

Alder Community High School Profile

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Alder Community High School

Mottram Old Road, Gee Cross

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<http://www.aldercommunityhighschool.org.uk/>

Local Authority:	Tameside
Age range:	11-16
Number of pupils:	790
Head teacher:	Mr Bob Wakefield
Chair of governors:	Mr Nick Lowther

What have been our successes this year?

A key achievement this year has been our designation as a specialist Maths and Computing College. The success of our bid to the DFES reflects the high standards in these two areas and will enable us to deliver an exciting action plan to the benefit of our students and the local community.

Academic standards continue to rise, both at KS3 and KS4, and we were particularly pleased with our SATs results which showed a significant improvement on those for 2005.

The school has also had another successful year on the sports field where teams and individual students have excelled in Athletics, Football, Rounders and Volleyball. We have also been awarded the FA Chartermark.

We continue to encourage our students to lead a healthy lifestyle and were recently awarded Healthy Schools status.

The school continues to be oversubscribed and this reflects the continuing confidence and support of the local community. The school is well supported and parent and pupil questionnaires continue to show overwhelmingly that children enjoy coming to Alder and feel safe and secure.

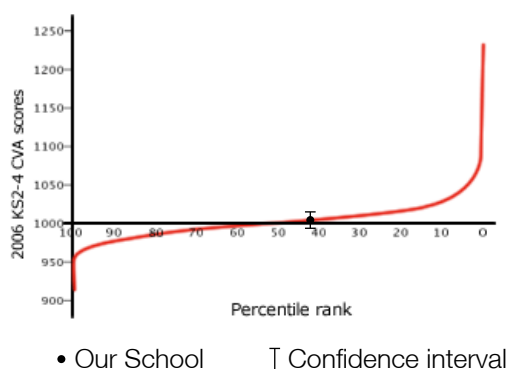
What are we trying to improve?

The school continues to make progress in areas identified for improvement in the 2004 Ofsted Report. In particular we:

- have continued to work hard at raising standards of literacy by using a range of strategies to develop speaking, listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum. We were pleased that students achieved in line with expectations in their English SATs exam in 2006 but there is still more to do.
- are providing additional time for Citizenship in the curriculum and have appointed specialist staff.
- have restructured the PE Department, appointed additional staff and provided more curriculum time at KS4.
- are continuing to work hard at raising standards of attainment across the school. Students achieved broadly in line with expectations at both KS3 and KS4 in 2006. Our challenge over the next few years is for students to achieve above expectations.

We are also seeking to improve attendance levels which are currently slightly below our target of 92%.

How much progress do pupils make between 11 and 16?

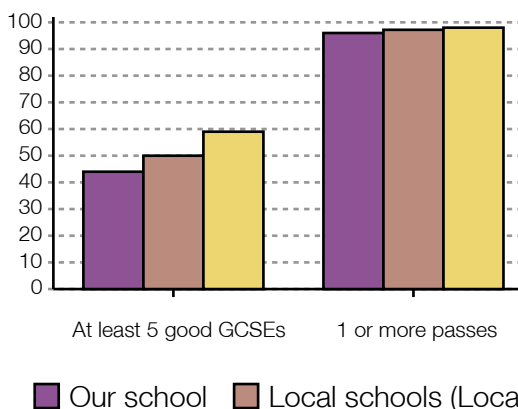


The chart shows our school's contextual value added (CVA) score relative to that of other secondary schools. CVA is a statistical means of assessing how effective a school is, by measuring pupils' progress using their test and examination results. The confidence interval shows the range within which we can be confident the score (calculated on the results of only one year group) represents the overall effectiveness of a school. The percentile rank shows the percentage of schools with a score equal to or higher than ours.

The KS2 to KS4 CVA score measures how well our students have done from when they started at Alder in Year 7 to when they left Alder in Year 11. The average CVA score for schools nationally is 1000.

Our CVA score of 1004.3 was above the average score and placed Alder at the 42nd percentile when compared to all schools nationally. This means that if our results were placed in a league table for all the schools in the country we would come 42nd out of 100.

How well do our pupils achieve in year 11?

