

# Aldbury Church of England Primary School

Stocks Road, Aldbury, Tring, HP23 5RT

**Inspection dates** 5–6 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The headteacher and governing body are very ambitious for the school and have worked well together to raise standards of teaching and achievement since the last inspection.
- Pupils across the school make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They behave consistently well and this contributes significantly to their good progress and the school's harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils take equal pride in their school work and caring for each other.
- The school encourages pupils to read widely and develop a love of reading. Many attractive areas are filled with a good range of books pupils can read, both inside and outside the building.
- Pupils feel safe at school and parents and carers are almost unanimous in their praise for the school's caring and supportive approach.
- A creative and imaginative range of topics and subjects strongly support the pupils' good learning and encourage their thirst for knowledge.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Staff do not yet ensure that all groups of pupils make equally rapid progress.
- Teachers do not always make sure pupils follow the precise guidance given in marking.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five sessions for pupils in mixed-age year groups. All the observations were carried out with members of the senior management team.
- The inspector examined a range of documents including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and documents relating to keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector heard some children read, visited some individual support sessions and made a number of short visits to other lessons. She looked at the work in pupils' books and attended an act of collective worship.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, subject leaders and leaders of the early years foundation stage and special needs, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 33 parents and carers were analysed through the Parent View website, and the inspector also spoke informally to parents and carers to seek their views about the school.
- The views of nine staff who returned questionnaires were also considered.

## Inspection team

Gillian Scobie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There are three classes, each with pupils of more than one age group.
- The large majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average and the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across all subjects by:
  - applying the school marking policy consistently to help all pupils improve their work
  - checking more carefully on the progress and standards of all groups, so any pupils at risk of underachieving or in need of extra help can be rapidly supported.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills that are below those typical for this age. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and by the end of Year 6 attainment is above national averages. In 2013, pupils were working on average half a term ahead of expected levels in writing and mathematics and a term ahead in reading. They are reaching similar standards this year.
- Children make a good start in reading, writing and mathematics in Reception and this is supported by the wide range of activities available to them inside the classroom and in the open air. The teaching, guidance and support given by staff are often outstanding and they keep a close check on children's progress. The results are recorded in very attractive and comprehensive Learning Journeys which clearly demonstrate good progress across all the areas of learning.
- By the end of Year 2 most pupils are able to read with confidence and some are already reaching standards that are more than a term ahead of expected levels. They use phonics (the sounds that letters make) with confidence and are able to read many unfamiliar words. Opportunities for writing are many and varied and often successfully linked to other activities such as recording what they have seen or done. The majority of pupils are able to recognise basic punctuation and use it accurately in their writing. In mathematics, pupils are developing their understanding of how numbers work very well and are able to use some mathematical terminology appropriately.
- There has been a focus on improving writing since the last inspection, although it is still not yet as strong as other subject areas. Opportunities to develop writing skills are carefully woven into a range of subjects. Pupils are encouraged to write imaginatively and at length in English, history and geography as well as recording factual evidence accurately and succinctly in science. In one lesson Year 6 were totally absorbed in writing a description of how they kept their acacia tree alive and some boasted that they had written 'nearly two pages' in the lesson.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2013, the majority of pupils achieved above the expected national level. All the pupils who retook the check in Year 2 also did so.
- Pupils with special educational needs across the school make good progress, regardless of their individual starting points. The staff know their pupils very well and strive to ensure that everyone is able to benefit from the full range of opportunities offered.
- Staff have worked successfully to improve the progress made by the small number of pupils supported by the pupil premium. School records and the work in pupils' books suggest that attainment gaps are closing and they are generally making good progress in line with their classmates.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers show that they have high expectations for their pupils and often provide lesson activities that are exciting so that pupils remain interested and enjoy their learning. The 'WOW' days that introduce a new topic or theme offer an excellent and unique introduction, such as a visit to see *The Lion King* at the beginning of learning about Africa. These events inspire the pupils' interest in subsequent lessons and feed their enthusiasm and tangible love of learning.

