

# Aloeric Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126474
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	360094
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hugh Protherough

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	323
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jon Woodger
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Nightingale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	St Michael's Road Melksham SN12 6HN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01225702563
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@aloeric.wilts.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed a total of 23 lessons and 11 teachers. Inspectors met with parents and carers, members of the governing body and staff. In addition to informal conversations in lessons, they held meetings with the school council and groups of pupils, including some from Years 2 and 6. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of information, including samples of pupils' work, the school improvement plan, curriculum and lesson planning and the tracking of pupil progress. They analysed the responses from 94 parent and carer questionnaires as well as those from staff and pupils.

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

- The profile of pupils' current achievements, especially in writing and for higher attainers and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The pace and challenge of teaching and the extent to which teaching meets the range of pupils' abilities.
- The quality of feedback to pupils about their work.
- The extent to which leaders and managers can demonstrate the impact of their work on improving provision and pupil outcomes.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than the average sized primary school. Most pupils are White British. Other groups represented include White and Black Caribbean and White and Black African. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals has increased since the school started offering a cooked lunch and is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

A new headteacher took up post in September 2009.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Many of the strengths identified in the previous inspection report have been sustained and improved. Highly effective work in respect of safeguarding and care, guidance and support ensures pupils' well-being and has led to outstanding outcomes in their sense of safety and the adoption of healthy lifestyles. The school is forging excellent links within its immediate community. Parents and carers told the inspectors of noticeable improvement in the way the school seeks their views and enables them to play a fuller part in supporting their children's education.

Apart from a sharp dip in 2009, pupils' performance in the Year 6 national tests has been broadly in line with the national average. Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved but results in writing have weakened, especially amongst the boys. Inspectors' analysis of the school's data and pupils' current work shows that attainment continues to rise, especially in English. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are making satisfactory progress from their starting points, but too few of the higher attainers are yet reaching the higher levels of which they are capable.

The reasons for this lie in the variable quality of teaching. Teaching is rarely less than satisfactory, but not enough is good and outstanding. Teachers plan conscientiously and frequently enliven learning with good quality resources and the use of new technologies which motivates the pupils. Teaching assistants provide effective support for the potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Despite thorough planning, work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' abilities. Sometimes teachers talk for too long and their questions to pupils are not sharp enough. Relationships between staff and pupils are cordial and adults provide them with plenty of encouragement, but pupils are not always clear about what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work. Expectations for the presentation of work are inconsistent across the school.

The headteacher has made an accurate evaluation of the school and has taken decisive actions to drive improvement, most notably in respect of pupil well-being and safeguarding. Individual pupil progress is tracked with rigour so that teachers are held to account for the performance of their pupils. Staff morale is high and middle managers have a secure oversight of their subject responsibilities across the school. The immediate impact of this is evident in a steady improvement in attainment, and especially that of the boys in writing. Appropriate actions are underway to improve the consistency of teaching and the curriculum. There is good capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment to levels that are securely above the national average in English and mathematics by improving the quality and consistency of teaching; for example, by:
  - ensuring a close match of work to the abilities of all groups of pupils, especially the higher attainers
  - developing teachers' questioning skills so that they probe pupils' understanding and deepen learning
  - improve feedback to pupils so that they know the levels at which they are working and their next steps in learning
  - raising expectations for the presentation of work.
- These features should be present in 75% of lessons by December 2011. A good result for the national tests of 2012 would be 95% of pupils attaining Level 4 in English and mathematics, and 35% Level 5.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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Pupils display positive attitudes in lessons and enjoy their learning, though this commitment can weaken if the teacher talks for too long or the work lacks challenge. As a result of these types of variation in the school's provision, pupils' achievement remains satisfactory.

In Years 5 and 6, pupils have enjoyed their study of Macbeth. Their appreciation of the play has been enlivened by the imaginative use of drama and film. Subsequent conversations with the inspector showed they know the story well, and some can quote from the text. They talk intelligently about characters such as Duncan and Banquo and the possible motivations that drive Macbeth. In a science lesson involving Years 1 and 2, pupils dutifully used reference books to find out about the different parts of a plant. Although pupils visited the school grounds, scientific learning in the classroom was constrained by the absence of plants to examine.

