

Inspection of an outstanding school: Alderman Knight School

Ashchurch Road, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8JJ

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Outcome

Alderman Knight School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Alderman Knight is an exceptional school. Adults place the needs of the child at the heart of all they do. Pupils flourish at this school and are proud to be part of it. Staff create an atmosphere that is warm, calm and productive. As a result, pupils attend regularly. The school has exceptionally high expectations of all pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve extremely well from their different starting points.

Pupils' behaviour, including students in the sixth form, is exemplary. They fully understand the school's ethos and values. Pupils accept each other's differences and are supportive of each other during lessons and social times. Pupils are responsible, respectful and active members of the school community who contribute positively to it.

Provision for pupils' wider personal development is outstanding. Pupils take delight in the rich and varied opportunities afforded to them. These help to develop their skills and interests in many areas, such as outdoor education, music and sport. Along with other activities, pupils and students develop high levels of independence, preparing them well as they move into adulthood.

Parents are delighted with the school. They recognise and appreciate how staff provide support for pupils and families, making their children happy and safe.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There is no ceiling placed on what pupils can achieve at Alderman Knight. The school sees beyond pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. It believes that, in the words of its motto, all are 'learning and achieving together'.

The school provides an excellent quality of education. It ensures that pupils learn an aspirational curriculum that meets their needs exceptionally well. The school typically follows the subjects in the national curriculum, including English, mathematics, science and physical education. This means that pupils, including students in the sixth form, gain

the knowledge and skills they need as they move through the school and are ready for the next stage of their education, training or employment.

The school is not complacent. It is continuously seeking ways to make further improvements to the education and care it provides to pupils. School leaders, together with staff and governors, reflect, research and tweak areas of the school's provision in order to continue to provide and build on what pupils need to learn next.

Staff know pupils very well. They have strong subject expertise and present information clearly. Staff select the most effective approaches and resources to help pupils gain, recall and remember important knowledge. For example, in mathematics, pupils draw on their knowledge of angles to solve geometry problems.

The school is ambitious that every pupil will become a fluent reader. Systems are securely in place to accurately identify pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read. Staff support pupils expertly to strengthen their knowledge of phonics. There is a wide range of quality texts across the school. As a result, pupils quickly learn to read and develop a love of reading, 'allowing a television in my head' as one pupil described to inspectors.

Students in the sixth form study a wide range of courses and accreditations including A levels. They enjoy work experience that meets their needs, interests and aspirations, such as working in a laboratory. Students receive high-quality careers guidance. This helps them realise their aspirations and gain the necessary qualifications and accreditations to succeed in life beyond Alderman Knight.

Pupils' wider personal development is integral to the school's work. The school carefully plans the curriculum for personal, social and health education according to pupils' needs. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating, keeping hydrated and leading safe, active lives. They learn about different faiths and cultures and develop a strong understanding of equality.

Pupils are respectful and courteous to both staff and their peers. They demonstrate impeccable manners. Pupils develop their leadership skills by serving food in the dining hall and becoming sports and young leaders. These and other opportunities help to develop pupils' confidence and independence.

Opportunities to develop pupils' interests and to have new experiences are abundant. A favourite for many was the trip to Edgbaston and Lord's Cricket Grounds to hone their skills in officiating and umpiring table cricket.

Pupils actively engage in charity work. Each tutor group has a charity or community link such as Gloucestershire Night Stop and the air ambulance. This helps pupils make a valuable contribution to local and wider society.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in January 2019.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	115825
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10322226
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Diana Hatton
Headteacher	Clare Steel
Website	www.aldermanknight.gloucs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Alderman Knight is a special school for children with moderate and additional learning difficulties, complex needs and Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers and staff.
- The lead inspector met with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered key documentation, including school improvement plans and governors' minutes.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. The lead inspector met with school leaders to discuss and scrutinise how they respond to behaviour incidents and pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys, Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text replies.

Inspection team

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