

# Aldermaston CE Primary School

Wasing Lane, Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4LX

**Inspection dates** 9–10 June 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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

- There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection, due to concerted and successful action by leaders and governors. The headteacher has strongly led these improvements which have been fully supported by all staff.
- A key improvement has been in the quality of teaching which is now good. Rigorous systems are in place to check on its quality, involving leaders and governors, and effective strategies have ensured improvement.
- The improvement in the quality of teaching has resulted in pupils' accelerated progress. They are now achieving well in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A further important improvement has been in governance. The governing body restructured a year ago and is now a highly effective body. Governors have extremely good knowledge of the effectiveness of the school and, in particular, the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement.
- Children have a good start to their education in the Reception class as the staff have created effective plans for their learning. Adults have clear knowledge of the needs of these young children.
- Pupils behave well and are polite and welcoming. Leaders are currently focusing on the school's successful 'learning behaviour' approach which prepares pupils more for learning. Pupils work enthusiastically and are keen to explain the impact their behaviour has on their learning. In discussions they noted the improvements in this area since the last inspection.
- The school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are outstanding. All systems are very thorough and rigorous records are kept. All pupils spoken to were very firm in their assertion that they felt safe in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils are fully aware of their responsibilities in creating a harmonious society. They have a very good understanding of British values and are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and life beyond.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to focus sufficiently on their skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling when they are working on longer pieces of writing.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to practise their skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in a range of situations, particularly in problem solving.
- There are occasions in the Reception class when adults are a little slow to intervene in order to accelerate children's learning during times when children have chosen activities for themselves.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 17 lessons, six of these jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors met informally with parents at the beginning and end of the school days and analysed the results of the 60 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation, development planning, and policies and procedures, including those relating to pupils' safety.
- The inspectors evaluated the school's information on the progress that pupils are making and scrutinised the work in their books.