Inspectors' analysis of pupils' books shows that in English, pupils are writing for a good range of purposes. While most take care to present their work neatly, this is not always the case. Opportunities to edit and revisit work, which underpin the development of higher order writing skills, are not yet embedded in all classes. An increased focus on problem solving is improving pupils' skills in mathematics.

Pupils are proud of their school and play an active part in promoting its improvement. The school council provides an effective forum that ensures pupils' views are shared and acted upon. They say that playground behaviour has improved because pupils have responded enthusiastically to opportunities to develop new skills as peer mediators. Many others are eager to accept additional responsibilities to help around the school on a daily basis. Pupils are regularly involved in charitable fund raising and have strong links with local senior citizens.

Pupils say they feel safe, secure and valued and speak intelligently about how to ensure the safety of themselves and others. They are polite and considerate and offer a friendly and courteous welcome to visitors. Observations of potentially vulnerable pupils and those

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with special educational needs and/or disabilities show they are cared for well, and helped to develop independence and to play a full part in the life of the school. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of what it means to live a healthy life. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of diet and exercise and offer persuasive evidence of the ways they put this into action in their own lives. They enjoy physical education lessons and pupils of all backgrounds and abilities take part in the good variety of clubs provided after school. The school has worked effectively to improve attendance to the current above-average levels and punctuality is good.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

The great majority of pupils enjoy school and make the most of what is on offer because they trust the adults who work and care for them. This is due to the excellent attention that is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. A small breakfast club ensures all pupils start the day having had something to eat and drink. Additional adults, such as well-trained teaching assistants, make a significant impact throughout each day, supporting learning in classrooms and working effectively with individuals and small groups around the school, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many pupils told the inspectors that they valued the weekly visits of a counsellor with whom they can discuss any worries or concerns. Strong partnerships with

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a range of agencies such as health, social services and education welfare ensure prompt support for families and their children.

Although there is a core of good and occasional outstanding teaching, not enough lessons are securing good progress. Throughout the school good relationships between staff and pupils support a positive ethos for learning. In some classes teachers are swift to engage the pupils' interest through sharply focused questioning that encourages them to share their learning. Pupils' engagement in work is enhanced by good resources and opportunities for practical activity. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject and the abilities of their pupils means that the pace of learning is usually brisk. In a small minority of lessons the introductions go on for too long and pupils, though well behaved, find it hard to sustain their concentration. Although lesson plans are detailed and identify appropriate objectives, the match of work to pupils' abilities is not always sharp enough. There are only limited opportunities for pupils to pursue the investigations or independent work of which many are capable. All staff make accurate assessment of pupils' work, but not all are skilled in using this knowledge to drive forward learning. Their marking tells pupils when they have met the lesson objective but does not always tell them the level at which they are working or show them the next steps in learning. While the majority of teachers demand that work is presented neatly and corrected and improved, this is not yet consistent across the school.

The school is embarking on a review of its curriculum. While current arrangements offer a good range of learning opportunities, they lack coherence. There is a secure planning framework to ensure satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum, but apart from English and mathematics, work is seldom securely matched to the interests, needs and abilities of individual pupils. The strength of provision lies in the wide variety of enrichment activities such as educational visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs which have a positive impact on pupils' approaches to learning. Pupils have adequate opportunities to apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in other subjects.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Morale is high because the headteacher is successfully developing the staff team. They have responded enthusiastically to opportunities to develop leadership roles and hold a strong sense of accountability in their areas of responsibility. Individual talents and interests are encouraged, valued and shared. The leaders for English and mathematics are effective teachers with good subject knowledge. They have established an accurate view

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of pupils' attainment and progress and the variations in provision that require improvement, though the impact of their recent actions remains at an early stage of development. The assessment tracking system enables senior leaders to identify with precision the achievements of each pupil. As a result, ambitious targets for individuals and groups systematically inform the review of pupils' progress and the performance management of staff. Analysis of the school's monitoring shows that decisive action has been taken to eliminate inadequate teaching and a programme of professional development is in place to ensure ongoing improvement.

The school has good oversight of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The teacher responsible knows the story behind their assessment data, so that if a pupil appears to be falling behind she can point to the reasons that may underpin this, as well as the action taken to help them to catch up. The support for these pupils, the improvement in boys' writing and the narrowing gap in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics are further good examples of how the school takes concerted action to promote equality of opportunity.

