

Albourne CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126014
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	363999
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2011
Reporting inspector	John Laver

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Cutress
Headteacher	Gail McNay
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. They talked to parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the governing body's minutes, data on pupils' progress and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They analysed questionnaires received from 84 parents and carers, 102 pupils and 16 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school is improving attainment and progress in writing.
- How effectively the school's leadership and teachers are using assessment to further improve pupils' attainment and progress.
- How effectively the curriculum is developing pupils' knowledge, skills and personal development.
- How well children are provided for, and making appropriate progress, in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Albourne Primary School is a smaller-than-average school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include a range of learning, behavioural and emotional needs, is close to average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school has Healthy Schools status and holds several awards, including the Gold Activemark and an International Schools award. It is part of a network comprising several local village schools and a secondary school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Albourne Primary is a good school which successfully promotes pupils' personal development while ensuring that they leave school at the age of 11 with above average attainment. Parents and carers greatly appreciate the school's successes, a typical comment being, 'Albourne is a wonderful school with a nurturing, warm approach.'

Children make a good start to school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress thereafter, at an increasingly faster rate as they move up through the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, share in this good progress. It is faster in mathematics and reading than in writing, although progress in writing is improving. Attainment in all core subjects is above average, as reflected in national test results of recent years. The good progress results from a combination of good teaching and pupils' positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils of all levels of ability continue to be on track to meet challenging targets.

In addition to acquiring the range of skills which prepare pupils well for the next phase of education, they develop well as confident, well-rounded individuals. Pupils, parents and carers value the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support, as seen for example in the work of the nurture group. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and the vast majority of pupils take part in additional sporting activities outside of lessons. Attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe, behave well, enjoy taking on responsibility and are enthusiastic about the wide range of enrichment activities such as clubs and visits. They also enjoy most lessons, which link subjects imaginatively in topics such as 'mountains'.

There are several strengths in the teaching, including the imaginative use of resources. Teachers use various methods of assessment well to help pupils learn more effectively. Occasionally lessons are too teacher controlled. For instance, children in Reception and older pupils who are keen to work individually or collaboratively do not move from teacher-centred activities to independent work early enough. Occasionally teachers miss opportunities to get pupils writing earlier in lessons and in a wider range of contexts. Nevertheless, teachers are addressing some of the previous underperformance in writing, for example by developing literacy skills in subjects such as history.

Parents, staff and the governing body respect the headteacher's inclusive, caring approach to pupils and her drive for continued improvement. The school's performance is rigorously monitored and based on accurate self-evaluation, with subject leaders more involved in this process since the previous inspection. All staff are now more accountable and share the headteacher's high expectations. The readiness to be self-critical, the successful drive to improve priority areas such as writing and the determination to build on continued successes, all demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment and improve progress in writing, so that more pupils leave school in 2012 with well above average standards, by giving them more and earlier opportunities to develop their writing in a range of contexts.
- Further improve teaching, for both the youngest children and pupils higher up the school, by providing more opportunities for independent and collaborative learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment on leaving Reception varies from year to year, because of small and changing cohorts of pupils, but it is usually in line with, or just above, average. They go on to leave school with above average attainment, with sometimes well-above average standards. Speaking skills are a particular strength. Standards of writing are more variable but have improved and are above average for most pupils.

Lesson observations during the inspection showed pupils learning well and responding enthusiastically to good teaching, for example showing an eagerness to respond to questioning, to express their views and to work collaboratively. This was seen in an outstanding history lesson in which pupils eagerly explored Tudor artefacts. The teacher communicated her own enthusiasm to pupils, making the exercise an imaginative journey in which pupils showed the ability to develop the skills of historical enquiry and interpretation beyond the usual level for their age. Pupils of all abilities make good progress: there is challenge for the more able, while vulnerable pupils, the very few pupils with English as an additional language, and those with special needs and/or disabilities benefit from good classroom support or specialist help in the nurture group.

Pupils also make good gains in personal development. Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection, and is good both in and outside lessons. Pupils feel very safe and get on very well with each other. They are punctual and attendance is above average. The school's Gold Activemark and Healthy Schools status are reflected in the very high level of participation in sports activities, pupils' participation in ecological schemes and their awareness of the importance of diet and other aspects of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils use their experience of activities such as the gardening club to play a prominent part in village activities, while all Year 6 pupils take on whole-school responsibilities and leadership roles, as well as contributing to the school council. Pupils take part in enterprise activities, for example in raising funds for charities and a Zambian children's home. Spiritual awareness is developed well in assemblies and is seen in work done on topics such as 'mountains'. The school succeeds in developing pupils' awareness of other cultures and faiths, for example through their work on India.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Good learning results from the good teaching. Teachers have improved their use of assessment; although there are variations in the quality of marking, pupils generally know their targets and get helpful feedback on how they can improve their work. Teachers deploy support staff well, so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good gains in understanding and often contribute confidently to class discussions. Teachers show good subject knowledge and use technology such as whiteboards and resources such as artefacts well to engage pupils' enthusiasm. Only occasionally is the teaching less effective, and this is usually when teachers talk for too long and do not give enough opportunities for articulate pupils to talk more about their work or engage earlier in planned activities such as writing.

