

# Alfred Sutton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109776
<b>Local Authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	337370
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thrussell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	401
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Juliet Hanfling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Val Preston
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	148 Wokingham Road Reading Berkshire RG6 1JR
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9015411
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 26 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, policies, monitoring records, tracking data, local authority reports, and questionnaires completed by 100 parents, 110 pupils and 21 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well teaching contributes to the learning of different groups of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of assessment to support learning and drive improvement
- the role of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, in securing and sustaining improvements
- whether provision and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage are as good as the school indicates.

## Information about the school

This is a large school. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest group being from a Pakistani background. Just over half of the pupils speak a home language other than English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but including an above average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Their needs include speech, language and communication, and behavioural and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school partway through their primary education is above average. The school has recently gained a Healthy Schools award.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Alfred Sutton Primary is a satisfactory school. In recent years, the school's main thrust has been to improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and to raise achievement and standards in reading and writing. Under the committed leadership of the headteacher, ably assisted by middle leaders, it has been successful on both counts. The Nursery and Reception classes provide children with a good start to school, establishing a secure foundation for their future learning and personal development. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is improving, with increasing proportions making good progress towards the challenging end-of-year targets set for them, especially where teaching is at its best in Year 6.

The school has recognised that it now needs to embed these improvements further and provide a stronger focus on mathematics, where progress has not been quite so strong. Evidence from lessons observed during the inspection confirms that progress in lessons is too variable. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to plan work for pupils of different abilities and aptitudes, so that all are appropriately challenged to move on in their learning. Consequently, the work for more able pupils is at times too easy and for less able pupils too difficult. This is particularly noticeable for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, whose progress is often restricted as the provision for them is not organised well enough to take full account of their particular needs and the targets that have been set for them. Despite these weaknesses, pupils' progress is tracked and analysed so that underachievement is identified and further support generally put in place. The school is beginning to hold teachers more accountable for pupils' progress. There are examples of good marking with development points to guide pupils in their learning, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school.

The school has good links with parents and carers. It works well to communicate with them, with multilingual members of staff always on hand. Regular newsletters keep them well informed and give further encouragement for them to be involved in their children's education and the life of the school. Pupils themselves, especially the school council, also play an active role in the school and local community. They are proud of their involvement in planning extensive new playground equipment and make a contribution to the school improvement plan. Their awareness of the needs of others is shown in the initiative they take in planning fundraising activities. Good opportunities for sport encourage pupils to be physically active. They are encouraged to make sensible choices when choosing what they want from the varied lunchtime menu. As a result, they have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.

Leaders and managers mostly work hard to bring about school improvement. Teaching

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is regularly observed, with a strong focus on actions that the school is taking to raise achievement and standards, for example guided writing. Development points are given, but these are not always followed up by subsequent observations, to ensure that they are fully acted on and the quality of teaching and learning improves. Given the school's generally accurate awareness of what needs to be improved, its track record since the last inspection and its recent success in bringing about improvements, the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by making the fullest use of assessment information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that points identified for improvement are fully acted upon.
- Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
  - monitoring teachers' planning in relation to pupils' individual education plans, and the progress made by pupils
  - organising the provision for individual pupils and groups more effectively.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

The quality of learning observed in lessons during the inspection was satisfactory overall for all groups of pupils, but patchy. Accelerated progress in Year 6 has resulted in considerable improvements to writing standards, but to a lesser extent in mathematics. The quality of teaching and learning observed in other year groups was too variable, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were making less progress than other groups of pupils. When pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards are broadly average in mathematics and science, but above average in English.

Pupils generally feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. However, a minority express concern about behaviour and how this is being managed. This concern is also expressed by some parents and staff. Inspectors found that behaviour is satisfactory and generally well managed, and that around school pupils are polite to visitors. Where pupils are fully engaged in lessons, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, but in others behaviour at times slips a little as pupils become restless, chatter and lose concentration. The school seeks the support of outside professionals for the few pupils who display behavioural and social needs, so that disruption to others' learning is mostly avoided. Pupils' cultural development is good as the school effectively promotes pupils' understanding and respect for the different cultural and religious traditions represented in the school, although lessons do not always demonstrate pupils' full enjoyment and fascination of learning, or provide

