

Albourne CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126014
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315395
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Cuttress
Headteacher	Gail McNay
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	The Street Albourne Hassocks BN6 9DH
Telephone number	01273 832003
Fax number	01273 835569

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Albourne is a smaller than average primary school situated in a rural village setting. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. A higher proportion of pupils than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is part of a network of local village schools which have links with the local Specialist Sports College. It also collaborates as a member of the area Inclusion Project.

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 where the headteacher has created a very caring ethos, enabling pupils to become confident, happy learners. Most parents express positive views of the school and say that, 'the school provides their children with special care and attention'.

Pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and behave well. There are good procedures for their welfare, health and safety which help pupils feel safe and confident that staff will deal well with any difficulties they experience.

Attainment on entry is broadly average. Pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above the national average. Children in the Foundation Stage are well cared for, and generally settle well into school routines. Most children make at least satisfactory progress across the areas of learning so that most are working within the goals expected of them on entry to Year 1. However, not all children, particularly the more able, are helped to make as much progress as they could.

On leaving the Foundation Stage, pupils make above average progress through to the end of Year 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, standards are significantly above the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets set out in their individual plans. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, which is helped by the very good relationships with them.

Teaching is good, with particular strengths in English in Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, which helps to make learning purposeful and fun. However, there are a few occasions when teachers do not always challenge the highest attaining pupils well enough, especially in mathematics.

Curriculum planning is good and provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to make good progress in their academic and personal development. Enrichment is a strength of the school, providing pupils with a wealth of curricular activities such as French, music and physical education (PE) and a developing range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their involvement in these activities.

The school has established good systems which are developing pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve their work and make the progress expected of them. The monitoring of pupils' progress and the use of assessment information to raise achievement are developing well and have already impacted significantly on raising standards across the whole school, and particularly in Key Stage 2. However, marking and the setting of clear targets does not form a consistent pattern across the whole school.

The headteacher and her staff provide strong leadership ensuring pupils' good personal development. Very good leadership ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The school is aware of the need to continue to develop the roles and responsibilities of key coordinators in order to impact further on school improvement. Senior staff have a strong commitment to improvement, with clear action plans for continuing to improve provision and standards in key subjects, particularly mathematics and for higher attaining pupils. The strong team ethos amongst the staff is supported well by governors, ensuring that the school has good capacity to improve still further.

Since the last inspection, standards in mathematics, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), the challenge and support for high attainers, and the use of

assessment information to inform teaching and learning have all improved. The provision of a larger school hall to enhance the provision for PE remains outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children joining the Foundation Stage have the expected skills and understanding for their age. Children are well cared for, and this enables most to settle well into school routines. Because of the satisfactory teaching and curriculum, most children only make satisfactory progress across the areas of learning and are working within the goals expected of them on entry to Year 1. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide children with good support. However, the balance between adult-initiated and child-initiated activities does not ensure that all children are actively engaged in purposeful activities and making the progress expected of them. The majority of children work and play well together, enjoying their learning. However, the wide-ranging pastoral and academic needs of children require a constant high level of support. Where low-level disruption by a small number of individual children interrupts learning, these incidents are swiftly and positively dealt with by staff. The school continues to develop the use of the well resourced outside learning areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the balance and quality of individual and group work in the Foundation Stage so that all learners make the progress expected of them.
- Improve the setting and monitoring of individual targets particularly in mathematics and for high attaining pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although there has been considerable variation in attainment since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 1, current standards are now above the national average in Year 2 and significantly above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress overall from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, with exceptional progress made particularly by high attainers in English by the end of Year 6. This is evident from the good achievement seen in lessons and pupils' work. Standards in Year 2 have been broadly average and, despite a dip in results in 2005, are now showing significant improvements, particularly in reading and mathematics, where standards are above the national average. The good progress that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make towards the targets in their individual education plans is the result of well-planned support and a curriculum tailored to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy school, confirming the view held by inspectors and most parents. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. Good relationships are a feature of the school, with pupils willing to help each other. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that staff will deal well with any difficulties they experience. Pupils are aware of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and of the need to take regular exercise. Younger pupils say they enjoy the fruit and vegetable snacks available during morning playtime and all pupils are permitted to drink water at regular intervals throughout the school day. Many pupils take advantage of the range of extra-curricular clubs offered by the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They are polite and well behaved in and around the school. The school's positive ethos is reflected in the many personal development initiatives, for example, 'Citizen of the Week', achievement assemblies and school awards for hard work and good behaviour. Pupils contribute to the school and wider community through participation in the school's Entrepreneurs' Project, Eco-Council, or as a member of the school council. Members of the council take their responsibilities very seriously and are actively involved in school life through the development of the school's recycling and anti-bullying schemes. Pupils enjoy an interesting range of cultural development opportunities through enrichment weeks, topics which focus on life in other countries, such as India, and fund-raising links with a Zambian children's home. Pupils' good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT prepare them well for the next stage of their education, and good social skills, reflected in their mature attitudes and behaviour, ensure a smooth transfer to local secondary schools. Whilst pupils' personal development and well-being are good, attendance remains only satisfactory due to the higher than average number of family holidays taken in term-time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of their learning stems from the good relationships they have with staff. Teaching is good, and the content of lessons is well matched to pupils' interests, abilities and needs. Such lessons are well structured and interesting, and teachers show good subject knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn. In the best lessons learning is fun, varied and exciting. The school recognises that a small number of lessons lack sufficient challenge, particularly for some younger and high attaining pupils where activities do not always match pupils' needs and abilities. Most pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work and, as a result, pupils make good progress and achieve high standards by the end of Year 6. Teaching assistants provide pupils with good levels of support, both in and out of the classroom, helping to ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Effective use of the classroom interactive whiteboards and laptops acquired since the last inspection enhances teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is designed to meet pupils' needs well. Programmes of work are planned well. They provide clear information about what children are expected to learn and when. They indicate clearly how work can be modified to ensure that pupils' different needs can be met. Considerable investment in topic-based learning resources to support the cross-curricular links being developed has provided a creative and colourful range of learning opportunities and activities. These links have already helped to raise standards in creative writing, particularly in Key Stage 2. The wide range of activities and opportunities such as music, French, specialist sports coaching, visits and visitors to the school, as well as whole-school enrichment weeks, all enhance a well planned curriculum which contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning. The school makes good use of members of the local community with specialist knowledge. During a topic on mountains, pupils enjoyed the tales retold by a local senior citizen about exploits in his youth climbing Mount Everest. The school works closely with the local authority to ensure enrichment opportunities are developing for more able pupils. The developing range of

