

Alderman Knight School

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8JJ

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher has very high expectations of pupils and staff. She has ensured that the school has maintained its high standards of teaching since the previous inspection.
- School leaders and members of the governing body work very effectively together to closely monitor all aspects of the school's work and plan future developments.
- Staff are extremely positive about how well the school is led and managed. They value being able to contribute their ideas to improvement plans and feel very well supported in their work.
- Teachers know the pupils extremely well. They use this knowledge to identify individualised targets which help pupils make outstanding progress in their learning and personal development.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the curriculum includes a wide range of subjects designed to develop pupils' academic, vocational and life skills. Pupils are highly engaged in their learning and achieve appropriate qualifications. As a result, they leave school exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their lives.
- Pupils feel safe and secure. The school safeguards pupils extremely well.
- Members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders keep a very close eye on how well pupils are progressing. If a pupil is not achieving what is expected, additional support is quickly put in place. The impact of this support is carefully checked to ensure that pupils catch up.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. Behaviour in lessons and during social times is excellent. Both the tutor and pastoral support teams provide strong support to pupils to help them manage any difficulties they have.
- Since it was opened in 2016, the sixth form has enabled many students to achieve very well. Students benefit from strong teaching and a curriculum that is planned around their individual needs. They make outstanding progress in all areas of their work.
- Teachers' excellent subject knowledge helps pupils excel across the curriculum, as well as in English and mathematics. Some new staff do not have enough knowledge of pupils' different special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to ensure that pupils can engage fully in all lessons. However, this does not affect their overall rates of progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the skills of staff new to the school to ensure that they have specialist knowledge and expertise in all areas of SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is very well respected as a highly effective leader. She has high expectations of what pupils and staff can achieve, and she uses these to encourage everyone to do their best. The headteacher has created a strong leadership team, all members of which hold responsibility for different aspects of the school's work. Together, leaders ensure that staff and pupils know what it is expected of them. As a result, there is a strong sense of teamwork and community cohesion. During the inspection, staff were very complimentary about how well leaders support them and listen to their views.
- The headteacher has ensured that the school has continued to improve since the previous inspection. There are now frequent opportunities for pupils to use their skills in the local community. These opportunities not only support pupils' learning effectively but also make a significant contribution to preparing them for life in modern Britain. Pupils' involvement with the local community also supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities include visiting a crown court, performing 'The Tempest' at a local theatre and mixing with pupils from Tewkesbury School during the school day. The opening of a new sixth form has enabled pupils to extend their learning, better preparing them for life after they leave school.
- Leaders have developed an assessment system to help teachers know how well pupils are progressing. Staff use this to track progress across all subjects. Leaders have also created effective systems to record behaviour incidents and safeguarding concerns. The information from these systems is regularly analysed by leaders, to identify areas that require development. Senior and middle leaders form working groups with members of the governing body to plan how these areas will be addressed. Governors are provided with regular reports, so they can check progress towards achieving these plans.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities. These match the needs and interests of pupils extremely well. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils make progress towards the objectives in their education, health and care (EHC) plans, alongside developing their academic, creative, vocational and life skills. Careful consideration is given to how pupils are grouped and creating the best environment to support their learning. This work contributes to the impressive progress that pupils make.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils get the precise support they need. This includes additional support and counselling to help them cope with their anxieties and to improve their communication and interaction skills. This group of pupils makes outstanding progress.
- The primary sport premium is used well to increase the range of sports and physical activities available to pupils. It has given pupils access to specialist coaches, who also provide training to staff.
- The Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium has been partly used to fund a range of resources for use at school and at home. It also enables pupils to learn in smaller groups. Pupils are making accelerated progress in both English and mathematics as a result of this funding.

- All staff attend annual performance review meetings. Leaders use these to check how well staff are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Performance review discussions result in training and support that enable staff to develop their effectiveness further.
- A school improvement partner is employed to support leaders and give his view on the school's work. He provides governors with very helpful independent quality assurance reports. The local authority performance advisor also supports leaders and governors well. She has recently been developing the skills of governors to help them fulfil their responsibilities.
- The school ensures that there is a regular forum involving pupils and their parents to focus on preparing for adulthood. This forum helps identify suitable curriculum pathways and required employability skills. The school has good local links that are used to provide work experience placements. The school's careers leader is a qualified careers advisor who provides impartial guidance.
- A large number of new staff joined the school this academic year. They have benefited greatly from the induction, training and support that has been provided. Leaders value the subject knowledge, skills and enthusiasm they have brought with them. Some staff lack the specialist knowledge to meet the wide range of SEND of pupils. While there is expertise within the staff team, and of advisory teachers and therapists who visit the school, these members of staff have not yet received this specialist type of training to help them plan lessons that engage pupils in learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the work of the school well. They visit the school regularly to see for themselves how well pupils are progressing. They are also well informed about the school's work through high-quality reports from senior leaders and subject leaders, and from presentations that leaders make during governor meetings.
- Governors work closely with leaders in working groups to develop strategic plans and policy. Within these groups, governors provide a good mix of challenge and support.
- Governors take their role for overseeing safeguarding very seriously. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding meets with designated leaders frequently. He is kept informed of any recent concerns and checks that leaders have responded to these appropriately. He also ensures that recruitment checks have been completed in line with school policy.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has developed a very effective system to record any concerns. Leaders follow these up rigorously. Outside agencies are used well to help keep pupils safe.
- Staff and governors all receive regular training to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities. The school policy reflects the latest requirements concerning child protection.
- There are strong arrangements in place to ensure that health and safety requirements are met. Risk assessments are used effectively to reduce risks to both pupils and staff.

