

# The Alderton Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114864
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX
<b>Inspection number</b>	290063
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Falconer HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	164
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs C Wort
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S A Dalby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 April 2002
<b>School address</b>	Alderton Hall Lane Loughton Essex IG10 3HE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 508 7168
<b>Fax number</b>	0208 502 5794

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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The Alderton Infant school is average in size and situated in Loughton. It has spacious grounds and outdoor play areas and shares the same site with the junior school. The pupils live in a mixture of privately owned, council and housing association properties. The range of abilities of the children entering the school is wide with attainment often low and for many very low compared to national expectations. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above the national average as is the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This school is a good school. It has some outstanding features. It works efficiently and conscientiously to provide a good quality of education for pupils and has made good progress since the last inspection. Pupils make good and often very good progress from low and often very low starting points. The leadership and management of the school are good and the vision and strategic direction the headteacher gives to the school are outstanding. Her strategies and actions are ably supported by a good senior management team, including an experienced and perceptive deputy headteacher. All members of the teaching staff have developing curriculum responsibilities that are carried out well. Governors are astute, well-informed and make a good contribution to the leadership and management. Some governors are also governors to the junior school and this contributes positively to transition arrangements.

The levels of achievement this year show that pupils are enjoying making good progress in their learning and they achieve challenging targets in relation to their abilities and their starting points. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good and standards are close to those expected nationally by the time the children enter Year 1. Standards throughout the school are similar to the national average overall but the school recognises that there is additional work remaining to be done to push the potential high achievers more.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and pupils' personal development and well-being are good. There are some outstanding features. These factors impact strongly on the current levels of good and often very good progress the pupils are now making.

The quality of teaching and learning is good because of the knowledge and expertise that staff possess. Pupils' enjoyment of their lessons and other activities is outstanding and shows that they really do want to learn. Teaching assistants prove to be a great investment for the school. They work hard and provide good opportunities for pupils to work in smaller group arrangements.

The curriculum is good and carefully planned to provide a good range of practical activities to meet the range of pupils' needs. The school's assessment of its strengths and areas to develop is accurate. The school has recognised the need to focus on raising attainment levels and ensuring that it is more consistent across the different year groups, in reading, writing and mathematics. There are well established links between the different subjects that encourage pupils to apply these literacy and numeracy skills throughout the curriculum. The school shows a good capacity to make further improvements and provides good value for money. Many parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and the vast majority of parents strongly agreed that this is a good school. Many of them offered additional, very positive information such as, 'The care and support given by the staff at the school is in my opinion exceptional.' Another wrote, 'I could not find fault with the education at the Alderton.'

