

Alfred Sutton Primary School

148, Wokingham Road, Reading, Berkshire RG6 1JR

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils achieve well, including those with disabilities and special educational needs. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception, and good progress continues at Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils are well prepared for their next school.
- The quality of teaching is good and makes sure that pupils do as well as they can.
- Support staff are used well, both in and out of lessons, to intervene with and encourage pupils who need help both in learning and in their personal development.
- Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning so that they always settle quickly to their tasks. They show consideration and respect for others and feel confident that the school is a safe place for pupils.
- Good teamwork is at the heart of the school's success. Because of a tireless drive to improve pupils' literacy and mathematical skills, pupils are doing much better than at the time of the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough teaching that is outstanding. This is because there are still a few lessons in which pupils find the work either too easy or too hard.
- In a few lessons, pupils do not always know what is expected of them and what they need to do to improve their work.
- For reasons outside of the school's control, the governing body has a number of vacancies. Serious efforts to fill these are underway but there is still a knock-on effect in that governors are not always able to ask really challenging questions of the school and help fully to make the school even better.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, members of the governing body, parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 48 responses to the online survey (Parent View) in planning the inspection as well as of the views of parents in the playground.
- School policies, assessment information, teachers' plans, pupils' work and school improvement planning were examined, as well as the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspectors analysed 29 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Watts

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alfred Sutton is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with Pakistani and White British being the largest groups.
- Over half the school population speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average, but the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at different points in the school year is higher than average.
- The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - being clear with pupils about what they are expected to learn
 - ensuring that activities and tasks are not too easy or too hard for pupils of different abilities and needs, especially the more able
 - providing clear feedback on how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Recruit new governors to fill the vacancies and take effective steps to ensure that all governors understand their roles and are fully involved in both supporting and holding leaders to account for the performance of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has rapidly improved because of the positive actions taken by the school. At the time of the previous inspection, there was uneven progress between different groups of pupils. In particular, boys and pupils eligible for the pupil premium trailed behind other groups. All groups of pupils are now making good progress. Pupils achieve equally well irrespective of ethnic heritage or gender.
- Children enter the Nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills below those expected for their age. A significant proportion enter with low language skills and a limited understanding of the world. In both Nursery and Reception Years, children make at least good progress because of good teaching and the interesting activities provided. In particular, high emphasis is placed on developing children's language and communication skills. Some make rapid gains in these areas. By the end of Reception, children's attainment is often broadly in line with national averages.
- Good progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2 so that pupils reach average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement from their starting points.
- The high number of pupils leaving and joining the school throughout the school year have a marked effect on the published test results at the end of Year 6. Those who remain in the school throughout Key Stage 2 do well. The needs of new arrivals are also quickly assessed and they receive good guidance and support so that they can settle quickly and learn well.
- Provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. As a result, they make good progress because they receive specific help and guidance as individuals or in groups. Those for whom the school is in receipt of the pupil premium are making good progress through well-targeted support.
- More able pupils are usually challenged and extended in lessons. Just occasionally this is not the case and opportunities to deepen their understanding or for them to plan and organise their own work are not regular enough. Likewise, sometimes the work is too easy and pupils do not make the progress that they could.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. Throughout the school, teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning, usually in pairs. Good questioning, drama and role play also contribute well to pupils' good progress. Pupils make good progress in reading because of the school's discrete, frequent and systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- The improvements to language work and reading have had a positive impact on pupils' writing. Pupils write for a range of purposes and in different styles. Topics are carefully chosen to inspire boys to write.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. Teachers ensure that the language of mathematics is understood so that pupils can explain their understanding. Good questioning to clarify pupils' misconceptions contributes positively to their progress in lessons.