- The local authority provides annual audits to help the school evaluate its work in this area. Leaders act swiftly to implement any changes and improve their practice. Their approach means they are able to provide the best protection and support to pupils.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. There are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that pupils are safe when using the internet. Pupils are encouraged to share any concerns they have with staff or by using the school postbox system. Pupils who spoke with inspectors all said that they feel safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers plan lessons exceptionally well. Learning is organised so that pupils build on their prior knowledge and skills. Teachers set objectives which outline what each pupil is expected to learn during the lesson. Pupils have a good understanding of this approach and know exactly what they need to do to be successful.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, providing excellent support to pupils. They use questioning very effectively to check pupils' understanding and to encourage pupils to extend their learning.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Combined with their high expectations, they use this to provide pupils with a high level of challenge. Staff very quickly spot if a pupil is becoming overwhelmed with stress or anxiety. When this happens, pupils are encouraged to take time away from their learning until they are ready to have another attempt at their work.
- The school's assessment system enables teachers to carefully track how well each pupil is progressing. This information prompts staff to provide effective additional support when required.
- Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work. In a design technology lesson, pupils accurately applied criteria set by the teacher to assess the key rings they were making. The different criteria were matched to the terms 'bronze', 'silver' or 'gold', in ascending level of difficulty. The teacher then gave clear guidance about what pupils needed to do to improve their work from 'bronze' to 'silver' and 'silver' to 'gold'.
- Teachers ensure that work is set to match the ability of each pupil. In a computing lesson, the most able pupils were set independent work where they could use their skills and knowledge in coding to write a new programme for a game. In an English lesson, a teaching assistant modelled writing using simple phrases that pupils said out loud. This approach supported lower-ability pupils to develop their letter-writing skills.
- English lessons are carefully planned to address each pupil's current target. This personalised approach ensures that each pupil makes outstanding progress from his or her individual starting point.
- Subject teachers create opportunities across the curriculum to extend pupils' reading, writing and oracy skills. In an art lesson, pupils prepared a presentation to give to younger pupils, introducing them to some aspect of art they had been studying, such as the work of a Japanese artist. This work helped develop pupils' literacy skills.
- Pupils benefit from using a good range of practical resources, including computers. In mathematics lessons, pupils use computers, board games and toy clocks to practise

telling the time and learn about the 24-hour clock. Teachers move pupils between different activities fairly often, which helps keep them motivated.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Tutor teams set short-term targets for each pupil that relate to the end of key stage objectives from their EHC plan. Many of these targets promote the development of pupils' social and emotional abilities. Tutor time is regularly allocated for pupils to work on these skills. Parents who spoke to inspectors identified this area of the school's work as a strength.
- Many pupils are referred to the school due to their high level of anxiety. The school is very successful at enabling pupils to learn how to manage their anxiety so that they can learn in a classroom environment. The vast majority of pupils become confident learners. Their ability to form friendships with peers and positive relationships with adults is very apparent.
- The broad curriculum provides many opportunities to support pupils' personal development and welfare. Pupils are taught about the changes that happen to their bodies as they get older, which helps them understand and prepare for the changes. A lunch club, set up by a pupil, focused on making friends and trying new things. During this time a group of pupils taught each other how to knit.
- The pastoral support team is available throughout the day to support pupils who are finding things hard. This enables pupils to have a consistently high level of support from the same group of staff when they need it.
- School records indicate that bullying rarely occurs. The school council agreed with this view when asked during the inspection. Council members described the school as a happy place where children are kind to each other.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school is an exceptionally calm and ordered place. It is a very positive learning environment.
- Pupils are very keen to learn. They behave extremely well in lessons, being highly engaged for the most part. Pupils were very happy to talk to inspectors about their work, quickly getting back to the task in hand once the conversation had finished. They showed pride in their work.
- Pupils occupy themselves alone or in friendship groups during breaktime. Some pupils join in with group games or sports. During lunch, pupils were observed talking openly with staff. They were happy to talk about their feelings. Pupils behave extremely well during these times and when they move around the school.
- Any incidents of poor behaviour are recorded. Incidents of pupils requiring physical

intervention from a member of staff have reduced significantly over the last few years and now rarely occur.