- Teachers know their classes very well and set them a good level of realistic challenges. Work is carefully adapted to take account of the range of abilities and ages in each class and pupils are often paired or grouped together according to ability rather than by age. As a result pupils are confident and not afraid to take risks in their learning.
- Small group work and individual support are carefully planned to meet pupils' specific needs. As a result the pupils who have special educational needs become confident learners who are ready to try new things and are able to make good progress.
- Homework is set regularly and includes a variety of daily and routine activities such as reading, spelling and number work. There is also a more creative and complex homework activity set each half term that draws together a range of skills to help pupils see their learning as real and relevant on a wider scale. These have included growing and measuring the progress of a bulb and drawing a large map of Simba's forest and writing a biography based on *The Lion King* and the African theme.
- Pupils often demonstrate a high level of resilience. This sometimes means that pupils, especially the more able, persevere for too long when they find something difficult rather than seeking help. Teachers do not always keep a close enough eye on how well some pupils are managing to complete a task, and as a consequence they do not always make as much progress as they could.
- The school has developed an effective marking policy that supports pupils' learning from Reception to the end of Year 6, and helps them to recognise instantly what they do well and what their next steps should be. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils make the best use of the advice given to move forward in their learning and develop new skills as quickly as they could.

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

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe at school and this is fully endorsed by their parents and carers. Pupils learn about how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when they are using the internet.
- The older pupils take care of the younger ones through a well-developed 'buddy' system. The older ones may look after their younger buddy when they are on trips or moving between the school and the church. They also read to each other and this adds to the atmosphere of harmony across the school.
- All pupils, including the youngest, have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They understand that there are different sorts of bullying and feel confident that if there are any problems between children they are quickly sorted out by their teachers or another adult. They also pair up to read together during the week.
- The behaviour of pupils is good, both in class and around the school. Pupils show a high level of respect and concern for each other. They are proud of their school and take a pride in looking smart and 'ready for work' in their uniform.
- The recently introduced Building Learning Power programme is helping to develop pupils' ability to stay focused on their work and improve their concentration. This was particularly noticeable on the first day of the inspection when the school was celebrating World Book Day. Everyone was dressed as a character from *The Wizard of Oz* ready for a trip to the theatre later in the

afternoon, but were still able to concentrate fully on their mathematics lesson and make good progress.

- Attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection and is now above the national average.

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

- The headteacher is very well supported by the governing body and staff. The small school atmosphere is used very effectively to build a strong team who aspire to be outstanding teachers. Careful and rigorous monitoring and well-chosen training ensure that everyone is able to develop their skills.
- Leaders' thoughtful and realistic evaluation has identified the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. This informs the school's development plan, which clearly states what needs to be improved and sets realistic targets that enable the school to move forward. As a result there have been improvements across the school since the last inspection, especially in teaching and learning and in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Policies are well designed to meet the needs of the school, and there is a strong emphasis on safeguarding and keeping pupils safe.
- The management of all available funding is closely and rigorously monitored by the governing body. Pupil premium funding is used carefully and effectively to support the learning needs of individual pupils and help them to make good progress. Sports funding is used to pay for a partnership with a local secondary school that extends physical education and sports opportunities for pupils of all ages. It has also been used to buy specific equipment, especially for the younger pupils so that they have the same opportunities as the older ones.
- The school has built strong links with the parents and carers who regularly visit classes to listen to children read and sometimes stay for lunch with the pupils. Events such as the highly praised Grandparents Day have helped to ensure good lines of communication.
- Pupils' spiritual, social cultural and moral development is promoted outstandingly well. There are very strong links with the church and the school is at the very heart of village life. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how they treat others and what it might be like to live in another culture or practice a different religion.
- Some subject leaders are relatively new to their post. They have quickly forged a good working relationship that ensures the sharing of good practice and the consistent implementation of school policies and procedures. As a result, staff and pupils all know what to expect and in turn what is required of them. However, they are not yet fully effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning by checking rigorously to make sure all groups of pupils are doing well.
- The school works closely with the local authority, whose representative has praised the positive impact the headteacher has had on all aspects of the school since the last inspection. Her ambitious approach and strong focus on teaching and learning have improved pupils' achievement and engagement to ensure a harmonious learning environment where pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are able to thrive and be successful.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governors are well organised and have an accurate awareness of the quality of teaching

and pupils' performance. They are ambitious for the school and very proud of its achievements. They visit regularly, keep teaching and learning at the centre of their attention, and ensure the focus of their visits is always linked to the school's improvement plan. They have an excellent understanding of how to monitor pupils' progress and achievement using all the available evidence and regularly ask challenging questions about all aspects of school life. They set rigorous targets for the headteacher and her staff and ensure that they are rewarded appropriately for their hard work. They have a clear understanding of how the school budget is spent, including the impact of pupil premium and primary sports funding. They are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities and make sure safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements.

## 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>	117382
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	430765

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>	71
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anthony Kent
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathryn Little
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 851240
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 851181
<b>Email address</b>	head@aldbury.herts.sch.uk

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