

Aloeric Primary School

St Michael's Road, Melksham, SN12 6HN

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides committed and determined leadership. Other senior leaders and governors offer good support. Together, they have an ambitious vision for the school.
- The headteacher, in particular, has a strong impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, the school is improving.
- Parents are particularly positive about the school. Almost all parents who took part in the online survey agreed that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The concerted action of school leaders to improve pupils' rates of progress has been effective.
- Across the school, pupils are making good progress.
- Many of the most able, those who are disabled or have special educational needs, and disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress.
- The quality of teaching is now consistently good, leading to pupils' more evenly good progress.
- School leaders, teachers and assistants set high expectations for both pupils' behaviour and their achievement.
- Adults are adept at fostering good working relationships with pupils.
- The teaching consistently engages pupils well.
- Teaching assistants make positive contributions to pupils' learning.
- The school's approach to marking helps learning by recognising pupils' achievement, but also by pointing to what could be improved.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, and their attitudes to learning are very positive.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Pupils say that there is some bullying, but that they are confident that adults quickly address any difficulties that occur.
- Attendance is above average.
- Children get a really good start in the Reception classes. They settle quickly because teachers set clear expectations. They make increasingly good progress in the course of the Reception year.
- The governing body is much more effective than at the time of the last inspection. Governors are now more rigorous in holding the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' overall attainment is not consistently above average by the end of Year 6 and end of Year 2.
- Not all targets are high enough to secure the more rapid rates of progress necessary to reach above average standards.
- Not a large enough proportion of the most able pupils and of boys reach above average attainment in writing and mathematics.
- The school has not closed the gaps between disadvantaged pupils' attainment in mathematics and that of their peers in school and nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also scrutinised samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics. They heard a sample of pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school's staff, the Chair, Vice-Chair and three other members of the Governing Body. A meeting was held with the school's improvement adviser representing the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 46 responses that were recorded on the online survey (Parent View) by the end of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding, performance management, the use of extra government funding and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Chris Grove, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clare Galliers	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Penman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a primary school that is larger than average in size.
- The school is situated in the town of Melksham in north-west Wiltshire, and draws most of its pupils from the local area.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care) is about one quarter of all pupils. This is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about one in every seven pupils. This is broadly average.
- The school has about 10% more boys than girls on roll.
- The Early Years provision consists of two full-time Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the 2012/13 session, the school experienced a higher than usual number of changes in the teaching staff, but since then staffing has been more settled.
- The breakfast club is managed by the governing body and formed part of this inspection.
- Among the school's accreditations are the Artsmark and Healthy School (plus) awards, and the Football Association Charter Standard.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement in writing, and especially in mathematics, so that more pupils finish Years 2 and 6 with above average attainment, through improving teaching by:
 - setting higher progress targets and raising teachers' expectations for the more able pupils and for boys
 - setting tasks which ensure that a greater number of pupils work at a more challenging level
 - ensuring that teachers identify the reasons for, and take effective action to reduce, the gap in attainment in mathematics between disadvantaged pupils and others.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school's position has strengthened considerably since the previous inspection, as a result of the committed and determined leadership of the headteacher, with good support by the two assistant headteachers, other leaders and the governing body. This results in the clear and purposeful direction set for the school. Senior leaders and governors communicate high expectations and an ambitious vision for the school.
 - Parents are evidently very supportive of the school. Of those who took part in the survey, almost all would recommend the school to other parents. Staff support is equally strong. Those who completed the staff questionnaire unanimously agreed that they know what they are trying to achieve as a school, and almost all expressed their pride in the school.
 - The headteacher, in particular, provides strong leadership of teaching. The school has resolutely tackled past weaknesses in some teaching. The headteacher and other senior leaders have instituted a programme that entails frequent observations of all members of the teaching staff, with clear feedback and advice about improvement. The programme has had the effect of raising the quality of teaching with the result that it is now consistently good. This, in turn, has resulted in better progress by many but not all pupils.
 - Middle leaders also check the quality of pupils' learning. The school makes good use of appraisal arrangements, whereby leaders set teachers annual targets for the progress of their pupils and for the improvement of teaching. In addition, senior leaders make regular checks on pupils' progress. Where pupils have not made sufficient progress, teachers and assistants provide additional support.
 - Leaders' resulting evaluation of the work of the school is thorough and accurate. This leads to improvement planning of good quality.
 - The school gives appropriate prominence to the development of pupils' skills and competence in reading, writing and mathematics. It also makes use of commercially produced units of work for teaching much of its wider curriculum. This is supplemented by various whole-school themes, such as the current focus on 'respect'. The school has gained the Artsmark award in recognition of its contributions to pupils' wider personal development. The tuneful singing by the choir, for instance, attests to this. The school's approach does much to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to prepare them effectively for life in modern Britain.
 - The school uses its primary sport funding to good effect. For example, the funding has allowed the employment of specialist coaching in football, basketball and dance. The school's analysis of impact indicates increased rates of participation in physical activities. The accolades of the Healthy Schools and Football Association Charter Standard awards recognise the school's effective promotion of pupils' physical well-being.
 - The school spends its additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils in ways that are consistent with its motto (making a difference every day). It uses the funding to good effect in raising disadvantaged pupils' attainment in reading and writing, but less effectively in improving their attainment in mathematics. Nevertheless, the funding serves to promote equal opportunities and to tackle discrimination. Leaders have employed additional teachers and assistants to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Other spending has included the employment of a parent support adviser and a counsellor.
 - Senior leaders ensure that the school fully meets all safeguarding and child protection requirements.
 - The local authority has provided ongoing support and advice for the school's improvement, notably through the rigour of the analysis of the school's evidence at the termly effectiveness review meetings. The authority is entirely confident in the school's capacity because of the leadership team's robust and systematic approach and accurate self-review.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has become markedly more effective. There is a strong partnership between governors and the senior leadership team. Governors are particularly well informed about the school and all its aspects. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and remaining areas for improvement because of detailed reporting arrangements that they have agreed with the headteacher. They are well informed about all aspects of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, from the headteacher's reports and from information about pupils' attainment and progress on national comparisons, as well as from their visits to the school. Governors recognise the importance of their role in setting targets for the headteacher. They also know about leaders' arrangements to set targets for other members of staff. The headteacher