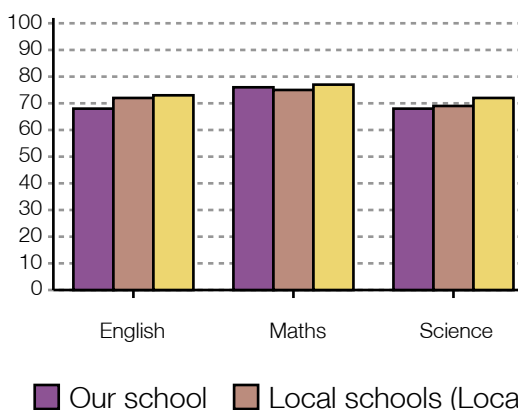


This shows the percentage of pupils (who were 16 years old at the end of the year) who in 2006 achieved 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (or GNVQ equivalent), and one or more GCSEs at grades A*-G (or GNVQ equivalent).

This year 44% of our students achieved 5 higher GCSE grades compared to 13% when we first opened. Although this is still below local and national averages our students made good progress when you consider their starting points when they began at Alder in Year 7. This is why our CVA score for progress from Years 7 to 11 was over 1000 as outlined in the last section.

Although we were disappointed with our GCSE results in English this year, the Maths results were again very good. Our CVA score just for Maths placed the school at the 20th percentile and the Maths GCSE results were described as significantly better than expected in the analysis by the DFES.

How well do our pupils achieve at age 14?



This shows Key Stage 3 results for 2006. It shows the percentage of pupils eligible for KS3 tests (usually 14 year olds) who achieved or exceeded level 5.

Results at KS3 showed steady improvement between 2001 when we opened and 2004, but then fell back in 2005. However in 2006 there were significant improvements in the % of students achieving level 5+ and level 6+ across all 3 core subjects.

In English 68% of students achieved a level 5+ and 23% achieved a level 6+. This was described as "in line with expectations" by the DFES, when they considered the students' starting points, and placed the school at the 61st percentile for English.

In Maths 77% of students achieved a level 5+, 57% achieved a level 6+ and 29% achieved a level 7+. This was described as "significantly higher than expected" by the DFES, when they considered the students' starting points, and placed the school at the 28th percentile for Maths.

In Science 68% of students achieved a level 5+ and 40% achieved a level 6+. This was described as "in line with expectations" by the DFES, when they considered the students' starting points, and placed the school at the 33rd percentile for Science.

How have our results changed over time?

Our Ofsted inspection in 2004 judged that examination results had been improving at a faster rate than nationally since we opened and that our "value added" scores (a measure of the progress that students have made from their different starting points) have been at least satisfactory in years 7-9 and good by the end of Year 11.

When the school opened in 2001, 13% of pupils gained 5 higher grades at GCSE. This has now risen to 44% in 2006. The Contextual Value Added score of 1004.3 demonstrates that overall performance is now above the national average when considering the students' starting points.

Results at KS3 showed steady improvement between 2001, when we opened, and 2004, but then fell back in 2005. However in 2006 there were significant improvements in the % of students achieving level 5+ and level 6+ across all 3 core subjects.

Students achieved broadly in line with expectations at both KS3 and KS4 in 2006. Our challenge over the next few years is for students to achieve above expectations.

How are we making sure that every child gets teaching to meet their individual needs?

At Alder we put considerable time and resources into developing a varied curriculum and providing support to meet the needs of all our students.

The school curriculum is broadly based and the option structure allows students to take up to 10.5 GCSEs depending on their ability.

Our Gifted and Talented students are provided with a range of additional opportunities, including lectures, workshops and summer schools. A group of Year 10 students are currently studying a

level 3 (A level equivalent) ICT course.

At KS4 we provide a range of individually tailored programmes, including the school vocational course, college and extended work placements, "Work and Learn", "Works 4 U", MPower, and specialised off site provision including our own market garden. Next year a group of students in Year 10 will have the opportunity to take twilight courses in a range of vocational subjects at Tameside College too.

Our Learning Support Team provides additional help for students with learning difficulties in a variety of ways from in class support to withdrawal for small group work or in some cases, an individualised programme. Specialist provision is also provided for students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

How do we make sure our pupils are healthy, safe and well-supported?

