

## Aldbury Church of England Primary School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117382
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326592
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 April 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Drew

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	87
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Barbara Harvey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Jayne Bowles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Stocks Road Aldbury Tring Hertfordshire HP23 5RT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 851240
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 851181

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: clarifying standards on entry to the school and at the end of each key stage; the quality of teaching and learning, tracking and leadership and management; the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They gathered evidence from observations of lessons and around school, discussions with staff, with pupils and with the vice chair of governors, and from the scrutiny of documents and pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. It serves the village of Aldbury and the surrounding rural area. A lower than average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals and attainment on entry to the school is above average. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British. The school holds the Sportsmark and Healthy schools awards. The current headteacher has been in post for ten weeks.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it has some strengths. The new headteacher has quickly and very effectively evaluated the strengths and weaknesses and has initiated plans for improvement.

Pupils enter the school with above average attainment and this position is sustained as they mature and leave in Year 6. Academic achievement is therefore satisfactory and reflects pupils' success in meeting current and past targets set by the school. Long-term achievement is mirrored by the satisfactory rates of progress seen in most lessons. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average. In some previous years, they have been above average, but in general, fewer pupils gain the higher level (Level 3) in English than might expected. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in English and mathematics. In science, they are only average and results show a decline over the last three years. The school's analysis of science results indicates a weakness in pupils' skill at understanding the wording of questions and this is being rectified by greater practice in this area.

Targets are too low. In meeting current and past targets, pupils' achievement has been satisfactory but insufficiently ambitious. For progress to be good or even better, expectations in both key stages need to rise. Good teaching and good tracking are the other prerequisites. The pupils' eagerness to learn and the strong parental support for the school, revealed in questionnaires, provide a positive basis for such improvement. Aspects of the school's work are already good. For instance, staff make the most of the school's small size to get to know pupils' personal needs and their families very well. This advantage has helped pupils' personal development to become a strength of the school: their behaviour is good, they are confident, polite and considerate to others and they enjoy school, as confirmed by their high attendance levels. Pupils show a good awareness of how to stay safe, live healthy lifestyles and contribute to school life and the world beyond. Much of the care, guidance and support work done by the school promotes a clear, consistent approach to encouraging pupils and demonstrating expectations regarding conduct. Statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. While much remains to be done to revise the curriculum, it already has some positive features which promote pupils' well being and enjoyment. Sport and music, for instance, have a marked prominence in provision and pupils speak positively about them. The school is aware of the need to provide many more links between subjects, greater scope for creativity in the curriculum and more formal and extra curricular reference to the main minority ethnic cultures in the United Kingdom.

Pupils' academic progress is largely governed by the quality of teaching and the efficiency with which staff monitor progress and act on the information this provides. Both features are currently satisfactory. Raising them to a good or better quality is the central task facing the new headteacher and her staff. Teaching and learning are predominantly satisfactory, with only a small minority of lessons being good, and there are rare instances where it is inadequate. Lessons typically have good relationships and positive attitudes from pupils. Staff are confident and clear in sharing their subject expertise. However, pace is generally steady rather than rapid, and the level of challenge is modest rather than demanding. The introduction of work to motivate and stretch the most able pupils tends to come too late in lessons. However, when these features are strong, as they sometimes are, the progress made by all groups of pupils is very impressive.

Teachers' success in pitching lessons at the right level has not been helped by a fragmented approach to the monitoring of pupils' longer-term progress. Staff hold some information on their own classes, but a comprehensive whole-school picture is only just being developed. Day-to-day work is not planned to take account of pupils' attainment on entry or reflect challenging expectations for their standards on leaving the school. Because the school does not have this broader picture, its ability to see the need for early intervention to help underperforming pupils is lessened. Pupils are aware of short-term goals, such as explaining their working in mathematics or redrafting written work, but are less familiar with the levels they should aim at longer term and how to reach these targets. A new system to rectify limitations in tracking is currently being tested by the headteacher.

Leadership and management and the proven capacity for improvement are satisfactory. The new headteacher's assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses has already led her to plan changes to enhance the quality of teaching, improve tracking, upgrade professional development and create a more attractive learning environment for pupils. Good use has been made of local authority support. At this stage it is far too early for the headteacher's impact on standards and achievement to be measured. The work of governors has had a satisfactory effect on the performance of the school in the past but they, similarly, now show a good awareness of the key areas for improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children gain a satisfactory start to the school in the Reception class. Staff work well with parents and children settle well. Children are secure and are helped to develop good behaviour and relationships. All safeguarding requirements are met. The school provides a safe indoor and outdoor environment. Some activities are well linked: for instance, stories about growth are related to gardening work and seed-growing projects children have carried out in school.

While the matching of tasks to the different abilities and interests of children is satisfactory, there are insufficient practical activities for individuals who flourish when working in this way. The level of challenge in work is generally adequate rather than demanding. Sound work is done on nurturing creativity and developing writing skills, but scope for more rigour and wider use of role play exists. Most tasks enable children to widen their knowledge, but the techniques of questioning children so that they learn to think independently and develop problem-solving skills are only satisfactory. Teaching, and therefore progress, are satisfactory, with staff showing good personal knowledge of the children, but the pace is steady and limited use is made of assessment data in order to plan the next stage of development for children. Children enter with above average skills, especially in communication, literacy, numeracy and social development, and they move to Year 1 with similarly secure standards.

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

- Set more challenging targets at each key stage to raise standards, ensure good achievement in all core subjects and to reverse the decline in Key Stage 2 science
- Lift expectations in teaching by establishing strongly paced, well-differentiated and demanding lessons as the norm
- Rapidly implement plans for a unified tracking system that monitors pupils' progress across the whole school and involves all staff in the process
- Expand the opportunities for pupils to gain awareness of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom.

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

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aldbury C of E Primary School, Tring, HP23 5RT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school last week. I appreciate that several of you gave up part of lunch time to come and speak with us.

We think that you are right to be so positive about important aspects of your school. It is a secure and happy place and gives a satisfactory education with some strong features.

The most impressive aspects of the school were:

- your good behaviour and mature attitudes
- your above average attendance and the way this shows your enjoyment of school
- the above-average standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics and good standards in sport and music across the school
- the way staff know you well and provide good care for your personal needs
- how quickly and accurately the headteacher has seen what the school needs to do to improve and the way some things have already changed.

If the school is to become even better it needs to:

- set higher targets for you at each key stage because you are good learners and should be making good progress, not just satisfactory progress, particularly in science
- make sure that more teaching has the really lively pace and demanding work for all abilities that we saw in the best lessons
- start using a new system for checking your progress in subjects across the whole school so that all staff can see what your work was like when you started school and what they should expect of you by the time you leave
- give you more opportunities to learn about the different peoples and ways of life in modern Britain.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at Aldbury.

Yours sincerely

Bob Drew

Lead inspector