

Inspection of a good school: Aldrington CofE Primary School

Eridge Road, Hove, East Sussex, BN3 7QD

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 November 2021

Outcome

Aldrington CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and feel safe at school. They enjoy their lessons and using the well-equipped playground spaces. They are enthusiastic about the wide range of opportunities available to them outside the curriculum through clubs and participation in events, such as cross country. Pupils know that if they have any problems or concerns, they can go to a member of staff who they say will, 'get to the bottom of things'.

Pupils are well behaved. They are motivated by the rewards systems, such as the postcards they earn for being, 'ready, respectful and safe'. They are proud if they are highlighted in assembly and understand that this may be in recognition of being kind or encouraging others. There is a strong support network in place for those pupils who need additional help to manage their behaviour. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils respond positively to the high expectations of behaviour and learning set by leaders. They relish challenges in their work and the many opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school through, for example, eco council or recycling projects. The school is a hive of activity. Pupils achieve well. There is something for everyone to do and enjoy.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

As the school has grown to have two classes in each year so the teaching staff has expanded. The leadership structure has developed since the previous inspection to reflect this. Leaders have carefully considered the curriculum, which is well designed to help pupils build knowledge across a broad range of subjects.

Due to staff changes, some subject leaders are new to their roles. They have focused on developing the sequence of what pupils are taught and refining subject plans. Teachers have benefitted from support from leaders and training to teach the planned curriculum well. Assessment tasks have been designed to identify what pupils know and can do. This

is helping staff and leaders to evaluate the impact of their teaching. These assessments have not been carried out yet this year in some subjects, as units of work are still being taught.

Pupils get off to a good start with learning to read. The teaching of phonics is clear and consistent. In Reception, children quickly get to know letters, the sounds that they make and how to blend them together to make words. This approach continues systematically throughout pupils' first years in school, so that they become confident and capable readers. Those pupils who struggle or start to fall behind benefit from additional support from well-trained adults. They learn to read books that are well matched to their phonic ability. This builds their confidence and helps them to catch up quickly.

As pupils move up through the school, reading is taught both in English lessons and through additional 'book talk' sessions. In English, teaching is appropriately challenging, clearly structured and effective. This supports pupils well in developing reading fluency and enjoying a wide range of texts. Occasionally, some 'book talk' sessions are not as well organised and are, therefore, less effective at helping pupils develop their reading skills.

Pupils enjoy mathematics. Regular assessment helps ensure that teaching is carefully matched to what pupils can do, so that they build their confidence and number skills. Pupils are excited by the regular opportunities to apply their skills to solve problems and puzzles. They explained that they like mathematics because they 'get to choose the way to solve things'.

The school is an inclusive community. Across the curriculum the needs of pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are carefully considered. Pupils with SEND are given the support they need to access the curriculum and experience success. Pupils who might find some learning in mathematics difficult or those with SEND benefit from teaching support in smaller groups or by using additional resources.

Knowledge is carefully built across the wider curriculum. For example, in design and technology, pupils learning about the design of pop-up books could remember and apply the earlier knowledge they had learned. Expectations are high in design technology. Children in Reception were exploring a range of rockets before designing and making their own spaceship. They excitedly discussed how the shape of the rocket affected how fast it might travel and began to consider how streamlining helped rockets to 'move really fast'.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to instructions and engage well with their teachers and each other. Working well together is valued by everyone. For example, this is emphasized for pupils by projects, such as the patchwork containing squares they made individually during lockdown which were subsequently joined together. There is a strong sense of community. Wider development is carefully considered. For example, pupils' spirituality is developed well. This can be seen in the prayer area which contains a range of insightful prayers penned by pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff and governors are well trained to identify and support pupils at risk. The procedures in place for reporting concerns are well understood by all staff. Records are routinely reviewed by leaders to spot any patterns or emerging needs. Where needs are identified support is timely and, where appropriate, guided by additional agency involvement. Recruitment processes show due regard to safeguarding.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including how to manage online risks. For example, pupils are taught what online bullying and harassment is and can clearly describe how to stay safe. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern about their safety and they have confidence in staff to help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some 'book talk' reading sessions are not well organised and are not suitably ambitious for all pupils. This means that pupils do not always make as much progress as they could in these sessions. Leaders should monitor these sessions to ensure that across the school 'book talk' demonstrates suitable ambition for pupils and contributes well to developing their reading fluency, confidence and enjoyment.
- Not all subject leaders have had the opportunity to monitor the impact of their subject plans. As these plans continue to be implemented, subject leads should routinely monitor how well they are helping pupils to build their subject knowledge.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2011.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114555
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10200400
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	430
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Susannah Kendrick
Headteacher	Verity Coates
Website	http://www.aldrington.org
Date of previous inspection	23 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The number of pupils attending the school has increased. This means that there are now two classes in each year group.
- The headteacher was appointed in November 2017 and the senior leadership team was restructured to reflect the growth of the school. This includes the appointment of a deputy headteacher and phase leaders. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) role has recently been extended to be a full-time position.
- The school is a Church of England voluntary aided school. The last statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in June 2017.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, the inspector met regularly with the headteacher and the leadership team. Meetings were also held with other school leaders, including the SENCo, early years leader and the safeguarding lead. The inspector met with governors, including the chair. The inspector also had telephone conversations with representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector conducted deep dives into reading, mathematics and design technology. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also listened to some pupils reading.
- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspector spoke to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The inspector reviewed responses to the parent Ofsted questionnaires.
- Groups of staff met with the inspector to share their views about the school, including on workload and well-being. The inspector completed a tour of the school with pupils and spoke to them on the playground and in the dining hall.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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