The school has successfully linked various subjects together, for example in the 'Rainforests' and 'Heroes and Villains' topics, which integrated diverse subjects such as art, dance, writing, physical education and geography. Pupils talk enthusiastically about these topics. The school makes good use of outside expertise, for example in modern foreign languages and music, to enhance provision. Links with local schools enable pupils to enjoy additional resources and facilities, for example in science. Another strength is the use made of the outstanding outdoors environment, for example in developing ecological projects. Themes such as 'the wider world' are used to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils enjoy the many residential and other trips, for example to a nearby lifeboat station.

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The very high quality of care and support is a major factor in pupils' good progress and strong personal development. There are good systems to promote attendance, a successful nurture programme, strong links with outside agencies, a well-developed programme of personal, social and emotional development, events such as anti-bullying week and an open-door policy which encourages parents and carers into school. All these activities contribute strongly to the inclusive, caring ethos so valued by parents and carers, one of whom referred to the school providing 'a wonderful start to school life'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has successfully transmitted her high expectations and drive for further improvement to all staff. She is supported in this by a governing body which is experienced, actively involved in the school and knowledgeable. Subject leaders are also enthusiastic and play an important role in monitoring and promoting progress. Their subject reviews are particularly impressive in the quality of their evaluation. The leadership's monitoring is linked closely to school improvement planning, which is based on an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development.

There are good links with parents, who are invited to events such as curriculum workshops. Links with local schools directly benefit pupils' learning and care, for example through joint access to a family link worker and a parent support worker. The school is very inclusive and has worked hard and successfully to ensure there is no discrimination. All groups of pupils achieve well, and the school emphasises the importance of equal opportunities in the curriculum and in assemblies.

There are good safeguarding procedures, which are regularly reviewed. Staff and pupils are aware of safe practices, for example in the use of computers. Parents and carers are very confident about their children's safety. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Cohesion within the local community is fostered in several ways, for example by joint activities with the local church. The school has developed pupils' understanding of a range of different cultures and beliefs, and has an International Schools award, although links with more diverse areas of the United Kingdom are at a relatively early stage of development.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children from a range of pre-school experiences join Reception with aptitudes that vary considerably from year to year, particularly in the key skills of literacy, language and numeracy. Children settle quickly into Reception, as seen in the way they start the school day in a calm and orderly manner and get on very well with each other. All children make good progress in developing the full range of skills and personal attributes, although some children make slower progress in writing than in other areas. Most reach age-related expectations or exceed them by the time they join Year 1.

Children are encouraged to give their views on what activities they have liked or would like to do, and they develop as confident and often articulate individuals. Children benefit from high-quality resources and an outstanding outdoor environment, which staff use well in activities such as 'wellie walks'. Provision in Reception has improved since the previous inspection. Staff now plan activities better to suit children's individual needs and usually make good use of children's eagerness to learn through a range of activities. Occasionally staff keep children sitting for too long, and occasionally when children are engaged in their chosen activities, staff miss opportunities to encourage more critical and creative thinking. Children were observed during the inspection working well on creative projects such as making calendars, and they have almost constant access to the outdoor area.

The Reception class is well led. Assessment systems have improved, and there are strong links with pre-schools and with parents and carers, who have regular opportunities to meet with staff and are encouraged to attend workshops and other activities. The good teaching, leadership and management ensure that not only do children enjoy their time in Reception, but they are also well prepared for their move into Year 1.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The number of returns of the parents' and carers' Ofsted questionnaire was above average. Parents and carers are very positive about the quality of education and care provided for their children, with one parent referring to Albourne as 'a breath of fresh air'. They believe that the school is a friendly and caring place, and that it is led well. Parents and carers are unanimous in their praise for the good quality of the teaching and the help which the school provides for parents and carers to support their children's learning. A very small minority believe that the school does not take sufficient account of their views and suggestions. However, from talking to parents and carers and reading many of their comments, the inspection team found that the school works hard to respond to their views and maintains good communications with the home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Albourne Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	65	26	31	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	81	14	17	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	51	40	48	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	45	43	51	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	62	31	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	64	30	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	65	28	33	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	44	52	34	40	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	50	39	46	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	44	40	48	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	40	43	51	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	64	26	31	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	71	21	25	3	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Albourne Primary School, Hassocks, BN6 9DH

Thank you for welcoming us in such a friendly way when we visited your school recently. It was very interesting to see you in lessons and around the school. We also enjoyed talking to many of you.

Albourne Primary School gives you a good standard of education. Nearly all of you, from the youngest children in Reception right up to Year 6, make good progress in your work. You get better results than pupils do in many other schools, although some of you do not do as well in writing as in other subjects. You attend school regularly, you are very well looked after, you behave well, feel safe and we know that you enjoy all the clubs and visits which the school provides. Your teachers work very hard and teach you well, although occasionally they tell you a lot without giving you enough time to talk about your own ideas and do more work on your own. You get a lot of very good opportunities to take part in sport and we were very impressed by what you know about how to live and eat healthily. You also get good opportunities in music and you told us how much you enjoyed some of the topics like 'mountains' and the 'Tudors'. Your headteacher leads the school very well and all the adults in the school do their best to help you learn and give you the opportunity to have responsible jobs in the school like being on the school council.

In order to make your good school even better, we have asked the school to:

- make sure that teachers give you enough opportunities to improve your writing even more, not just in literacy but also in other lessons
- make sure that teachers give all of you, including children in Reception, more opportunities to develop the skill of learning independently and with each other.

You can all help your teachers by continuing to be enthusiastic and working as hard as we saw you doing during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Laver

Lead inspector

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