

Alresford Primary School

Ford Lane, Alresford, Colchester, CO7 8AU

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Actions taken by leaders are not yet bringing about quicker rates of progress for pupils.
- Teaching varies too much, especially at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment and progress in reading is not as good as it is in writing and mathematics.
- Not enough pupils are attaining the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities, especially for the more able.
- Middle leaders do not do enough to check the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is making changes that are beginning to make the school better and teaching is improving.
- Leaders at all levels know the school well and want it to be successful.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good and children make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy the way they are starting to receive more challenge in lessons and that lessons are becoming more interesting for them.
- Pupils behave well and show good manners to each other and to adults.

Information about this inspection

- Seven lessons were observed during the inspection, five of which were joint observations with the headteacher. All teachers were seen.
- Pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 were heard reading and an assembly and a playtime were observed.
- A range of documentation was looked at including lesson plans, safeguarding and information on pupils' progress.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher, middle leaders and three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion also took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The responses of 27 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account, as well as staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Peter Lacey-Hastings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alresford is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding used to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and those from families in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision off site for its pupils.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure more teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - giving pupils clearer guidance about their next steps in learning through more frequent checking of progress in lessons and improved marking in books
 - challenging pupils to make faster progress, especially the more able
 - giving pupils different activities that are more closely matched to their abilities.
- Increase rates of progress, especially in reading at Key Stage 1, by:
 - making sure that pupils have more challenging books to read
 - having higher expectations of what pupils are capable of learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - extending the roles of middle leaders and leaders of key subjects, so they can check teaching and make a stronger contribution to school improvement
 - holding teachers accountable and providing more training to make teaching better, so that attainment and progress improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement at Key Stage 1 varies too much. Attainment levels have been low in the past, especially in reading. Over the last three years standards in mathematics and writing have been broadly average, but there is variation between year groups. Not enough pupils who are capable of reaching the higher levels at Key Stage 1 are doing so.
- Rates of progress in reading at Key Stage 1 have been slower than in writing or mathematics. This is also true for current pupils because sometimes pupils do not always read books that challenge them enough and help them to make good progress.
- Children join the school with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. In the past progress has varied for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but last year children made good progress and current children are also making good progress. This is because the quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently good.
- Last year pupils in Year 1 performed above the national average in their reading check. Current Year 1 pupils are also making good progress in linking letters with sounds (phonics) because they are being taught these basic reading skills well. However, this is not always used to make sure pupils continue to make good progress as they get older.
- Standards are average at Key Stage 2 in all subjects. Pupils' attainment is slightly better in mathematics than in English. Progress requires improvement because good progress is not being sustained over a long enough period of time.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to other pupils in the school, but they make good progress in reading at Key Stage 2. This is because teachers know them well and match work to their learning needs. Interventions and small-group work help support them to make good progress in their reading.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils, but attain slightly better in mathematics at Key Stage 2. This is because the progress of these pupils is carefully checked and teachers make sure they make at least the same progress as others, including the use of small groups and support from other adults.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- At times, work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' different abilities, especially the more able. For example, resources such as worksheets are not demanding enough and, as a result, more-able pupils do not make good progress.
- Teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 varies too much. Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet bringing about quicker rates of progress.
- Pupils in the school are generally motivated and want to learn. For example, they put their hands up, behave well and apply themselves to their work. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of how quickly pupils can work or what they are capable of learning.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and pupils mostly know how to improve it. However, sometimes marking does not link to the purpose of the lesson. In lessons, marking is not used enough to let pupils know how to improve their work and make quicker progress.
- The teaching of reading varies across the school. In better lessons, learning is more active such as older pupils making notes on books they are researching about the Victorians. Pupils say they prefer this approach and it helps them make progress.
- Reading books are generally matched to pupils' abilities. However, some pupils in Key Stage 1 spend too long on a particular reading level, even though they can read and understand more challenging books.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is consistently good. As a result, children get a good start to their schooling. Routines are well understood by children and this allows them to learn independently and co-operatively.
- When this happens, other adults can focus on small groups and teaching strategies are effective in helping pupils make good progress. For example, some younger children tested themselves and each other with spellings, while another group learned how to blend sounds to read words.
- In better lessons pupils, know from the start what they need to do to show they are making progress. This includes pupils being encouraged to check their targets before they begin work. For example in a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils used their target sheets to see how well they were doing and marked in their book margins which target they thought they had met.
- The teaching of phonics is good for younger pupils in the school. They learn key vocabulary and other adults support pupils well, for example helping them with their sounds and assessing how well they can spell words.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is usually good. Pupils are polite and courteous to each and to adults. For example, younger pupils say 'sorry' to one another without adults prompting them, and their apology is accepted. Relationships are good and there is a positive atmosphere.
 - Pupils themselves say that behaviour and safety are strengths of the school. Evidence during the inspection supports this, such as pupils playing safely during running and chasing games on the playground.
 - Pupils, including younger ones, know and understand the behaviour system. For example, they like the 'privilege cards' and 'golden time' that are used to reward good behaviour. They also say the 'yellow card' system works well because pupils know the consequences of their actions.
 - Pupils settle well into their lessons and are attentive to adults. For example, they line up in the playground in an orderly way, walk into school and get into classrooms quickly. Once in class, they apply themselves to the task at hand. Just occasionally more-able pupils in particular do not work as hard as they could because they are not sufficiently challenged.
 - Pupils know about different forms of bullying such as racism. They say that bullying is very rare
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indeed and when incidents occur they are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. As one pupil said, 'We forgive really easily and make up quickly'.

- Pupils are aware of possible dangers around the school and in their lives such as internet safety. For example, they understand how some websites are blocked due to their possible content.
- Attendance is average, although pupils are positive about coming to school. Behaviour is well managed by teachers and support staff.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Middle leaders and leaders of key subjects do not have a wide enough range of skills to support the headteacher in checking teaching, for example, in analysing information about pupils' progress, observing lessons and looking at pupils' work in their books.
- Leaders at all levels know the school well. Leaders and staff have a new sense of purpose and determination for the school to improve. The new headteacher has both challenged and supported staff to review and reflect on how effective they are.
- Inspection evidence supports the school's evidence that teachers are responding well to actions taken by leaders. However, this is not yet bringing about higher levels of attainment and quicker rates of progress.
- Performance targets for teachers are linked to pupils' achievement and the national 'Teachers' Standards'. There are some training opportunities that help teachers become more effective. For example, partnerships with local schools mean that good practice is shared. However, these are not yet bringing about enough improvements in teaching overall.
- There is wider range of themes and topics following a review, some of which are taught across the whole school at the same time, such as 'Heroes and Villains'. Pupils say they enjoy this way of learning.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, pictures of Arabic words and culture are displayed in a classroom. Social awareness and imagination were also developed during an assembly in which pupils were challenged to work together to find their own solution to a problem.
- Safeguarding requirements are met such as checks on adults working with pupils and checking on the safety of the school site. The school makes sure all pupils have equal opportunities and that discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are active around the school. They know the school well and are now receiving more information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They know how good teaching is rewarded and any underperformance tackled. As a result, they are more able to ask searching questions of the headteacher. They set performance targets that link to how well pupils are learning. The governing body also supports the headteacher in the way teachers' performance targets challenge them to increase rates of pupil progress. Members of the governing body know about the pupil premium and authorise its use to help and support individuals and groups. However, their decisions and actions have

not yet brought about consistently good teaching across the school or higher levels of pupil achievement.

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

Unique reference number	114734
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	405531

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Roscoe
Headteacher	Janet Meacock
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2011
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