

# Awliscombe Church of England Primary School

Awliscombe, Honiton, Devon, EX14 3PJ

**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Parents and carers appreciate the friendly, family feel at the school that helps pupils to develop self-confidence and respect each other.
- The school is emerging well from a year of substantial change in the staffing and leadership of the school.
- Determined leadership by the new headteacher, aided by new and existing teachers, has brought a fresh approach, which is building well on the positive attitudes to learning established securely by previous leaders.
- The headteacher, supported well by staff with responsibilities and governors, has restored a strong drive for continued improvement, seen, for example, in the significant proportion of Year 6 pupils now reaching high standards in mathematics.
- The pupils' consistently above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6, and increasingly in other year groups across the school, further show the pupils' good achievement.
- Teaching is typically good, with teachers' improved marking of pupils' work and raised expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, promoting good and improving progress through the school.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with staff that encourage their positive attitudes and above average attendance.
- Secure safeguarding arrangements, excellent pastoral support from very caring adults and good links with parents and carers, also help pupils to feel safe and greatly enjoy school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- At times, lesson introductions continue for too long limiting pupils' ability to learn more quickly at their own level.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to learn by finding things out for themselves.
- Pupils' skills in checking their own work and in using targets to bring improvement are not taught in a clear enough way as they move through the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 10 lessons and was accompanied by the headteacher during most of these observations.
- The inspector observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and also attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes. The inspector met with governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspector also took account of 26 parents' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection and also received nine staff questionnaires and two letters from parents and carers. The inspector also spoke informally with a number of parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is below average in size.
- Almost all pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is very small.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average. The school does not use any alternative educational provision.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is comprised of one mixed-aged Reception and Year 1 class. Most other pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new acting headteacher commenced her duties in September 2012 and was appointed permanent headteacher in November 2012.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
  - making sure that lesson introductions are concise and continue at a brisk pace so that pupils move quickly into work that is more closely matched to their needs and abilities
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to investigate and find things out for themselves
  - improving the use of individual targets so that pupils develop the ability to check the quality of their own work and bring improvement for themselves as they move through the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills on entry to the Reception and Year 1 class generally match those normally expected for their age. Children soon learn how to post up their chosen activities on the choosing board and joyfully contribute their ideas during group work. As a result, children quickly develop their self-confidence and social skills and make good progress across all areas of learning.
- Pupils, including those joining other than at the normal time, continue to make good progress and teachers are redressing some of the inconsistent progress that existed during the previous year. This has restored the securely above average attainment at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics, reflecting pupils' typically good achievement since the previous inspection.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included in all learning activities reflecting the school's diligent promotion of equal opportunity. Consequently, in relation to their abilities, these pupils make similarly good progress to other pupils.
- The very few pupils supported through pupil premium funding also respond well to additional support for their personal and special educational needs. Given the very small number of such pupils and the complexity of their needs, comparisons with non free-school pupils based on average points of progress made are not relevant in these circumstances.
- The school responded well to a dip in pupils' reading skills at the end of Year 2 in 2011 by improving the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds.) This contributed to the above average scores in the Year 1 phonics check in 2012.
- Since September 2012 the school has continued to strengthen the teaching of reading and writing by providing guided reading support every day rather than the previous weekly sessions. Children in Reception have been taking reading books home since they started school and this too is contributing to significantly quickening progress in reading. As a result, attainment in reading at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above average.
- Achievement in writing and mathematics is also improving rapidly as pupils rise to teachers' consistently high expectations. For example, more-able pupils discussed quadrilateral number sequences during mathematics in Years 5 and 6, reflecting significantly higher than expected skills and the very good progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- New and existing teachers are responding very purposefully to strong support from the new headteacher and are fully committed to extending pupils' learning through activities that relate to the pupils' own experiences. In Year 4, for example, the teacher stimulated pupils' interest by using photographs of well-known African animals such as a meerkat to develop their imaginative writing.
- Such topics also show how teachers successfully promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and are enriching literacy and numeracy skills across the range of subjects. For example, pupils investigate how shadows are formed in science and paint and discuss the environment during exciting 'Forest School' activities in the school grounds.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well and have their needs met by capable teaching assistants. They also respond well to such relevant and often practical learning opportunities.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively and are using the pupils' positive attitudes to learning to raise expectations. At times, teachers continue discussions for too long during introductions to lessons and do not leave enough time for pupils to complete the group tasks that more closely match their abilities and this slows their progress.