Relationships between staff and students and pastoral support are real strengths of the school.

The school has a comprehensive PHSE programme, involving outside agencies, to provide information and guidance on a range of topics from sexual health to drugs awareness. In addition we hold an annual "Health for Life Festival" and a whole school cross curricular health awareness week. We have recently been awarded Healthy Schools status.

The school has a range of policies aimed at ensuring that students are safe and secure and also provides:

- high levels of staff supervision at break and lunchtimes (students have open access to the school building at lunchtime but are not permitted to leave the site);
- staffing on the school buses in the morning and evening;
- in house and external support for students with complex and emotional needs;
- extended induction programmes for pupils transferring from Year 6 to Alder.

Clearly bullying is a concern in all schools although, in our recent survey, 86% of parents did not feel that their child had been bullied at Alder or were unaware of any issues. When bullying does occur we always try to deal with it sensitively but firmly.

How are we working with parents and the community?

We gather the views of parents through our annual survey. The views are overwhelmingly positive. We were particularly pleased that in our most recent survey 98% of parents agreed that their child likes school, 87% felt that teaching was good and 88% considered that their child is making good progress. There were lower levels of satisfaction with student behaviour, homework and keeping parents well informed, at 78%, 64% and 74% respectively, and these issues, particularly homework, will be priorities for the year ahead.

We have a school website. We publish a school newsletter five times per year and we are further developing links between school and home through our Virtual Learning Environment. This will be used for setting and monitoring homework and for providing more information to parents.

Students get involved in community action. A significant number of pupils have volunteered to be part of our Community Support Team. In addition our students support the "Respect" Scheme in Hattersley and we are also involved in local events including the local Well Dressing Event and our OAP Christmas Party. Fundraising is carried out for a number of charities including Water Aid, Children In Need, Comic Relief, Christies and Action Aid.

What activities are available to pupils?

Ofsted considered that the opportunities for students to continue their learning outside the classroom were very good. This is done through visits, clubs, study support and access to first class sporting facilities.

The all weather pitch and fitness gym are open (and supervised) every lunchtime. Each year there are three residential activity holidays to France (water sports), Spain (sports tournament) and Austria (skiing).

There are a large number of lunchtime and after school clubs. These include Art, Cookery, Dance, Film, Singing and Trampolining. School teams compete at all levels in football, netball, basketball, rounders, volleyball and athletics.

There are a range of curriculum enrichment opportunities including Young Enterprise, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, Enterprise and Industry Challenge Days, trips to the museum, theatre, orchestra and ballet, as well as field trips and trips to local and national events such as the Clothes Show.

The school also provides a very well supported holiday revision programme for students in Years 10 and 11. This runs during the February half term, Easter and Whit holidays and students that attend are eligible for free activities including bowling, ice skating and the cinema in the afternoon.

What have pupils told us about the school, and what have we done as a result?

We seek the views of students through our annual student questionnaire and the work of the School Council.

The results of this year's questionnaire told us that students felt: Alder was a good school to be at and that it was well run; behaviour is generally good; there is good support from teaching staff; work is considered challenging; and issues such as drugs, graffiti, vandalism or litter were not a problem.

They did have concerns, however, about: the quality of homework; property being stolen; and not being good at English.

In response to these concerns, procedures for securing valuables have been reviewed and lockable boxes have been bought to keep possessions in during PE lessons.

New ways of engaging students in homework are being trialled through the school website and the developing Virtual Learning Environment.

Literacy is an area of concern and a whole school Literacy Action Plan is being developed.

There is an active student council with representatives from each year. The Council has purchased benches and basketball posts for the playground, sports kit, head microphones for

drama and set top box for music videos. It has also supported charities and helped to interview staff.

How do we make sure all pupils attend their lessons and behave well?

