

Inspection of Alconbury C of E Primary School

School Lane, Alconbury, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 4EQ

Inspection dates:	26 and 27 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and staff feel part of the 'Alconbury family'. Pupils are welcoming, friendly and polite. The school has high expectations for pupils in all areas of their learning, starting in the early years. Pupils enjoy being at school and make positive progress.

Pupils know that when they share their feelings or any worries they might have, staff respond appropriately. This helps them feel safe at school. Pupils understand the school's expectations of their behaviour and know these are applied fairly. They behave well and engage positively with their learning. As a result, the atmosphere in school is calm and purposeful. Playtimes include many activities that develop pupils' social skills. Pupils get along well together and enjoy being active.

The school provides pupils with many valuable experiences, including clubs, trips and visits. An impressive range of clubs, such as chess, cake decorating and karate, helps develop pupils' interests and talents. Pupils understand the importance of growing up in a world where diversity is celebrated.

Pupils have opportunities to contribute to the life of the school through roles such as school councillors, eco-councillors, or worship leaders. They are proud to take part in these roles and can describe how they are improving the school.

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

The school has created a strong, shared vision for excellence in both pupils' care and their academic achievement. The curriculum has breadth and ambition for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has carefully considered what they want pupils to learn and when. As pupils move through the school, they build knowledge and skills well. For example, in history, they learn about their own village before studying its links to Oliver Cromwell in later years. Some recent improvements to the curriculum need time to embed. On occasions, some teachers do not use activities or resources that support pupils' learning effectively, or take pupils' needs and starting points into account sufficiently. When this is the case, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

The school ensures pupils with SEND achieve well. Staff quickly identify pupils' needs and provide early, targeted support. The school carefully monitors the effectiveness of these strategies. Regular reviews and adjustments ensure that pupils with SEND achieve well. Most support is tailored well, enabling pupils to achieve success. Some staff would benefit from further training to help them deliver the curriculum to pupils with SEND.

Pupils begin learning to read as soon as they join in early years. Reading is taught well, with new sounds introduced in a logical order. Teachers regularly check children's understanding. Staff provide timely additional support for pupils who need it. This helps them to keep up. The books pupils read match the sounds they are learning, which helps their confidence and fluency. Reading sits at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils

read regularly at home and school. They enjoy discussing their favourite authors or trying something new. This broadens their knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning from the early years onwards. Children settle quickly and follow the classroom routines. Staff get to know children well and build strong relationships with them. Resources encourage children to become independent learners.

The school's approach to behaviour is grounded in its values of being ready, respectful and safe. There is tailored support for individual pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult. Actions taken by the school have worked well to improve and maintain strong attendance rates.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils benefit from a carefully chosen menu of trips, visits and visitors linked closely to curriculum plans. These improve pupils' understanding of their local area and the wider world. Guest speakers highlight a wide range of different careers to inspire pupils. Older pupils know what it means to be a role model to the younger pupils. They value their leadership roles and the contributions they make to the school. Pupils are successfully prepared for their next steps at secondary school.

Governors know the community and the school very well. They focus strongly on the quality of education the school provides. Governors work in close collaboration with the school to ensure continuous improvement. They provide supportive professional challenge to the school. The school carefully considers how its decisions impact on staff's workload. Staff value this and feel listened to, cared for and appreciated. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly happy with the school. They appreciate the support their children receive and value the school's efforts to help their children succeed. Parents know their children are eager to arrive at school and enthusiastic about their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes the tasks given to pupils do not align closely enough with the intended curriculum. Sometimes the activities and resources are not appropriately adapted to meet the different starting points or needs of some pupils. This means that pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that the curriculum is implemented in a way that enables pupils to meet its ambitious aims.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	110809
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10345121
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Damion Lewis
Headteachers	Jane Watts & Hannah Mulcrone
Website	www.alconburyprimaryschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is led by two co-headteachers.
- The school is a Church of England school and is part of the Diocese of Ely. The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, for schools with a religious character, on 22 April 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within five school years of that date.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school manages its own before- and after-school childcare provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design and technology, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors heard pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 read to a member of staff.
- To gather the views of pupils, inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, including in lessons and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers and considered their responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- To gather the views of staff, inspectors spoke to several staff and took account of their responses to the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Simon Eardley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Karen Stanton

Ofsted Inspector

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