consults governors about recommendations for salary progression following the appraisal process. Governors know that the headteacher tackles any underperformance rigorously. They clearly meet their statutory obligations. They also hold the school to close account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils themselves say that others behave well. They are appreciative of the supportive ethos of the school, describing it as 'like a family'. Teachers and assistants set clear expectations for good behaviour to which pupils respond well.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning in class. They are quick to be attentive to teachers and to other pupils. They participate in lessons willingly, responding readily to teachers' questions. Pupils cooperate well in the frequent opportunities to act as 'talk partners' (short conversations between pairs of pupils to prepare an answer to a question or to compare their understanding of a particular point, for example). In assemblies, pupils sustain interest and concentrate well.
- Pupils behave well as they move around the school buildings. They are polite and respectful towards adults around the school. At playtimes, pupils behave well in the playground and enjoy the opportunities for social contact. Meal times in the school hall at lunchtime are pleasant events because pupils conduct themselves well.
- School records indicate that there are quite a high number of minor behavioural incidents, and that these have not diminished over time, which is why behaviour is not outstanding. There have been no permanent exclusions, but there have been a small number of fixed-term exclusions in the last two years.
- Those parents who took part in the online survey were almost unanimous in agreeing that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. Similarly, nearly all the members of staff who completed the questionnaire agreed that behaviour is good and is managed consistently well.
- Attendance has continued to improve, and is above average with a low rate of unauthorised absence.
- Staff manage the breakfast club well and provide an enjoyable experience for pupils. The supervisory members of staff set a caring tone for the club. Pupils are happily engaged in a range of games and activities.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school since there is always someone on duty and 'teachers make you feel safe because they are helpful'. Pupils also say that they learn how to keep safe. For example, they know about the danger that strangers may pose, and understand the need to exercise care when using computers.
- In the responses to their respective surveys, every parent and every member of staff agreed that pupils are safe in the school.
- Pupils recognise the persistent nature of bullying and know the different forms that bullying can take. They say that there is some bullying at school but that adults sort it out 'because we work together'. Most parents, and almost all members of staff who took part in the surveys, agreed that the school deals effectively with any cases of bullying.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching, including the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, is now more evenly spread across the whole school. This has a beneficial impact on pupils' learning and leads to their consistently improving progress.
- In the online survey of parents, all respondents agreed that their children are well taught, and almost all judged that their children are making good progress. Inspection evidence largely supports their views.
- Teachers and assistants are skilful in the way they foster good and caring relationships with their pupils. Such relationships are a significant element in the warm climate for learning in all classrooms, and the school's very positive ethos.
- Teachers set clear expectations, both for pupils' behaviour and for their achievement. Expectations for pupils' behaviour in class are so well set that they are often implicit rather than spoken. Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement reflect the high expectations that the headteacher and other senior leaders have of members of staff, and are having a largely positive impact. Nevertheless, the school's

targets for the rates of progress of some groups, including the most able pupils and boys, have not always been high enough for them to achieve as well as they could.

