

Aldrington CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114555
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	289965
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Liz Kounnou

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Jeffrey
Headteacher	Michael Jee
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002
School address	Eridge Road Hove BN3 7QD
Telephone number	01273 542656
Fax number	01273 542656

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average sized school is situated in a mixed economic area typical of England. There are slightly more pupils from various minority ethnic backgrounds than average; none are learning to speak English as an additional language. Fewer pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is typical. When children start school in the Reception class their attainment varies but is broadly as expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that places a very high priority on developing pupils' personal development and well-being, which are excellent. Pupils' musical, sporting and artistic achievements are outstanding and contribute extremely well to their remarkable enjoyment of school. The walls and corridors are covered with stunning examples of pupils' artwork. Some pupils are sufficiently talented to play in the prestigious Brighton and Hove Youth Orchestra, and many more are developing good skills in playing musical instruments or singing. Pupils achieve well, reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. In the Foundation Stage the quality of education is good, children are challenged and have a lot of fun. One parent commented, 'This has been a very positive start to my child's school life.'

Good teaching and learning lie at the heart of the school's success. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and this leads them to develop good personal skills. They behave well all around the school. In lessons they are especially keen on the class themes that make the outstanding curriculum extremely enjoyable. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their initiative and make decisions about their work. Nonetheless, they are asked for their opinions regularly. The school council are particularly proud of the changes they have made, such as the introduction of a healthy tuck shop in Key Stage 2. Pupils' tremendous sporting achievements play a considerable part in their good healthy lifestyles. They are very competitive and win many local tournaments so that the school entrance is full of sports cups.

Teachers' very good relationships with pupils contribute to the good care, guidance and support that pupils receive. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported particularly well. Again this is something that parents remark on. 'The school has risen to the challenge and worked wonders with my son,' wrote one. All through the school pupils are set challenging targets for learning and these are shared with both pupils and parents. At the moment pupils are not fully involved in judging their own progress in their learning. This is a missed opportunity for them to take more responsibility for their own work and make even better progress. This applies particularly to the most able pupils, even though an above average proportion of pupils exceed the standards expected for their age. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly taking a lot of time and care; however, the comments written in pupils' books do not usually help them understand why their work was good and how it could be even better.

Leadership and management are good because governors and school leaders keep a close check on how well pupils are doing each term in English and mathematics. The systems for checking how well the school is doing are good and involve a range of different activities and people. Pupils' sustained good achievement over a number of years is clear evidence of the school's good capacity to bring about even further improvement in future. One Year 6 parent summed up saying, 'I hope I have conveyed how delighted I am with the education my daughter has received at this school.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' involvement in assessing their own work and progress, and provide more opportunities for them to use their initiative in lessons.
- Ensure that teachers' marking helps pupils know how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well all through the school. Since the last inspection, standards have been above average in most years at the end of Key Stage 1 and every year at the end of Key Stage 2. Children do much better in the Foundation Stage now, making good progress in all areas of learning. Pupils are challenged to extend their skills in lessons across the curriculum so that the most able do well. More than a third of pupils in Year 6 reached the higher levels in English and mathematics last year, and more have done so this year. Science standards are exceptionally high. Pupils make especially good progress in English, developing key literacy skills through the class themes as well as in English lessons. In Key Stage 2, this good progress is maintained from year to year. In Key Stage 1, pupils have done very well in reading this year with about a third attaining Level 3 in the recent tests. Pupils' progress in mathematics is good, and the high standards reached by pupils in Year 2 are maintained throughout the school. The small group of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided for very well, often with one-to-one support, and as a result they make good progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Cultural development is good, although pupils could learn a bit more about the way that the diverse cultures of Great Britain live together. Musicians, artists and young sportsmen and women flourish in this school. Pupils' energetic lifestyles contribute significantly to their health and well-being. Pupils are happy, confident and polite and enjoy coming to school a great deal. Their attendance is above the national average. They say that the learning in lessons is the best thing about the school and clearly have fun. Pupils support one another very well. They feel safe because the majority are careful and orderly all around the building, both in and out of lessons. An example of their high level of moral development was shown by their disapproval and consequent reporting of racist remarks made by some pupils. Pupils thrive on the many community sports activities and other events. These contribute extremely effectively to their social development and the excellent contributions they make to the community. A papier-mâché merry-go-round horse from pupils' participation in the Brighton Festival, and a large model tank prepared for the end of term concert adorn the school and add to the sense of fun and community spirit. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills are good, but they could have more opportunities to organise themselves and take responsibility for their own work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning lie behind pupils' success. Very good relationships between staff and pupils help pupils of all abilities to develop the confidence to make contributions in lessons. Pupils are often asked for their opinions and know that these will be valued. They behave well in all lessons because teachers have high expectations of them. In the Reception class children really enjoy their lessons. One child asked, 'Have you seen all the things we can do outside?'