## Inspection team

John Eadie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Aldermaston CE Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. There are seven classes, one for each year group from Reception to Year 6. All early years children attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is well below average. For example, the numbers of these pupils in Year 6 has varied from two to five over the last three years. There are almost no disadvantaged pupils in the school this year.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. One in eight is from a variety of minority ethnic groups and this proportion is below average. Roughly a third of these speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of an informal federation of small schools in the locality.
- The school provides space for a breakfast and after-school club, but this is managed privately and is inspected separately.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
  - encouraging pupils to focus more on their skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling when they are carrying out longer pieces of writing
  - ensuring that pupils' skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are practised in a wide range of situations, particularly in problem solving
  - ensuring that, when children have selected activities for themselves in the Reception class, adults intervene more effectively to accelerate their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, very ably supported by the senior leadership team, has driven the improvements since the last inspection very well. There is a very clear sense of ambition to provide the best for the pupils, which is shared by all staff and governors. The school's current focus on enhancing pupils' behaviour for learning is having a good impact, not just on pupils' attitudes to their learning, but on behaviour more generally as pupils take more responsibility for their own behaviour.
- A particular improvement since the last inspection has been the improvement in the quality of teaching. This is because leaders have put in place rigorous systems to monitor teaching and have initiated effective support where a need has been identified. A particular strength is the review process, where areas for development noted in a teacher's previous monitoring are discussed with the teacher prior to their next visit by a leader. Teachers value this opportunity to show the work they have done to improve.
- Middle leaders play an effective role in the process of improvement. For example, the leaders for literacy and numeracy have instigated good initiatives which have led to improved progress for pupils in these subjects. They have clear plans for further development.
- The ethos of the school is one of fostering the individuality of the pupils and recognising that all are equally important. Discrimination of any sort is therefore not tolerated and this is reflected in pupils' acceptance of all, whatever their race, religion or sexual orientation.
- The extra funds provided for disadvantaged pupils are used effectively. This is reflected in the increased proportions of these pupils working at age-related expectations and making the same progress as their classmates.
- The school provides a curriculum that is closely matched to pupils' learning needs, and pupils say that it is interesting and engages them in their learning. There is a correct emphasis on the skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Other subjects are not pushed to one side, though, and music is a particular strength. Three classes learn a musical instrument as part of their curriculum provision and there is an active choir and a band. Pupils benefit from regular visits and visitors, and much work in a variety of subjects is based on these first-hand experiences.
- Extremely good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's key values of compassion, respect and 'striving for our best' are strongly emphasised. Pupils respond extremely well to this provision and are developing into caring young people, who are acutely aware of their responsibilities and the needs of society generally. They have a very good awareness of British values and are being prepared very well for the next stage in their education and life in modern Britain.
- The extra funds for physical education and sport are used well. For instance, this funding was used to bring a Paralympic athlete into school and he introduced pupils to a range of Paralympic sports such as Boccia. Pupils subsequently had an opportunity to engage in inter-school competition in these sports. A measure of the effectiveness of the use of this funding is that there has been a doubling of the numbers involved in after-school sports activities. There is a clear beneficial effect on pupils' health and well-being.
- The procedures for keeping pupils safe are extremely rigorous, and all statutory requirements are met in this respect. The school is particularly assiduous in maintaining its records, and staff awareness of the issues in this area is reflected in their readiness to share concerns confidentially with the headteacher.
- The local authority has supported the school well in the process of improvement. However, it recognises the improvements made and says that leaders are now asking for specific training when needs arise rather than being provided with what the local authority deemed appropriate.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has been a particular area of improvement since the last inspection. There have been changes of personnel and a restructuring of committees which have resulted in very strong levels of expertise, which are appropriately used. This has resulted in high levels of challenge as governors know the questions to ask due to their in-depth understanding of data regarding pupils' progress. They are also very aware of the quality of teaching and what is done to improve it. Governors understand fully their role in checking the quality of teaching and rewarding teachers when their targets are met. Their drive has been a significant aspect in the improvements noted in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors have recently developed their support role as they recognise that the high-level ambition for improvement has been taken on by leaders and managers. Very careful control is kept on finances, and all funds are managed very effectively. This applies particularly to the extra funds provided for disadvantaged pupils. Governors meet their statutory requirements well.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are courteous and considerate, and there are good relationships at all levels.
- Their attitudes to their learning are good. They appreciate the school's current focus on improving their learning behaviour. Pupils say that as well as giving them a greater understanding of how they can improve their learning it has reduced the incidence of low-level disruption in lessons as pupils realise how their behaviour affects the learning of others.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. They play sensibly together and break times are happy occasions. Pupils say that they are 'always there for each other' and this ensures that all are included and none left out. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in the numbers who rush in well ahead of their parents in the morning.
- Attendance is broadly average. Although for the vast majority of pupils it is very good, there are some families where the children do not attend regularly, which brings the overall attendance rate down and these children do not learn as well as they could.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Systems are extremely rigorous and records kept are meticulous. For example, even the most minor incidents are recorded so that an emerging pattern can be spotted early to enable prompt intervention.
- Pupils are well aware of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, when using the internet for instance. They understand risk and are very good at evaluating it.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school. A major aspect of this is that they regard bullying as being almost non-existent. They say that 'occasionally some are mean', but they do not regard this as being a problem. When it happens, they say that the headteacher deals with it extremely well.
- Pupils have excellent knowledge of different types of bullying, appreciating the annual internet safety day and the information that they gain from it for example. Pupils hold extremely strong views on the unacceptability of all types of bullying, for instance racist or homophobic. They were keen to explain that all individuals should be accepted for who they are, as we are all different.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- The quality of teaching has improved notably since the last inspection. The improvement in the quality of teaching in literacy, reading and mathematics has been the key element in pupils' improved achievement in these subjects.
- There is a range of general strengths. For example, teachers' explanations of tasks and learning are good due to their secure subject knowledge. Pupils are therefore fully engaged in their learning and they say that teachers make their lessons interesting. This was well exemplified in a mathematics lesson where pupils were being challenged to solve a problem using their knowledge of place-value. Pupils learned well because they were enthused by the task which encouraged them to think more and more deeply.
- Teaching assistants are deployed efficiently and are usually guided well by teachers. For instance, in a literacy lesson where pupils were learning to use persuasive language, the teaching assistants had been well prepared to take part in the teacher's questioning session. This engaged the pupils, helping them to realise just what the teacher was looking for, and to respond well. There are occasions, however, when teachers do not ensure that pupils are focused on the particular objective for learning in a lesson. Teaching assistants are skilled, particularly when they are working with pupils who find learning difficult, and they play a key role in the good progress that these pupils make.
- Teachers' planning is good and a particular strength is the checklists that they produce, often in consultation with the pupils, for the learning in a particular lesson. Pupils say that this helps them to understand what they are learning and measure how well they are doing.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly. This information is then used very well to establish whether any are in danger of falling behind. Effective strategies, often developed by the leader for special educational needs, are then put in place to enable these pupils to catch up.
- Good relationships exist in all classes and this has a positive impact on pupils' motivation and achievement.
- The teaching of reading is thorough, reflected in the strong results in the national assessments in Year 6 in this subject.
- There are occasions when opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills in other aspects of learning.