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that progress in reading, writing and mathematics is more consistent through the school.
- Improve the support offered to the most able pupils to ensure they achieve all they are capable of.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and often very good for the majority of pupils as they move through the school. Many come into the Foundation Stage with low and often very low starting points. They begin with levels of personal and social education, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development well below those found nationally. The Reception class promotes and develops pupils' personal and social awareness skills very well. It also does a good job in moving pupils forward with their skills in communication. Their language and literacy and mathematical development are supported very well. The vast majority of pupils continue to make good progress in Year 1 and Year 2 because of the good quality of teaching and learning. Standards at the end of Year 2 are similar to the national average. The 2005 results were above the national average but last year's results were below in reading and writing and broadly average in mathematics. This was due to the nature of that group with a higher percentage of pupils having learning difficulties. There was also a higher than usual number of pupils moving in and out of the school throughout the year.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. There are some outstanding features. Every effort is made to develop pupils' awareness of the importance of learning and working hard in a very happy, safe and secure environment. Improved attendance this year reflects pupils' enjoyment for school, which is outstanding. The level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with very strong emphases on the social and moral development. Pupils are kind to each other and help each other out. They are considerate and behaviour is outstanding in classrooms and around the school. They feel safe and secure and make good progress in developing their own personal qualities and their understanding of the needs of others. They are good at learning about safe practices and healthy lifestyles. Pupils make a good contribution to their community and this helps them to develop positive attitudes for their future lives. The school council were in no doubt and added, 'School is fun and safe and all the children are sensible.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Very good relationships between adults and children and good teacher expertise are at the heart of the good teaching and learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and other activities and show they are keen to learn. Teachers work well together and share good ideas as they continue to develop and to refine approaches to teaching and learning. They use questioning well to assess progress in learning and give constructive and encouraging guidance to help pupils improve. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT), especially the interactive whiteboards, to stimulate interest. Good use is made of teaching assistants' high levels of expertise. They make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, leading small groups effectively and ensuring all pupils are fully supported in lessons. The excellent displays in classrooms and corridors are purposeful and extend pupils' learning. Teachers are now focused on developing even more challenging targets for all pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and planned carefully to provide a good range of practical activities for all pupils' needs and abilities. All curriculum requirements are met with a strong emphasis on the basic skills of English and mathematics. Well established links exist between the different subjects are a particular strength, encouraging pupils to apply literacy and numeracy skills throughout the curriculum, often through ICT. Regular themed events such as the 'science week' and the 'big arts week' capture pupils' interest and add to the richness of the curriculum. It is further enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors. These have a positive impact on learning. Good provision is made for needs of pupils with learning difficulties and those who are in the early stages of learning English.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's care, guidance and support are outstanding and provide a warm and friendly environment where pupils are happy and feel secure. This makes an important contribution to their all-round development. They are confident that they are well looked after and know there is always an adult to talk to. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are very thorough. Teachers set individual targets in English and mathematics and track pupils' progress carefully to help them move forward in their learning. Most pupils understand their targets and older pupils in particular are clear about how to achieve them. Pupils with learning difficulties have clear educational plans that provide them with good support as well as helpful advice for teaching assistants and parents. Intervention strategies for the less able are firmly in place. The school works very effectively with other agencies to make sure that wherever necessary these pupils and their families get the help they need. Parents are very appreciative of this.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The vision and strategic direction of the headteacher are excellent. Her strategies and actions are well supported by a good senior management team, including an experienced and perceptive deputy headteacher. All members of the teaching staff have curriculum responsibilities that are carried out well and are currently being developed further. The school makes outstanding use of external agencies including the education welfare officer, educational psychologists and speech therapists. There are strong links to the many feeder nurseries, to the junior school, a local special school and the local college. This school is moving forward with enthusiasm and vigour and keeps up to date on all aspects of its work through the good links with the learning community and university. The governing body works hard and plays an astute role in the school's development.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
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

14 March 2007

Dear Children

The Alderton Infant School, Alderton, Hall Lane, Loughton, Essex. IG10 3HE

I am writing to you to say a big thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We came to see how well you were doing with your lessons and we were really impressed. This was because you showed how much you enjoyed your learning as well how much progress you were making in your lessons. When I asked a group of you about your work and whether it was easy, the answer was, 'no,' and you all thought the work was just about right. That's what we thought.

We were impressed with your attitudes to school, to each other and to the adults who teach you and look after you. All of you feel that you are safe and secure in school with adults that can help you with any little problems. Lots of people help you to learn including the teaching assistants who sometimes take you in small groups.

I saw a really good session on sounds, sounding out letters and words. The adult kept saying, 'my turn, your turn' and you were really quick to answer. Your progress was very good. I kept waiting for my turn. The design and technology session where Year 2 children were designing a park was great. Lots of different ideas of what you would like to see and do in a park of your own designs and there were some brilliant designs to choose from. We also noted how you were developing your skills with the computers in school and with the interactive white boards and how much enjoyment you got from these, as well as them helping you to learn more.

Just to make sure that you all do as well as you possibly can in the future, we have asked your teachers to make sure that your work is always at the right level for all of you and pushes you that bit further all the time. For those of you who work really quickly we have asked your teachers to make sure that you are given work that will stretch you that little bit more and especially in reading, writing and mathematics.

Once again thank you very much for all your help.

George Falconer

Her Majesty's Inspector