

# Albury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church End, Albury, Ware, SG11 2JQ

**Inspection dates** 9–10 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher, staff and governors are successfully promoting effective teaching and good achievement for pupils.
- Teamwork among the staff and governors is strong and this has a positive impact on bringing about improvement.
- There is a very positive and welcoming school atmosphere where pupils learn and thrive.
- Pupils show considerable enthusiasm for learning and their outstanding behaviour supports their academic achievement.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well and has good links with the church.
- There are highly effective procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils feel safe and very well looked after by staff.
- Good teaching successfully engages pupils and promotes good progress. Some teaching is outstanding.
- Marking and feedback are strengths of the teaching.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive effective support from learning support assistants.
- Children in Nursery and Reception achieve well. They make a good start to their school life.
- Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is usually above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, work is not set at the right level of difficulty for pupils.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- Considerable time was spent analysing pupils' work and the information on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors, parents and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 24 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and correspondence from parents.
- Questionnaires from seven members of staff were analysed.
- The inspector examined a range of documents including school policies, safeguarding procedures and the school's development planning.

## Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- A small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school part way through the year is higher than normal.
- The headteacher took up the post in September 2013.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the good teaching so more pupils make rapid progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that the work set is always at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The relatively new headteacher has brought enthusiasm, energy and good experience to his post. He provides very effective leadership in raising pupils' achievement, developing teaching and in building the school's ability to improve.
- Other leaders, staff and governors share the headteacher's ambition, vision and expectations for the school. All leaders and staff work well together in promoting high quality teaching and good achievement for pupils. The promotion of pupils' behaviour, safety and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Leaders and staff are particularly successful in promoting care, respect, responsibility and tolerance. Pupils are developing a very good understanding of different cultures and faiths. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There are clear systems for checking the school's performance. The headteacher has effectively involved all staff in identifying what the school does well and what needs to improve. Similarly, all leaders and staff are engaged in planning action to make these changes happen. For example, there have been recent improvements to the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to pupils' achievement in writing.
- Arrangements for appraising the performance of teachers are clear and robust. Teachers' targets are well linked to pupils' progress, to school improvement priorities and to their professional development. Leaders provide effective training and support to increase teachers' skills. Successful action has been taken to ensure that teaching is at least good. Teachers have useful opportunities to observe teaching and learning in other schools. There is a clear programme of mentoring and support for newly qualified teachers.
- The school's curriculum provides a wide range of subjects and topics which promote good achievement for pupils and contribute very well to their personal and social skills. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the additional activities, such as clubs, sport and educational visits. There are no signs of discrimination in the school and all pupils have full and equal access to the learning activities provided. The school is making good progress in implementing new assessment and curriculum arrangements.
- The school uses its primary sports grant successfully to extend pupils' opportunities for sport and physical development. A productive sports partnership has been formed with a local secondary school. Specialist sports coaches and teachers develop pupils' skills. Pupils participate well in a range of local tournaments including athletics, basketball, hockey and tennis.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide eligible pupils with extra support, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The funding and support is having a positive impact on their progress.
- The local authority provides effective support through the Hertfordshire Improvement Partner programme. The improvement partner has a clear overview of the school's performance and provides a good blend of challenge and support. Reports of her findings provide the school and governors with an accurate picture of the school's effectiveness.
- The headteacher and staff have established productive partnerships with parents. Parents hold very positive views about the school and have very few concerns.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body are rightly proud to be part of the school community. They value the school's achievements and its very positive atmosphere.
  - The governors possess a very clear and accurate overview of the school's performance. They are well informed about the achievement of different groups of pupils in different subjects.
  - Governors receive accurate information about the quality of teaching. They understand requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases reflecting the progress that pupils make.

- Governors ensure that additional funding is used wisely and check the impact of spending on pupils' progress.
- They have ensured that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- The governors support the headteacher and staff well. Their secure knowledge of the school's performance enables them to challenge the headteacher and hold the school to account.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is also outstanding.
- Pupils feel safe and very well looked after by the staff. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and their often impeccable behaviour in lessons contribute considerably to their good progress. Behaviour is outstanding at playtime and lunchtime as well as in the classrooms.
- All parents who completed Parent View stated that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and that it deals effectively with bullying. All parents who responded also believe their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school. These very positive responses to the survey reflect the inspection findings.
- Children in Nursery and Reception enjoy the interesting indoor and outdoor activities provided. They learn and play very well together. The strong relationships between adults and children and the childrens' first rate behaviour support learning well.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 show a real thirst for learning. They participate with enthusiasm in the activities provided. Some of their comments included, 'learning is fun' and 'you know when you come into school that that you will have a good day'.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. Part of the school's very positive ethos is the promotion of qualities such as caring, respect for others, taking responsibility and being truthful. Pupils are considerate, courteous, and respectful and relate extremely well to adults and to other pupils. Pupils are particularly good at making visitors and new pupils feel welcome. They show a very good understanding of different religions, cultures and of what it takes to be a good member of the school community.
- Pupils thrive on the additional responsibilities provided such as being monitors, eco-warriors and sports leaders. Members of the school council represent their fellow pupils well. Pupils raise funds for different national and international charities. They appreciate the importance of helping others who are less well off than themselves.
- The school's records of incidents show that behaviour is typically of a high standard over time. Pupils show a clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it might take such as name calling and cyberbullying. Pupils informed the inspector that bullying does not happen in the school. They said, 'we know everyone here' and 'we all get along'.
- Attendance has been broadly average. The headteacher has taken measures to raise attendance and this has improved over the past year.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teaching successfully engages pupils and promotes good learning for all groups. Some teaching is outstanding and promotes rapid progress. Clear explanations and demonstrations help to ensure that pupils know and understand what they are expected to learn. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding of new work.

