

# Alresford Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114734
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311684
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary Summers

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	133
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Graham Aylott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Robert Collins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Ford Lane Alresford Colchester Essex CO7 8AU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 822731
<b>Fax number</b>	01206 827651

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small village school serves pupils from a wide catchment area. The vast majority of pupils are from White British families. There are hardly any who speak English as an additional language. The proportion identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has risen in recent years and is now similar to that found in most schools. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals has also increased and is now slightly above average. There are considerably more boys than girls in Key Stage 2. An inspection in November 2001 judged the school to require special measures. It was removed from this category in December 2003. The present head joined the school in September 2002. The school has suffered a significant turnover of staff and pupils in recent years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is emerging from an unsettled period where teacher turnover and pupil mobility have been high. It offers satisfactory value for money. Achievement is satisfactory, although boys do not do as well as girls. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Most pupils enjoy school but a few say they find lessons dull. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, including their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Many display positive attitudes to their learning and behave well in class and around the school. A few boys need adult support during lessons to ensure they maintain their concentration.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Classrooms are bright and stimulating and often contain useful displays to help pupils carry out their work successfully. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pace of learning varies from class to class because of differences in the quality of teaching. Teaching strategies are sometimes too narrow and do not engage pupils' attention well enough. The satisfactory curriculum is broad and balanced and the school is currently reviewing ways of making it more relevant and interesting for pupils. The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. Teachers set targets for pupils' achievements but sometimes these are not challenging enough. Senior staff do not check progress towards targets on a regular enough basis to allow action to be taken to address any underachievement.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily and keep safe. They eat a balanced diet and take regular exercise. Pupils and parents really appreciate the school's efforts to improve school meals. As one pupil remarked, 'Even the broccoli is good!' Pupils know what to do to keep safe in and out of school. They make a useful contribution to the school community and wider area, as school and class councillors and by participating in village events. They leave school with the expected basic skills and are ready for their move to secondary school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Recent improvements to the premises have made the school bright and cheerful and have provided better facilities to support pupils' learning in, for example, information and communication technology. The school has implemented a range of initiatives to improve pupils' achievement but these are not all monitored well enough to evaluate their effectiveness. This lack of rigour in monitoring has also contributed to the variation in the quality of teaching. The headteacher has managed the school calmly and competently during a period of turbulence and is supported well by the governors. The school's situation is now more stable and the capacity for future improvement is satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and most reach the levels expected by the time they transfer to Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory and engages children's interest. The curriculum provides a sound range of opportunities for children to develop in all areas of their learning. Children settle into school quickly because of satisfactory induction procedures and the fact that adults welcome them warmly showing good levels of care. Children participate in activities enthusiastically, for example, when seen taking great delight in identifying different parts of their bodies with sticky labels. They readily accept responsibilities offered. They take