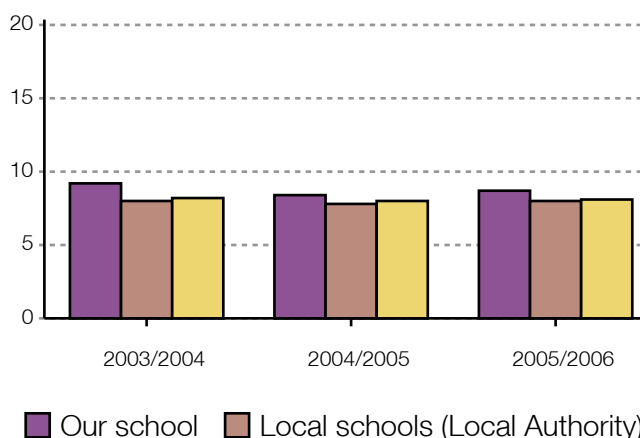
Attendance at lessons is good and in line with national averages. We have an electronic registration system which records attendance for every lesson. First day phone calls are made in the event of absence from school.

The Ofsted inspection of 2004 judged that attitudes and behaviour of students were good except for a small minority whose behaviour was unsatisfactory. There is a range of strategies in place to ensure that behaviour meets appropriate standards as outlined below.

- There is a simple and clear Code of Conduct
- Good behaviour is encouraged through a culture of positive reinforcement and a system of rewards.
 - There are clear procedures and sanctions for dealing with inappropriate behaviour.
 - The school works closely with other agencies in order to engage with challenging and/or disaffected students.
 - The curriculum is varied and innovative with an increasing emphasis on finding vocational, out of school learning and work related opportunities for those students less suited to traditional classroom learning.

There is a reducing rate of fixed term exclusions with the figures for the last two years below the LEA average and there have been no permanent exclusions since November 2004.

How do our absence rates compare with other schools?



This chart shows the percentage of half days missed through authorised and unauthorised absence by all pupils at the school. Information is given for the school, for schools within the local authority and for all schools.

Attendance has improved from 87.8% when the school opened to 91.6% in 2005/2006. The target for attendance is 92%.

We have fewer fixed term exclusion than the average for Tameside and there have been no permanent exclusions since 2004.

Alder is a happy school and the most recent parental survey demonstrated that 98% of respondents agreed that their child likes school. Nevertheless, a small number of persistent absentees can skew attendance figures and this is an area of concern for most schools. A number of strategies have been adopted by the school to raise attendance levels as outlined below.

- The broad based curriculum seeks to ensure that each student studies the right balance of academic and vocational subjects for them.
- The KS4 Rewards Scheme encourages good attendance, behaviour and work.
- We work with a number of agencies on a range of schemes aimed at engaging any disaffected students.
- We have an electronic register and "first day" phonecalls are made in the event of absence.
- The school is trialling a new parent messaging system which can be used to alert parents about absence and punctuality.
- Parents are strongly encouraged not to take their children on holiday during term time.

What do our pupils do after year 11?

Last year 73% of students that left Alder entered fulltime education or training. The % of students entering full time education has increased every year since we opened.

The % of pupils not in education, employment or training has decreased from 26% in 2003 to 11% in 2006.

Work related training, enterprise activities and out of school vocational training are an important way of introducing pupils to the world of work. Pupils are offered opportunities to visit and discuss their future educational needs with local colleges.

We shall continue to encourage students to consider HE and FE through our Careers programme, the Connexions partnership and our involvement with initiatives such as Aim Higher.

What have we done in response to Ofsted?

The areas for improvement identified in our OFSTED report of 2004, and the action taken since, are as follows:

1. To raise standards of attainment at the end of years 9 and 11.

Performance at KS3 and KS4 continue to improve and students now achieve in line with expectations. Performance in English is still an area of concern.

2. To give greater attention to improving reading, spelling and writing across the school.

A cross curricular working party has introduced a range of strategies aimed at raising standards of literacy across the school. Additional support is also provided for individual students through our intervention programme. The English Department is piloting new ways of assessing and monitoring progress in literacy as part of a national project.

3. To improve Citizenship education.

Specialist staff have been appointed to teach Citizenship and PSHE and additional curriculum time provided.

4. To raise the achievement of boys in Physical Education.

The PE Department has been restructured as a single department, new staff have been appointed and standards of achievement have improved.

More Information

If you would like more information about school policies, including our policies on special educational needs and disability, admissions, finance, school food and our complaints procedure, please contact us:

By telephone 0161 3685132

Our website <http://www.aldercommunityhighschool.org.uk/>
