

Aldrington Cof E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114555
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	378889
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2011
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	Church of England (Aided)
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Lines
Headteacher	Michael Jee
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Teaching and learning were observed in 16 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by nine teachers. The lead inspector was accompanied in a few lessons by the headteacher. Meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the senior leadership team, members of the governing body, staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, examined pupils' work, and looked at self-evaluation documentation, action plans, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans, safety records and school policies. They analysed 88 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with those completed by 88 pupils and 31 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of the school's actions to raise attainment in writing and mathematics, and to eliminate any significant variations.
- Whether teaching and the curriculum provide suitable challenges for all groups of pupils, particularly boys and more-able pupils.
- The effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment data to ensure that all groups of pupils make similar progress, including boys, the more-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, in driving school improvement since the previous inspection, and the school's capacity to sustain recent improvements.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school. All year groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, have single-age classes. Most pupils are White British with the others representing a very small range of other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is currently just above the national average and includes those with speech and language issues and a range of physical disabilities. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The school has improved its facilities since the previous inspection and the current phase of the new school buildings, a learning needs facility, is due to be opened in 2012. A daily on-site breakfast club, managed by the school, is provided for pupils who attend the school. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy Schools and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. At the heart of its community, and led with a clear purpose by the headteacher, the school provides a secure and happy environment in which pupils do well. Parents and carers are delighted with what the school provides. Comments such as 'It is a happy school' and 'Staff know each child very well' reflect their very positive views. Many also said how much they appreciated the well-run early-morning breakfast club. Pupils are similarly enthusiastic. As one said, 'The teachers do a great job ... this is a special place.' The school's exceptionally strong Christian spirit effectively cultivates pupils' very impressive spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A clear set of values underpins the life of the school and is constantly reflected in day-to-day routines such as class prayers. The school has sustained good outcomes since the previous inspection. There have been a number of improvements. The now outstanding care, guidance and support contributes significantly to pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their good and sometimes outstanding behaviour, and an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. Attendance has further improved and is now high.

Reception children start school with skills and understanding broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make outstanding progress in their learning. This is because activities provide a very stimulating range of learning opportunities which promote high levels of independence and challenge them in their learning. Consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching throughout the school, a well-planned curriculum and very effective induction and tracking systems make sure that the progress of pupils is effectively monitored. Appropriate support is provided for any in danger of falling behind. This ensures that most, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make equally good progress. The good capacity for sustained improvement has been evident in the improvements in reading attainment which is the result of developments in teaching, very well-tailored intervention strategies, and effective use of assessment and tracking systems. Attainment in writing and mathematics has also continued to improve but has not risen as rapidly. This is because a few teachers do not always put their good lesson planning into practice, to ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, are consistently challenged to do well in lesson activities.

The staff, governing body and headteacher work in good partnership. They are ambitious for the pupils and keen to improve the school's work so that it becomes outstanding. They know what needs attention to enable this improvement. School improvement planning is good and is based on accurate and effective self-evaluation.

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The school has made continued improvement since its previous inspection and has good capacity to maintain its advance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics so that it matches the higher attainment already achieved in reading in this coming academic year by:
 - ensuring that all pupils, particularly the more able, are provided with tasks that are more closely matched to their level of abilities
 - ensuring that teaching and learning in writing and mathematics lessons are consistently good or better
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to write for different purposes and varied audiences in a range of subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well and enjoy school. A very effective Early Years Foundation Stage enables pupils to make an excellent start. In lessons observed, pupils made overall good progress in their learning across the school. Attainment in Year 6 is above average overall, slightly higher in reading. National test results suggested girls were doing better than boys in English and mathematics. This gap has been closed partly because of developments in the curriculum, which provides greater interest and challenge for boys as well as girls.