regular physical exercise during the 'Take 10' programme, to help them maintain a healthy lifestyle. Parents are involved well during the induction programme so they understand what to expect when their children start school and how to support learning at home. A welcome pack sent out at the beginning of the year encourages parents to provide information that teachers can use to plan appropriate activities to help different children move on in their learning. The new teacher for this age group has already made a good start in acting on the areas the headteacher has identified for further improvements to the provision.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve boys' achievement by extending the range of teaching strategies used to motivate and involve them in their learning.
- Improve monitoring procedures to ensure consistency in teaching and to check the effectiveness of new initiatives.
- Set more challenging targets for pupils and monitor their progress towards these regularly, taking swift action to address any underachievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards at the end of Year 2 have varied considerably in recent years. This has been due in part to the differences in pupils' abilities but also because of the high number of staff changes that affected the continuity of pupils' learning. Standards for this age group are broadly average and achievement satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, standards are also broadly average. Standards have been affected in recent years by the significant number of pupils that joined the school in Years 5 and 6, many of whom had significant learning difficulties. The pace of progress in Years 3 to 6 is uneven because of variations in the quality of teaching and some staff absences and changes. Boys' achievement is weak across the school, especially in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils have positive attitudes and the majority enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average. Pupils are friendly and polite. They express their opinions confidently but are not always so good at listening to the views of others. Behaviour is satisfactory, but occasionally pupils lack the self-discipline needed to behave well during lessons without adult support. Pupils keenly take on responsibilities, for example as school councillors and running the healthy food tuck shop. They show care for others through raising funds for charities. Pupils show good awareness of healthy lifestyles and a high proportion take part in the extra-curricular sports offered by the school. They know how to keep safe in and out of school. The standards they achieve in basic skills give them a satisfactory grounding for the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and this promotes a pleasant learning atmosphere around the school. Classrooms are bright and well organised and this contributes to pupils' readiness to learn. Teachers use their assistants well to support pupils who need extra help and help them remain focused on the task in hand. They are beginning to use new technology to make lessons more visually stimulating. Lesson plans are satisfactory although not all teachers use day-to-day assessments effectively to match work to pupils' individual needs. The slow pace of lessons in some classes and the narrow range of teaching strategies used often hinder pupils' learning. Boys especially, lose interest because they are not involved enough at a practical level.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

As well as the required subjects that are offered, pupils enjoy the visits organised and visitors to the school that add interest and relevance to their learning. They enjoy 'hands on' activities rather than those where they have to sit and listen for long periods. Their views echo those of some parents who note that their children do not always enjoy school. The school is currently reviewing its curriculum to increase the amount of practical work and to plan more opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and computer skills through other subjects. Pupils enjoy a good range of clubs that help them develop their social awareness as well as refine and develop specific skills. Intervention strategies provide satisfactory support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school cares well for its pupils and they feel safe. Pupils say that behaviour has improved recently, because of the new personal, social and health education programme. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The school promotes healthy lifestyles well. It is rightly proud of its 'family service' school meals which ensure a very pleasant sociable atmosphere. Academic support and guidance are not as strong as the pastoral care in some respects. Most pupils have learning targets but these are not always sufficiently challenging and are not reviewed regularly enough to check progress and make additional provision if necessary.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school operates calmly on a day-to-day basis. Recent improvements to premises have resulted in better accommodation and resources. This has raised staff and pupils' motivation and commitment to improvement. There are good systems in place to analyse assessment information and identify relevant areas for improvement. Actions are planned to improve provision as a result but their impact is not evaluated rigorously enough to check how well initiatives are working. Consequently, teaching and learning are inconsistent

across the school and result in variations in pupils' achievement. Targets set for pupils are realistic but represent only moderate challenge. Governance is good in most respects. Governors support the school well and hold it to account for its performance. They have a good monitoring programme which provides them with relevant information to inform their budget decisions.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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

13 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alresford Primary School, Alresford, Colchester, Essex CO7 8AU

Thank you all so much for your very warm welcome and for sharing with us your views about the school. We really enjoyed our visit, watching you learning, looking at your work and chatting with you in the playground. We reached the conclusion that yours is a satisfactory school with some strong points and some areas which could be better. Here are some of the things we thought were especially good.

- You attend regularly and are seldom late for school.
- You understand the importance of eating a sensible diet and taking plenty of exercise.
- Girls do especially well, reaching high standards in English, mathematics and science in the national tests.
- The governors do a good job in helping your headteacher to run the school.
- The adults in charge keep you safe and care for you well.

A few things need improvement so that boys particularly reach higher standards in their work.

- Teachers need to make lessons more interesting by making sure you are more involved and have plenty of opportunities for practical work.
- The people in charge should check carefully how all the different initiatives they have introduced are helping you to make better progress and reach higher standards in your work.
- Your learning targets should be more challenging and adults need to check your progress towards them more regularly.

Thank you once again for your help. We know that you will continue to work hard and support your teachers and other adults so they can help you do your very best at school.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers

Lead Inspector