- There has been a significant improvement in overall attendance over the last few years. Pupils now attend well. The school has effective processes in place to support pupils who find it hard to attend.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils of different ages join the school. Their starting points are usually well below their peers in mainstream schools. During their time at the school pupils make outstanding progress in all subjects. All pupils who left the school at the end of Year 11 last year obtained appropriate qualifications.
- The school tracks progress for all groups of pupils, including different year groups. Assessment judgements are carefully moderated to ensure that they are consistently applied and accurate. Progress is equally strong for all ages and for different groups within the school. Disadvantaged pupils make strong progress that is, at least, in line with all other groups.
- The school offers a wide range of accredited courses. Pupils make outstanding progress in achieving these. The most able pupils achieve GCSE passes in a wide range of subjects. They set their sights high, aspiring to move onto A-level courses, and then university.
- Pupils' workbooks show that they produce work of a high standard and make strong progress over time in all subjects. Pupils' rapid learning is also evident during lessons. Highly effective lesson planning enables pupils to consolidate existing skills and knowledge and learn new concepts. For example, in English, the most able Year 11 pupils were observed to become less reliant on prompts to structure their writing because they were taught to write with greater independence. As a result, pupils produced well-written paragraphs with accurate spelling and neat handwriting.
- Pupils make very strong progress in their personal development and behaviour. Once pupils have settled into the school they quickly respond to the high expectations, skilful teaching and supportive environment to make sustained progress. The high-quality provision they receive prepares them for a wide range of social experiences, such as helping to run the weekly tearoom for the public at Tewkesbury Abbey.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The headteacher provides very strong strategic leadership of the sixth form. The operational leadership is provided by the post-16 manager, who ensures the effective daily running of the provision.
- Teachers have high expectations, to which students respond very well. The structure of lessons reduces students' anxieties and supports them to engage exceptionally well in their learning. Teachers provide a good level of challenge to students through the effective use of questioning. Teaching is focused on students' individual targets, which ensures that they make very strong progress. Consequently, students are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

- The curriculum enables students to build on the skills and knowledge they gained in key stage 4. For students who are planning to move on to a non-academic destination, the emphasis is on employability, vocational preparation and life skills. The most able students are able to join A-level classes at Tewkesbury School. All students are supported to take part in work-experience placements. Members of the governing body are very knowledgeable about the curriculum and the impact it has.
- Regular transition meetings ensure that there is a close match between students' targets, curriculum pathways, work-experience placements and students' ambitions and goals. These meetings involve students and their parents.
- The behaviour and personal development of students are very strong. Students show high levels of respect to each other and to staff. They develop extremely positive attitudes to their learning. Students display considerable self-confidence during lessons. They also demonstrate their maturity by coping well when they mix with members of the public. Some students enjoy having their lunch in the dining hall of Tewkesbury School, alongside mainstream peers.
- Students make outstanding progress. Although no students have yet had an opportunity to complete the full three-year programme, school progress information shows that all groups of students have made rates of progress similar to those of other pupils in the school.

School details

Unique reference number	115825
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10058286

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	25
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Street
Headteacher	Clare Steel
Telephone number	01684 295639
Website	www.aldermanknight.gloucs.sch.uk
Email address	head@aldermanknight.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 April 2014

Information about this school

- All pupils have an EHC plan. The majority of pupils have moderate and additional complex learning needs. A small minority of pupils have severe learning difficulties.
- Pupils who attend the school come from a number of different local authority areas.
- Since the previous inspection the school has added a sixth form.
- Pupil numbers have increased significantly over the past few years.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is higher than the national average.
- A smaller proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all key stages. Most of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at pupils' workbooks, sometimes with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed behaviour during lessons and playtime. A number of pupils shared their views about the school with inspectors. A meeting was also held with the school council.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, a range of staff members and the school improvement partner. Members of the governing body also met with inspectors.
- The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a local authority advisor.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents. Documents included information on the school's website, school policies, minutes from governing body meetings, pupil-progress information, behaviour records, health and safety records, risk assessments, attendance information and safeguarding records.
- Inspector spoke to parents who were bringing their children to school. Inspectors also considered responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and free-text responses. Inspectors took into account views expressed in the surveys completed by staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Andy Lole, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Buckton	Ofsted Inspector
Andy Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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