For instance, some areas of grammar, spelling and punctuation are not always practised sufficiently when pupils are engaged in longer pieces of writing or in subjects other than literacy.

- Pupils do not always have opportunities to practise some of their number skills, for example, in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, often enough in other aspects of mathematics such as problem solving.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- There have been good improvements in pupils' achievement since the last inspection. Pupils are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups.
- Attainment in the national assessments improved significantly last year and was comfortably above the national average in all subject areas. The biggest improvement was in mathematics and there have also been good improvements in writing over the last two years as this has been a particular focus for development. There have also been improvements in writing through the school, especially for boys, as initiatives to engage boys in their writing have been successful. Pupils in the current Year 6 are again working at significantly above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are less confident in their abilities in problem solving in mathematics and in their grammar skills even though these skills are above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in each cohort varies widely, often being as few as one. However, almost all are now making the same good progress as their classmates in all year groups, and working at similar levels. Any gaps in their attainment have almost entirely closed. Due to the very small number of disadvantaged pupils currently on the school roll, it is not possible to provide meaningful comparisons of their achievement with other pupils nationally.
- There are good levels of challenge in all classes and so the most-able pupils make good progress relative to their abilities. This is evidenced by the fact that the proportions reaching the higher levels in the national assessments in Year 6 last year were comfortably above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although the proportion achieving the higher levels in the assessments in Year 2 last year was only average, this was linked to the ability of the cohort who did not attain as highly as previous cohorts. Good levels of challenge were observed in lessons.
- Pupils' attainment in reading in the assessments in Year 6 has been consistently strong in recent years. Performance in the national phonics (letters and their sounds) screening check has been average for the last two years, but currently a high proportion of pupils in Year 1 is already working at the required standard. Teachers build effectively on this strong basis and, by the time pupils are in Year 6, they read widely and for enjoyment.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because provision has improved due to the coordinator being given more time to liaise with teachers about their learning. Support has therefore been more closely matched to their needs. Information on pupils' performance shows that the good range of interventions has been effective in accelerating the progress of these pupils.
- The few pupils from minority ethnic groups make the same good progress as their peers. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language all have sufficient command of English to access the full curriculum and they make the same good progress as their classmates.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Leadership and management of the early years is good and teamwork is strong. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn, and provide a rich range of worthwhile opportunities to foster the development of their basic skills.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. They achieve well in the Reception class, where good teaching is closely matched to their learning needs. As a result, children make good progress in all aspects of their learning, and the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is above the national average. They are well prepared to start the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- The early years curriculum covers all areas of children's learning well. Staff provide ample opportunities for children to develop independence and to make good use of the outside area as a learning resource. Alongside these activities, teachers ensure that children benefit from well-focused teaching of key skills, for example by fostering their reading, writing and mathematical development. For instance, most of the children were able to write the story of the gingerbread man which they had been listening to. They were

really involved and engaged with the task, with some producing lengthy stories. Others were ordering the story using pictures and were able to recount the story orally showing interest and understanding.

- Just occasionally, when children are engaged with activities they have chosen themselves, staff are a little slow to notice that learning sometimes slows. When this happens, children require more guidance so that they can make the most of these learning opportunities.
- Relationships between staff and children are highly supportive and children develop well as confident learners. Children quickly get used to the rules and they behave well. Staff have created a safe environment and unsurprisingly, children enjoy coming to school. Constructive relationships are also built with parents, and induction procedures are good.

## 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>	109947
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	462363

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	175
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marcus Dimbleby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rhodri Bowen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 June 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9713362
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