportunities, and other out of school occasions like sporting fixtures and arts festivals consolidate this feeling.
14. The very good PSHCE programme deals extremely successfully with many of the issues that parents, adults and young people often find difficult to discuss. Some subjects, such as relationships, are returned to at increasingly sophisticated levels and incorporated very well into lessons with a particular focus. In one session on sexually transmitted diseases, for example, issues of mutual respect and shared responsibility were subtly and sensitively dealt with – but with no punches pulled. Emotional issues, drugs awareness and many other challenging topics are very successfully dealt with in the same productive way. English, expressive arts, religious education and physical education lessons also provide opportunities to enable pupils to take risks without being put down and they are helped to recognise the importance of feeling good about themselves and the impact that this has on their

own and others' self esteem. A lunch break rehearsal of a small mixed group of older pupils, preparing for their subsequently very well received contribution to a dance festival, powerfully illustrated the impact of this approach. Boys and girls together were able to offer both constructive criticism and praise in equal measure – and without embarrassment.

15. The school's philosophy also incorporates well thought out opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility. This manifests itself at the simplest level in their helping themselves to equipment and tidying up in lessons or at break times. At a more sophisticated level, the recent development of a school council, with elected members from the older classes discussing and resolving whole school issues, such as fund raising for charities, on their peers' behalf, is already having a significant positive impact on the way the members perceive their and others' responsibilities. Involvement in the Borough Youth Council takes that awareness one step further. Vocational courses for manufacturing and the Team Enterprise programme have a similar effect on pupils' awareness of and ability to debate and resolve difficulties collaboratively. In this and many other ways during their time at school, pupils learn important lessons about right and wrong, citizenship and the impact of their actions on others. Even more relevantly, they come to identify and understand some of the pressures they will experience as young adults. They are, consequently, helped to become more mature and sensible young people – an aspect of the school's approach that is especially valued by their parents.

**An effective management partnership between the headteacher, his staff and supportive governors has sustained the school very successfully through unsettling times.**

16. The overall very good performance of the school and the continuing high standards detailed above have resulted from the strong leadership of the headteacher and his commitment to ensuring that the school is managed very well on a day to day basis. His able senior management colleagues and other key staff, who have performed their assigned tasks very effectively, have helped him considerably in this endeavour. A very efficient team of office and care-taking staff has also made a significant contribution to the successful organisation and administration of the school. The well developed role of curriculum co-ordinators and a shared responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has had an important positive impact on both staff attitudes and overall standards, as has the effective performance management programme. Everyone has benefited from well organised training and professional development opportunities - and the continued re-accreditation of the school's Investor in People status demonstrates the success of this whole approach.
17. There is, though, a recognition by the headteacher that the long term management challenge of sustaining existing good practice and maintaining an appropriate staffing structure and staff morale, whilst investing significant energy in fighting for the school's future, has placed particular demands on his effectiveness. This has resulted in his employing a leadership style that has not afforded his senior management colleagues (and consequently other staff) the opportunity to be appropriately involved in debating and developing the future role and direction of the school.
18. The governing body has been particularly successful in meeting its responsibilities through a well structured and effective committee structure. Financial resources have been very well managed, with the help of a very competent bursar and, as a result the school is well resourced for teaching and learning. Governors have been

closely involved in arranging improvements to accommodation and equipment for science, ICT, food technology and art and they have applied the principles of best value appropriately in this respect. Their recent stronger involvement in monitoring the curriculum is having a significant impact on the quality of learning opportunities available for pupils. Clearly, though, their most significant activity has been in their very strong advocacy of the school, both locally and nationally in relation to its insecure future. As with the headteacher, however, the governors have tended towards a reactive rather than visionary approach to planning for the school's future.

19. In this context, whilst the school's improvement planning process has focused very effectively on management and maintenance objectives, it has not fully considered what direction the school might take in the current challenging climate. It is appropriately structured as a long term, five year tool, but it does not incorporate a rolling programme of development work that looks regularly at the years ahead, taking particular account, for example, of the predictably changing population. By the same token, although thorough monitoring of targets has been undertaken to see if they were achieved, there has been limited evaluation of the impact that any improvements have effected. The school's existing, very effective collaborative planning model can, however, easily be adapted to take account of these issues.