- Teachers convey high expectations of learning and behaviour and the pupils respond very well to these. Pupils are inspired and motivated by their teachers' enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge.
- Speaking and listening skills are promoted well in all subject areas. For example, pupils in the Year 5 and 6 class had good opportunities to question their fellow pupils who were in role as characters from a poem. The teaching of reading skills, including phonics, (letters and the sounds they represent), is effective. Pupils make good progress in writing because they receive good guidance from their teachers. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 created interesting sentences about their very recent visit to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.
- In the teaching of mathematics, pupils acquire essential knowledge and skills and are provided with interesting and relevant opportunities to apply these in solving problems.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment is accurate and thorough. In the main, teachers use this information well to plan their teaching and to set challenging work for different groups of pupils. Consequently, pupils are fully engaged and interested in their learning. They make good gains in acquiring knowledge, deepening their understanding and developing their skills.
- Just occasionally, the work is not set at the right level of difficulty. When this happens, pupils' learning can slow down because the work is too easy for them.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is successful. Learning support assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional help.
- Teachers set clear individual learning targets for pupils in writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils know how well they are doing and know what they are aiming for next.
- The marking of pupils' work was an improvement point from the previous inspection and the school has tackled this very well. Teachers provide encouraging advice and state why a piece of work is good. Constructive comments guide the next stages of pupils' learning.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 1 and 2. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is usually above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There are only a few pupils supported by the pupil premium in the school and there were none in Year 6 in the summer of 2013. Good teaching and well-focused support helps to ensure that pupils eligible for the additional funding make good progress. Current information shows that these pupils make faster progress than the others in reading. Gaps in attainment are closing and pupils eligible for the funding attain similar standards to their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive effective support from learning support assistants and the work set is well suited to their needs.
- Pupils who join the school part way through the year do well at Albury. Their needs are carefully assessed; they settle quickly and make good progress because of good teaching and support.
- The most able pupils are usually challenged and given opportunities to extend their learning. In 2013, an above average proportion of pupils attained the higher-than-expected levels in reading and mathematics. Effective action has been taken to extend the most able in writing. Just occasionally in lessons, work set is not demanding enough for the most able.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and make good progress. Their knowledge and understanding of phonics is secure. Older pupils acquire and apply more advanced reading skills such as deduction and inference.
- Year 6 attainment in writing trailed behind that of reading and mathematics in 2013. The school has taken positive action to raise achievement in writing. Pupils' handwriting is developing well. Grammar, punctuation and spelling are accurate. Pupils apply their writing skills well to other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 wrote clear factual accounts of what life was like for the soldiers in the First World War.
- During the last few years, pupils' rate of progress through Key Stage 2 has been lower in mathematics than in reading and writing. The school is taking action to address this issue. Pupils' calculation and problem solving skills are being strengthened.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children's attainment on entry to Nursery varies because of the small numbers in a year group. Most year groups enter with knowledge and skills broadly typical for their age.
- The Nursery and Reception classes are well led and managed. Leaders have recently brought about improvements to the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are offered a wider range of learning activities and leaders are checking children's attainment more sharply. These improvements are having a positive impact on children's achievement and enjoyment.
- Adults have established high quality relationships with the children and create a positive and stimulating environment for them to learn and flourish. The children feel safe, grow in confidence and relate extremely well to adults and to other children. Their behaviour is very positive.
- All groups of children are making good progress in the different areas of learning. This is because of good teaching and the interesting range of indoor and outdoor activities. Children make good progress in speaking and listening because teachers and helpers are successful in encouraging them to talk about their learning.
- Children applied their observation skills well when exploring different leaves, berries and cones on a country walk. They have also been successful in growing plants from seeds.
- Children's attainment and progress is carefully checked and recorded. There are also detailed learning journals for each child with photographs and annotations of their learning and experiences.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117419
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448501

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	55
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Victoria Clayden-Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Howard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 771253
<b>Fax number</b>	01279 771253
<b>Email address</b>	admin@albury.herts.sch.uk

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