extra-curricular activities, which includes sport, ICT, chess and the school choir, are well attended by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The majority of parents and children view Albourne as a caring school. Most parents say their children enjoy school and benefit from strong home-school links. Pastoral care is good and staff pay close attention to pupils' health and safety. Robust procedures help to ensure that pupils are well protected. Pupils with learning disabilities and/or difficulties have excellent support, with pupils benefiting from work programmes that are well matched to their individual needs. This tailored support, provided in class, individually or in small nurture groups, ensures that these pupils make good progress. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development have been strengthened recently by improvements to assessment procedures. These give teachers a clear picture of the progress each pupil makes. In the best practice, teachers keep pupils well informed as to how well they are doing and, as a result, most pupils are beginning to understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, such guidance is not consistently effective across the whole school, and particularly for younger pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is ably led by the headteacher who demonstrates a clarity of vision that has enabled it to continue the good progress it has made since the last inspection. The headteacher has successfully introduced a range of new procedures for monitoring teaching, setting academic targets and assessing pupil progress, which have brought about considerable improvements in the overall quality of education and consequently, raised standards. The headteacher is ably supported by the senior leadership team who have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, middle managers are not as fully involved in the analysis of pupil results and the development of the curriculum. The leadership team have set appropriate school improvement targets to continue to raise standards and provision, particularly for higher attaining pupils, mathematics and those in the Foundation Stage. Staff work together effectively and have a shared commitment to improvement. Governors play an active role in school life, providing excellent support as well as holding the school to account.

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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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Albourne C of E Primary School, Hassocks, BN6 9DH

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited it recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work. We were so impressed with how hard you work to make your school a happy place.

You go to a good school. Standards are above average and most of you make good progress. Your headteacher and staff really care about you and provide many interesting extra activities for you, such as school visits, performances, enrichment weeks, music, French and ICT to help make learning fun. Many of you are working hard at school and the oldest children are making good progress.

You told us you enjoy school and work hard to do your best. You get on well with each other and have good attitudes to both work and play. You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and help others to have a happy time at school. We think the quality of teaching you get is good.

We feel that there are some things that your school could do better. This is because not all of the activities in the Foundation Stage help you to achieve your personal best. We also think that not all of you fully understand what you need to do to improve your work to reach even higher standards. We have asked your school to make some improvements to help you in these areas. These are:

- Make sure that the activities you do in the Foundation Stage help you to make good progress and achieve your personal best.
- Make sure that the setting and monitoring of your targets, particularly in mathematics, help you understand how well you are doing and what to do next to improve.

I know all of you will do all you can to ensure that your school continues to improve and that you achieve the best possible results. I hope that you will continue to work as hard as you can. Your good behaviour and attitudes will help your teachers work on the things they need to do.

Best wishes for the future.

Wendy Forbes Lead inspector



29 February 2008

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Wendy Forbes
Lead inspector