**The school works in a very successful partnership with parents and carers.**

20. Parents' responses to the questionnaire and their comments at the well attended meeting before the inspection indicated that they are extremely happy with what the school does to help them and their children. There were strong expressions of appreciation overall. This was particularly so in a number of instances when parents mentioned their children's previous negative mainstream experience and the benefits that had followed from their transfer to Alderman Knight. They feel that the school focuses very successfully on individual needs within a caring but nonetheless challenging environment. They consider that staff are 'ambitious for every child' and that this results in many achieving standards well beyond what parents might originally have expected. For them, it is important that their children are taught to be independent, how to conduct themselves out in the community and how to cope with difficult situations – for example 'how to stick up for themselves without being unkind to others'. This latter point was especially re-assuring in relation to any likely incidents of bullying, which they feel confident are handled quickly and effectively. The parents of children with ASD were particularly appreciative of the social skills training that was provided, which often made their own lives at home much easier. There were frequent expressions of gratitude about the care that staff offer and special mention for the LSWs and their high level of commitment to their work. Many parents were very complimentary about the impact of the 'wonderful, safe and liberating residentials' and other opportunities for their children to experience what they might never do otherwise.
22. Parents feel that the school is open and welcoming and works very hard to establish and maintain a productive partnership with them. They find that the home-school books and newsletters help to keep them informed and involved. The great majority consider the Statement Review meetings and open evenings are very helpful and that the flow of information about their child's work and progress is very good. They are very impressed by the speedy, sympathetic and effective responses to any difficulties they might have. The Friends of Alderman Knight are much appreciated for both their very successful fund raising activities that 'support all sorts of extras for the kids' and the 'very enjoyable' social activities they organise.

23. A small, but significant minority of parents expressed some criticism of the homework arrangements. Inspectors did consider this to be a valid concern, finding that, in a few instances, either the work set was not always appropriate, requiring pupils to use skills beyond their capabilities, or that teachers were inconsistent in the way they applied the policy concerning frequency or amount. Inspectors did, though, also have sympathy with the contrasting majority view that, for most pupils, arrangements were appropriate. Parents of pupils who benefit from the homework club after school were particularly appreciative of this thoughtful and supportive facility.

#### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

24. No significant areas for improvement were identified.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

25. In order to improve further the already very good education that the school provides, the headteacher, senior management team and governors should incorporate the following objectives in future school improvement planning:
- consider how best to structure development of teaching and learning approaches for the younger group of pupils with more complex needs, better to meet their needs;
  - review the form, content and use of IEPs to ensure that they will be both effective and efficient as planning and assessment tools;
  - develop further the working practices of the senior management team so that members can be more productively involved in the development of the school's future role and in the present climate of change;
  - adapt the school's improvement planning processes so that they are strongly focused on a way forward for the school and incorporate a more evaluative approach to gauging the impact of development decisions;
  - review arrangements for homework.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	12	1	-	-	-
Percentage	4	50	42	4	-	-	-

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents nearly four percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)**

Due to the small number of pupils entered for these tests, it is not appropriate to publish the results. However all the pupils were working towards Level 1 in most subjects.

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2002	8

The majority of pupils were entered for the statutory tests in science but not for English and mathematics, for which teacher assessments were carried out. The results are shown below:

<i>Percentage at each level</i>	L2	L3	L4
English	75	25	
Mathematics	63	37	
Science	13	37	50

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2002	19

Pupils were entered for statutory testing and the results are shown below:

<i>Percentage at each level</i>	Below L 3/4	L3	L4	L5
English	84		16	
Mathematics	42	42	11	5
Science	37	26	16	21

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2002	11

<b>GCSE results</b>								
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Entries</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
Art and design	9			2	1	4	2	
Design and technology	2					1	1	
Mathematics	5						3	2
Science	6			1	1	2	2	
Food technology	11				2	4	4	1
English	1					1		
Expressive arts	4				1	3		

Overall average points score for GCSE 9.7

Entry Level Certificates	Entries	L1	L2	L3
English	5		2	3
Science	5		4	1
French	11		3	8
Design and technology	9	8	1	
Mathematics	7		6	

AQA Achievement Tests in Literacy	Entries	L1	L2	L3
Literacy	24	9	14	1

GNVQ Foundation Part 1	Entries	Passes
Manufacturing	11	11

AQA Unit Award Scheme (Letters of Credit)	
Subject	No of Certificates
English	1
Expressive arts	20
Physical education	4
Religious education	11
Music	6
Technology (Food)	11

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
76
1
2
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
4	

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 -Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.6
Average class size	8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y1-Y11**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	287

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	790,339
Total expenditure	766,525
Expenditure per pupil	8,811
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,000
Balance carried forward to next year	23,810

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	40

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	22	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	34	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	34	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	32	16	3	3
The teaching is good.	80	17	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	19	5	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	26	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	73	24	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	12	5	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	31	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	22	8	0	0