Pupils appreciate the lengths teachers go to to make learning fun, as seen in an outstanding Year 4 lesson where pupils developed a play script based on 'The Gingerbread Man'. The very effective use of practical drama and 'talk partners' helped pupils to understand the format of a script, use of stage directions and the impact of well-written dialogue. The pace and challenge of the lesson was relentless, and expectations high. As one pupil said, 'It's exciting being a playwright, imagining your words coming to life.' Such high expectations help to ensure pupils' overall achievement is good.

Pupils' work and information about how well they are doing show that a number of initiatives are helping to raise attainment in writing and mathematics, such as opportunities to extend their writing and the development of investigative mathematics. This is reflected in the school's award of the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Exceptionally well focused individual support ensures pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress in their learning. Overall good achievement, good personal development and very positive attitudes to learning all help to ensure that pupils are well prepared for their secondary education and later life.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in their friendships and exceptional, sensitive support for each other. Through themes studied in assembly and links with schools in India and Brazil pupils gain an excellent

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understanding about how people live in other international communities. Throughout the school, pupils' good and sometimes outstanding behaviour, characterised by good manners and courtesy, is an expectation. Pupils feel extremely safe and know there is an adult they can turn to if they are worried. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community by taking on responsibilities, as 'buddies', paired readers, and as members of the Eco committee or school council. Pupils' noteworthy contributions include involvement in the local community homeless project 'Off the Fence'. They are proud of their enormous fund-raising efforts. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle enjoying the wide range of activities to help keep and stay fit, which is reflected in their national awards.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Staff make lessons stimulating and interesting, as seen in a good Year 1 literacy lesson where pupils worked hard to develop their understanding of a story setting. Good use of visual prompts and the captivating story of the 'Naughty Hamster' helped pupils to understand the timeline of events and the impact of language needed to write what one pupil described 'a gripping story'.

Although teachers' good subject knowledge and their understanding of pupils' needs ensure that they plan well for different ability groups, not all tasks set consistently challenge pupils in practice, particularly the more able in writing and mathematics. As a result, their progress is not as rapid as it could be and the attainment of these

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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pupils not always as high as it should be. Much has already been done to address this, but the impact of opportunities to write across the curriculum, ‘response marking’ and developments in the practical mathematics have yet to be realised. Pupils are helped to consider how well they have worked and what they most enjoyed, but the otherwise well-constructed self-assessment opportunities focus heavily on the pupils’ enjoyment of learning, occasionally missing opportunities to encourage pupils to evaluate how they could improve. Teaching assistants play an invaluable role in providing effective support for pupils who have additional needs.

The good curriculum is enriched by an excellent range of activities, including high-quality music, sport and art. Such strengths are reflected in the high-quality art work displayed around the school and pupils’ enthusiasm to participate in the many dramatic performances, music groups and extra-curricular opportunities. Visits and visitors make a strong contribution that motivates pupils to learn and plays a part in pupils’ good personal development. Effective links are made between subjects which make learning interesting. For example, in a Year 6 topic about the Second World War, pupils enjoyed making recipes using ‘rationed’ ingredients, investigating the nutritional content of food and the impact of rationing on families.

Pupils receive excellent care and support throughout the school day. Each child is known and valued. The impact of this is evident in pupils’ good standards of behaviour and social skills. The role of a learning mentor provides excellent support for the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and their families, as well as those at risk of underachievement. Induction and transition arrangements are exceptional, enabling Reception children to settle very quickly and for Year 6 pupils to feel very confident about starting their new schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

‘Valuing each child’ aptly sums up the headteacher’s vision for the school. His relentless drive for improvement enthralls others to have the highest possible aspirations for themselves and the pupils. It provides a good basis for embedding ambition and driving improvement, and has already brought about higher attainment in reading. Effective systems are established to monitor and self-evaluate the work of the school. Adults at all levels are good at promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination through raising pupils’ expectations of what they can achieve. Any differences in performance between groups of pupils are quickly

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identified and effective action is taken. The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. It is clear about what leaders need to do next to improve provision further.