The quality of teaching is good

- School leaders have taken effective measures to improve teaching. Teaching is now good overall and has been a key feature in raising pupils' achievement. Lessons are lively and teachers take every opportunity to make the learning enjoyable through practical activities.
- Teaching promotes pupils' personal development well. Teachers create a positive climate for learning and establish good relationships with their classes. Pupils relate well to others and work collaboratively when required. Teachers set clear expectations of learning and behaviour and pupils respond well. They show care and respect for others' feelings and views.
- In most lessons, teachers make the purpose of the lesson clear so that pupils fully understand

what they are expected to learn. In the best practice, well-considered steps to success are provided to help guide pupils' learning. Just occasionally, the lesson objective is not sufficiently focused and pupils can be unsure of what they are expected to learn.

- The teaching of essential skills is effective. In a successful English lesson in Year 5, for example, the teacher used role-play well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils were enthused and rose to the challenge of presenting information clearly to their classmates.. In writing, the same pupils benefited from the teacher's clear demonstrations of the construction of sentences and how to use speech marks correctly. Pupils then made good progress in practising these skills themselves.
- In the main, teachers use information on earlier learning well to plan their teaching and match tasks to pupils' different abilities and needs. As a result, pupils are generally suitably challenged and they make good progress in acquiring knowledge and deepening their understanding. Occasionally, this is not the case for the more able pupils and their progress slows as a result.
- Most teachers provide good feedback to pupils so that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, this practice varies in quality across classes and can occasionally limit the progress pupils make..

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a positive and harmonious community. Safety and good behaviour are promoted well by staff. All parents who completed the online survey agreed or strongly agreed that their children are safe and well cared for at school. Pupils also told inspectors that they felt safe and well looked after. These positive views reflect the inspection findings.
- Children in Nursery and Reception settle well because of the strong relationships they have with the adults around them. Children grow in confidence and feel safe while learning. They relate well to adults and to their peers and behave well. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Discussions with pupils show that they have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and persistent name-calling. Pupils report that bullying is rare and that staff deal with it well if it does occur.
- A few parents expressed concerns about behaviour. Behaviour can be a little boisterous at times in the playground. Those few pupils who find managing their behaviour a struggle are well supported by staff who take swift action when needed.
- Effective steps are taken to promote and raise attendance. Since the previous inspection, attendance has improved from below average to securely average. A few families take extended visits abroad and this has an adverse impact on the school's overall attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have formed a successful partnership and provide clear drive for school improvement. They are well supported by other key leaders, and teamwork amongst the staff is a strength. All staff share the senior leaders' ambition to speed up the pupils' achievement and improve teaching even further. The recruitment of staff has been effective and new leaders are already making a positive impact.
- The school has demonstrated a strong capacity to improve. Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement, behaviour and the quality of teaching have improved from satisfactory to good. In particular, the school has been successful in raising the achievement of groups who were doing less well than others.
- The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Checks on the pupils' performance are regular and rigorous, as are those of teachers' performance. Quick actions to bring about improvement are always followed through to see if they are successful. The local authority provides appropriate advice and support.

- The leadership of teaching and learning has been a key factor in the school's improved performance. Senior leaders monitor teaching and provide constructive feedback to staff. The appraisal process of staff performance and well-planned training to strengthen their skills have contributed to better teaching.
 - The curriculum is broad, balanced and enables pupils to achieve well. A strong emphasis is rightly placed on the promotion of language, literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils thrive in a positive atmosphere where different cultures and faiths are valued and respected.
 - The pupil premium is well used to provide additional teacher support for the pupils and the impact is seen in the fast rate at which any gaps between different groups are closing.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is going through a period of transition with a new Chair and there are vacancies to be filled. This means that roles and responsibilities are shared between fewer people and so governors have not been able to be fully involved in supporting and holding leaders to account.
 - Governors receive thorough reports from leaders so that they are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development, although they do not always question these reports in sufficient detail.
 - Governors take great care in their safeguarding checks. Statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109776
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	401078

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Faruq Bilbe
Headteacher	Val Preston
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 October 2009
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