Challenging work is provided for the most able in all classes and this helps them reach high standards. Nonetheless, there are not many opportunities for pupils to use their initiative. They do not often organise and assess their own work, and this is something the school is working to improve. The careful marking makes a very good contribution to teachers' assessment of pupils' work, but is less effective in helping pupils to improve their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and helps pupils to make consistently good progress and have a lot of fun. The headteacher and governors have ensured that the building and grounds provide a high quality environment for learning and play, often responding to pupils' suggestions. Staff have worked hard to design a curriculum that helps pupils throughout the school reach the next steps for learning. This work ensures that pupils enthusiastically build on their skills as they move from class to class. Much of the work revolves around class themes that capture pupils' interest and develop their skills well. The Year 3 classroom has been transformed into a tropical rainforest at the moment and pupils' writing about the forest canopy is of a very good standard. Extra activities are the school's shining glory. Authors, storytellers and dancers promote yet more interest in learning. The music clubs foster very high standards. Parents really enjoy the culminating show-stopper concert, held outside in a specially designed area at the end of each year. Pupils are busily rehearsing the Sound of Music in after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' safety and well-being have a very high priority so that care, guidance and support for learning are good. There are robust procedures to make certain that all the necessary checks to ensure pupils' safety are in place. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are cared for very well, so that they are confident and learn at a good rate. The rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress ensure that all staff know how well pupils are doing. Pupils' learning targets are carefully attached to their workbooks so that they can readily see what they need to improve in their work. Currently, pupils have too little involvement in assessing how well they have done in each lesson, or the progress they are making towards their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The happy atmosphere in the school stems from the good teamwork that is evident. Leadership and management are good, and all the parents who contributed to the inspection share this view. Parents are very supportive. They particularly appreciate that the headteacher and staff are approachable and help them to resolve any issues quickly. They value the school's ethos and are delighted with many of the activities provided. School self-evaluation is accurate. Senior staff and governors know what is working well and what could be even better because they make a lot of checks to see how things are going. They are ambitious. The headteacher has very high expectations and drives forward school improvement. All the staff and governors are determined that the school should improve even further. A lack of clarity in assessing the impact of new initiatives on improving pupils' progress is holding back school development a little.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aldrington CofE Primary School, Hove BN3 7QD

Thank you all for making me so welcome and helping me when I visited your school. It is a good school and you all make good progress in your work. Some of you reach very high standards for your age, particularly in science. All the staff care for you well. The teaching is good and you have fun. The headteacher, governors and all the staff work well together to provide you with excellent opportunities to do your best.

Here are the things that I think are best about your school:

- You especially enjoy the class themes and these help you to learn how to read and write really well.
- Your artwork all around the school is fantastic.
- Most of you play musical instruments or sing very well.
- Your sports teams are very successful and win plenty of local tournaments.
- You behave well in your lessons and are often enthusiastic about your work.
- The school council help to make a lot of decisions about the school.
- You have many things to play with outside, and calm places if you choose to sit quietly at breaktimes.

I have asked the school to encourage you to be more involved in checking your own work to see how well you have done, and to give you more opportunities to make decisions about your work. You could do this in all your lessons, and you could also check how well you are doing towards your learning targets. I think your school would be even better if you did this really well. I have asked the teachers to help by making clear in their marking how you could improve your work even more.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you.

Yours faithfully Liz Kounnou Lead inspector