- In Reception and Year 1, children are taught how to contribute to their own learning, for example, through role play outdoors or indoors in the 'castle' and by helping to clear away equipment after lessons.
- Teachers in other classes frequently encourage pupils to learn independently by using computers, but do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to set up their own investigations and find things out for themselves.
- Teachers assess pupils effectively and adjust planning to provide additional support for pupils' changing needs. Teachers give good guidance to pupils by discussing how their work needs to be improved. Some teachers set clear targets or use different colours when marking work to indicate what pupils need to do to improve. However, there are inconsistencies across the classes in the way that pupils are taught to check their work and targets to bring about further improvement for themselves.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- As in the previous inspection, pupils' good behaviour and their excellent relationships with each other and with very caring staff continue to be strong features throughout the school.
- Parents and carers, staff, governors and pupils also express the view that behaviour is good and is caringly supported by staff.
- One parent or carer wrote, typically expressing the views of most, 'The ethos of the school for children to help and support each other cannot be praised enough; the children are taught to care for and to look after each other; my son has made some very good friends.'
- Equally positive comments by the pupils included: 'We are one big family', 'We are kind and caring' and 'We really help each other.' These qualities were evident in all classes visited by the inspector and were clearly seen as all pupils, including the youngest, assisted in preparing the hall at lunchtime. Discussions with the school council also showed that pupils take their responsibilities seriously, work well together to help improve the school and raise funds for charities, for example, holding a 'dance-off' for Help For Heroes.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning with the majority applying themselves in an exemplary manner, throwing themselves wholeheartedly into their various activities. A few pupils lack confidence in responding to teachers' questions unless directly approached and this slows their learning at times during whole-class discussions.
- Pupils talk knowledgeably about the different forms that bullying can take, for example cyber bullying, and say confidently that 'We don't have bullying here, but sometimes a few children could be more considerate.'
- Pupils show a good awareness of each other and how to keep safe, for example, by holding on to each other as they walked through the slippery snow.
- Pupils say that they are doing well and know this because 'Teachers talk to us, mark our work helpfully and give us stickers and certificates for good work.'
- All pupils questioned said they greatly enjoy being at school, as seen in their above average attendance. Most said that they love the challenges that teachers set them, but some said that work could be harder and that they would like more time to investigate things for themselves.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides determined leadership. She is assisted by a united team of teachers and supportive governors in a successful drive to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- In a relatively short time, the headteacher has made sure that effective school development and management have secured good teaching and pupils' learning in all classes. Safeguarding

procedures have also been updated to robustly secure the welfare of pupils and staff.

- New subject leaders are developing more consistency in the way they support teachers and check pupils' progress through the school. As a result, improvement continues at an impressive pace, as seen in the pupils' raised writing and numeracy skills, which show a strong capacity to improve further.
  - Pupils have good opportunities to learn across a full range of subjects. These are well planned to respond quickly to pupils' differing needs. For example the topic on Africa was aimed at stimulating the interest of boys. Staff are making increasingly good use of the school grounds for 'Forest School' activities to extend pupils' learning experiences.
  - The staff sustain close links with parents and carers, the church and the local community to include all pupils equally, to eliminate discrimination and to enable all pupils to achieve well. Assembly themes such as Going for Goals also show that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fully promoted.
  - Leaders and managers manage finances efficiently. Additional funds to assist disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and more recently a few in receipt of pupil premium support, are well used to enable them to learn well across the full range of learning activities.
  - The local authority has provided good assistance for the new headteacher, continues light-touch support and remains ready to respond to future needs.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Governors have played a reassuring pastoral role in helping to steer the school through a period of staff change. They have received training and visit the school to meet teachers and pupils at first hand and then report back to other governors. This has given them a good oversight of the provision, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Governors have improved how they examine data of pupils' progress and know that this school's performance compares well to that of similar schools. Governors also discuss detailed reports with the headteacher and question her carefully. Their improving knowledge of the quality of teaching enables them to check that staff appraisal and performance management, especially of the headteacher, link pay to performance and bring improvement. Governors now recognise the need to more formally check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Governors sustain efficient financial management. They know that the funding for the very few pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is used effectively to include them in all school activities, including residential trips. Governors are seeking to further develop their understanding of the impact that such additional funds have on pupils' progress.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113422
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	403206

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	94
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nick Thwaites
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicola Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2008]
<b>Telephone number</b>	01404 42031
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