The governing body contains a wide range of experience and expertise. They are fully involved in the life of the school and offer good support and constructive challenge. There is regular consultation with stakeholders which confirms a groundswell of support for significant improvements in the school over the past two years. For instance, the school adopts excellent approaches to all aspects of risk assessment and the safeguarding of pupils. The headteacher and staff work productively with other agencies, such as health and education welfare, to support the specific needs of individual pupils and their families.

Plans to promote community cohesion are appropriate and reflect a secure understanding of its context. Initiatives to develop pupils' awareness of the diversity of the United Kingdom beyond the school and its immediate communities have as yet had only limited impact.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle swiftly into the world of school because they have close and trusting relationships with the staff. They arrive happily with their parents each morning and show great confidence in daily routines. The outstanding partnership between home and school was clearly evidenced during the inspection when parents and carers stayed with their children to help them make cards to welcome next year's class. This session also helped the children to reflect on their own past experiences and their feelings about moving to Year 1.

The data for last year's Reception children indicate that they made good progress from their starting points, which were broadly average for their age. By the end of the year the proportion working securely at average standards across the six areas of learning was slightly above the national average. The current cohort is also making good progress. The majority of pupils are working securely within and beyond age-related expectations in each of the areas of learning. Teachers ensure effective support for those children, often boys, who arrive with lower levels of communication, language and literacy so that they too make good progress.

Staff planning is thorough and detailed. It ensures a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. For instance, the children were fascinated to sit and talk with parents and carers from a variety of employment backgrounds, including a builder, a shepherd and a care assistant. They listened well, asked pertinent questions and learned a great deal, especially when there were artefacts to touch and talk about. Later on they made their own choices as they wrote, drew and acted out the jobs they want to do when they grow up. Children select equipment and resources and use them thoughtfully when directing their own work. They show increasing ability to work for an extended period to follow through their ideas and collaborate well with each other in both indoor and outdoor classrooms.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well and the staff team work well together, effectively modelling positive relationships. Close teamwork ensures assessment arrangements are thorough, but while day-to-day assessments provide a good record of what children are doing, opportunities to identify and record the next steps in learning are not firmly embedded across the classes. Individual learning journals are building a compelling picture of children's achievements across the areas of learning. These are augmented by the homeschool learning books, many of which demonstrate the positive impact of the developing partnership between home and school.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

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## **Views of parents and carers**

Around 29% of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of these, and also those who spoke to inspectors, are pleased with their children's experience of school, the steps it takes to keep their children safe and the quality of teaching. A few are concerned about the extent to which the school listens to concerns and complaints. Inspectors found that there are good arrangements for consultation with parents and the headteacher holds an open forum once a month at which parents and carers can speak to him directly about any issues they may have.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aloeric 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 323 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	51	43	46	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	60	38	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	41	46	49	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	37	52	55	7	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	44	50	53	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	40	48	51	7	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	40	51	54	4	4	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)	39	41	50	53	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	40	51	54	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	31	57	61	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	29	55	59	8	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	40	51	54	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	44	52	55	1	1	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Aloeric Primary School, Melksham SN12 6HN.**

Thank you very much for your polite and friendly welcome during the recent inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to meet you all. Your questionnaires and conversations with the inspectors were extremely useful in helping us to find out about your school. You know a great deal about how to keep each other safe and healthy, and the way you are putting this into practice is outstanding. You told us you enjoy school and we could see that in most lessons and in much of your work. We found that your school is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. However, there are one or two things we want to happen that will make your school even better. Over the past few years your results in the national tests for English and mathematics have been 'average.' We want you to make sure that the results at Aloeric are always better than the national average, (your teachers can help you check this!)

In order to achieve this we have asked the teachers to help you make faster progress, by:

- setting you more challenging work
- asking you questions that make you think hard and discuss
- making sure you know how well you are doing in your work and what you have to do to improve
- encouraging you to present your work neatly.

In the meantime the headteacher and staff, with the help of the governors and your parents and carers, are going to keep a close eye on how things are going. Together you can make your school not just satisfactory, but good.

Yours sincerely

Hugh Protherough

Lead Inspector

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