- Teaching consistently engages pupils well, through a lively tone to lessons, leading to the good levels of pupils' participation.
- The work that teachers set provides a degree of challenge for pupils. The best teaching offers more than one level of challenge in the tasks set for pupils. In a mathematics lesson in a Years 5/6 class, for example, pupils chose work at one of three levels of difficulty. The teacher carefully assessed pupils at their chosen level, encouraging those who found the task relatively easy to move to a more 'spicy' (that is, more stretching) task. In another Years 5/6 lesson, pupils had to use their knowledge of mathematical tables to calculate the area of rectangles. The teacher stretched the most able pupils through the additional challenge of working out the areas of compound shapes. Such approaches help to ensure the increased challenge that is necessary to raise pupils' attainment further.
- Teachers regularly deploy teaching assistants flexibly and to good effect so that they make positive contributions, for example, to the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. The school's 'two stars and a wish' approach to marking usefully allows teachers to acknowledge pupils' achievement, and also to point out what could be improved in the work. Teachers usually identify pupils' misconceptions, though opportunities to note errors in understanding are occasionally overlooked.
- Teachers do not always provide enough challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics and writing to enable them to achieve to their full potential in these subjects.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' improved rates of progress in more recent times are the outcome of concerted and very effective action by school leaders since the last inspection. As a result, pupils in all year groups are now making progress in reading, writing and mathematics which is more consistently good.
- In 2014, overall attainment by the end of Year 6 rose in all three subjects, and especially in reading, because of pupils' better progress. There was good improvement in standards at the expected level in each subject. The school's strong performance in reading was the result of the above average proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 5 standard of attainment. There was an increase in the number of pupils who gained Level 5 in the other two subjects also. However, the proportion of pupils who attained the higher standard remained below the national average in writing, and more particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was broadly average in 2014, as it had been in previous years. In mathematics, in particular, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 3 standard of attainment was below average.
- Pupils' success in the Year 1 phonics screening check (checking pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make) in the last two years has been noteworthy. In 2013 and again in 2014, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard was very much higher than the national average.
- Many of the most able pupils make good progress because teachers provide them with appropriately challenging work. However, not a high enough proportion attain as well as they could in writing, and especially in mathematics, by the end of Year 2 and end of Year 6. The school's strong results in reading at the higher Level 5 standard in 2014 indicate the potential for further improvement in standards in writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress because teachers and assistants offer them good support, and meet their needs well.
- Although boys across the school regularly make good progress, the progress of girls is almost always at least a little more rapid. The result is that girls' attainment in all subjects is presently consistently higher than that of boys.
- The school's evidence shows that pupils who are eligible for the additional government funding are currently making improving progress in reading and writing, and often now in mathematics. This is because these disadvantaged pupils are benefiting from the extra support of teachers and assistants.
- In assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2014, the gap in attainment between those supported by the pupil premium and other pupils narrowed in reading, and narrowed more considerably in writing, when compared with results in 2013. By contrast, in mathematics there was no gap in 2013, but a gap opened up in 2014. The gaps equated to about one and a quarter terms in reading and in writing, and about two and three quarter terms in the case of mathematics. The school has given the current disadvantaged pupils further support.
- The comparison between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in the school and that of other pupils nationally shows a similar pattern of gaps. In reading, the gap narrowed, to about half a term. In writing,

the gap narrowed very considerably, to about one and a half terms. In mathematics, the gap widened further, to more than three terms.

The early years provision

is good

- When children first enter the school, their knowledge and skills are variable, but are typically as would be expected for their age. Most arrive at school with the expected readiness for reading and number work. However, about half of the year group have levels of self-awareness and self-confidence, and knowledge and understanding of the wider world, that are lower than expected. For about one in every three children, this is also the case with their readiness for writing.
- By the end of the Reception year in 2012/13, most children showed skills and knowledge in all areas of learning in line with expectations. This showed considerable improvement for many children, for instance in their self-confidence and in their writing skills.
- The proportions of children who meet expectations in reading, writing and number work by the end of the year improved further in 2013/14. Furthermore, a higher proportion of children also exceeded expectations in these three areas of learning by comparison with the previous year. This indicates that children are increasingly well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- Children's successful learning and improved performance are the result of the good quality of teaching. The teachers and the assistants are good at creating a very positive atmosphere for learning, to which children respond very well. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is particularly good. However, children sometimes have limited access to computer facilities to support the reinforcement of their learning of phonics.
- Teachers carefully plan the range of activities in the classrooms and in the outside area to ensure that children gain a good variety of learning experiences. For example, one teacher discussed with a group of children how they could get a toy animal out of a bowl of solid ice. This stimulated their thinking well and provided opportunities to explore ideas such as 'melting'.
- Children show very positive attitudes to learning. They behave well because teachers and assistants set consistent expectations. They feel safe in the Reception area, and know how to keep safe, for instance how they should respond if they saw something unpleasant when using a computer.
- The Early Years teaching staff engage especially well with parents. For example, on arrival at the beginning of the day, teaching assistants work with the children so that parents can speak with the teachers, as necessary.
- The leadership of the Early Years provision is very effective. There is a close-knit team of teachers and assistants who collaborate well. The Early Years leader provides a strong sense of direction. She has, for instance, written a detailed plan designed to further enhance provision, procedures and performance.

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	126474
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	453433

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Willis
Headteacher	Matthew Nightingale
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 March 2013
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