Very well-developed support systems are complemented by an excellent range of partnerships with outside agencies such as the Counselling and Family Linx Services who provide very effective support for the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable as well as those at risk of underachievement. Parents and carers engage very effectively with their children’s learning and in the life of the school. They appreciate the many opportunities provided by the school to learn about what is taught and how they can best support their child.

The school has developed good provision for local and global development within its community cohesion policy. Links for example with Sharp School for the Blind in India and with the local church community are well developed. A good start has been made at extending pupils’ understanding of schools and communities in the United Kingdom. Measures for safeguarding pupils are good. Good quality training of all staff in child protection is frequent and up-to-date, and all statutory requirements relating to child protection are well met.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is a constant and exciting buzz in the Early Years Foundation Stage as children are challenged to think and work well together. Frequent giggles of joy could be heard as ‘Tommy the tortoise’ helped children to remember new sounds learnt, ‘Oscar the octopus’ reinforced numbers and role-play ‘cooks’ served imaginary breakfast to the visiting inspector. There are high expectations of children. It is no

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wonder they make such outstanding progress towards the early learning goals. Parents and carers are appreciative of the care in planning the induction process when their children start school. As a result, they settle quickly and happily into the daily routines of school playing together and behaving very well. An outstanding partnership is rapidly formed with parents and carers who value the efforts the school goes to include them in their child’s learning, enjoying regular opportunities provided to stay and play with their children. As one parent said, ‘Our children have a wonderful start and my child skips into school every morning.’

There is a consistent, very skilled approach to the teaching of letters and sounds commonly known as ‘phonics’. Regular and very thorough assessments enable staff to keep track of children’s progress and plan the next steps in their learning. This ensures an excellent balance of both child-initiated as well as adult-directed activities complemented by a good free-flow of both indoor as well as outdoor activities. Exemplary skills of the outstanding leader and manager of the Early Years Foundation Stage, an excellent curriculum, consistently good teaching and high quality care ensure that almost all children meet, and many exceed, the expected levels for their age on entry to Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the average number of questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team were very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and that the headteacher leads and manages the school very well. Typical comments included ‘It is a happy environment for both parents and children’ and ‘The school ethos is one of celebrating achievements of each child’. Inspectors endorse these views. A few parents or carers felt that the school did not always deal effectively with behaviour or that their child did not make enough progress. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms and around the school, had discussions with staff and students, and scrutinised behavioural records. Rates of progress made by pupils were a key focus for the inspection. Inspectors’ findings on both these issues are in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aldrington CoFE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	76	21	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	80	17	19	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	61	34	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	52	35	40	7	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	68	28	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	70	26	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	67	27	31	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	54	61	29	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	51	34	39	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	35	45	51	9	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	43	41	47	4	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	59	67	29	33	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	76	21	24	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aldrington CofE Primary School, Hove, BN3 7QD

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently.

We spent time in your lessons and enjoyed talking to many of you. We also looked at the work of the school and talked to many of the staff and some of the school governors. Your parents and carers told us that the staff look after you really well. We checked this and saw that all the adults in school want to help you do well. They make sure your learning is fun and interesting. The staff at the school work hard and the headteacher is doing a good job. The work of the school is good. These are some of the things it does particularly well.

- The excellent provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gets you off to a really strong start at school.
- There are lots of smiling faces when you arrive at school and I can see that you enjoy being there.
- The school looks after you extremely well and most of you are making good progress in your learning.
- The way you behave is good and sometimes excellent, and you work and play well together.
- You reach high standards in music, art and sport.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have done a good job of helping the school improve and they are working very hard to make sure it keeps improving in the future.

These are some things we have asked your school to do to help it to become even better. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- ensure that more of you reach higher standards in writing and mathematics by providing work that is not too easy or too hard and gives just the right level of challenge
- ensure more of you benefit from the extremely good or better teaching seen in some lessons
- ensure there are more opportunities to write in different ways and in different subjects.

Thank you very much once again. Keep up the good work and we are sure that if you do this, you will continue to enjoy learning for a long time to come.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Forbes
Lead inspector

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