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opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they are doing. Although the school works hard to encourage good attendance, it nevertheless is average. Given the academic and personal skills gained by pupils, they are satisfactorily prepared for their future life and learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Assessment is not always accurate enough to provide fully secure starting points on which to base pupils' learning. An over-reliance on published schemes of work, especially in mathematics, further inhibits teachers' planning for different ability groups. Where teaching is stronger, the content of lessons is far more creative, interesting and relevant to pupils' experiences. Learning objectives are shared with pupils. Throughout better lessons, pupils are reminded of these and encouraged to discuss their different tasks and evaluate how well they are doing, and the pace of learning is good. In other lessons, pupils are at times slow to start work and teachers have lower expectations of the work they want pupils to complete. More able pupils are not always challenged soon enough in lessons, with extension work provided only when basic tasks have been

<sup>1</sup> 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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completed. Pupils are given targets to help them improve their work. Some of these are too broad and written in ways that are difficult for pupils to easily understand, and they are rarely referred to in lessons or in the marking of pupils' work.

The school has very recently introduced a topic-based curriculum, making appropriate links between different subjects in order for learning to be more interesting, imaginative and purposeful. Further improvements are planned in writing and information and communication technology through this approach. Good enrichment opportunities, including a range of popular lunchtime and after-school clubs, trips and visitors, contribute effectively to pupils' personal and social development.

The care arrangements for all pupils are good and well organised. The support for pupils who are new to learning English is of variable quality, although it is particularly well targeted for those pupils from a Pakistani background, or who join the school in later year groups, so that these pupils do as well as their peers. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities does not always fully meet their needs. It is mostly provided within class by learning support assistants. Outside specialists provide programmes of support for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, but none of the support staff is fully trained in this area.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

School improvement planning clearly shows how the school is continuing to bring about improvements in English through well targeted actions, such as the regular scrutiny and moderation of work, the monitoring of teachers' planning and the provision of purposeful writing opportunities through a creative curriculum. The new mathematics leader has already identified where improvements are needed, including an audit of teachers' subject knowledge and skills, although the planned actions are more about identifying weaknesses than showing how improvements are to be made and evaluated.

The school generally works hard to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and do not suffer from discrimination, but the senior leaders and governors have been slow to identify the weaknesses in provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The coordinator of this area has not ensured that planning and staff training take the fullest account of pupils' specific needs, and this is reflected in some members of staff feeling that the school is not effectively led and managed. However, governors fulfil their statutory duties well in other respects,

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ensuring that all procedures for safeguarding are fully in place and understood by staff. They generally have a good understanding of the school's performance and effectively question it on this. Community cohesion is promoted well, particularly at local and global levels, and the school has appropriate plans to further develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of indigenous British culture. Good links with other local schools add to pupils' learning experiences, for example through a sports partnership and opportunities for pupils to share their writing with older students.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of skills that is well below that expected at this age, especially in communication and language and mathematical calculation. They make good progress across the different areas of learning, particularly in those weaker areas identified on entry. The leader has identified the priority to develop further children's spoken vocabulary, in part to aid their development of mathematical problem solving and calculation. Good links with parents ensure that children quickly settle into school. Their behaviour is good and they rapidly learn social skills, such as taking turns and sharing with others. The setting provides a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. There are many opportunities for first-hand learning experiences, such as planting bean seeds, sweeping up leaves, and making dough for the giant. Staff make learning fun, for example by giving torches for children to use in the 'dark den' in preparation for Diwali celebrations. Good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor areas in providing varied opportunities for children to practise a range of skills. Developments have been made to the outdoor area, which is



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now of high quality. Staff observe children well and make full use of assessments to adapt future learning to their individual needs. Many children speak English as an additional language and are well supported by multilingual assistants. However, the identification of specific language and learning needs is not always prompt enough to ensure timely focused support.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

About a quarter of the school's parents and carers returned questionnaires. Although their views of the school are mostly positive, a small minority are concerned about the leadership and management of the school, and especially of children's behaviour. The inspectors find that behaviour overall is satisfactory, and where there is difficult behaviour, this is now being addressed with increasing effect, drawing on the support of outside specialists. They also find that leadership and management are overall satisfactory, although some weaknesses are identified in this report.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alfred Sutton 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 401 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	59	37	37	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	45	50	50	2	2	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	24	59	59	13	13	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	25	55	55	13	13	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	28	28	64	64	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	21	59	59	15	15	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	30	69	69	1	1	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)	27	27	53	53	6	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	21	58	58	14	14	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	20	55	55	12	12	9	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	20	58	58	16	16	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	15	15	55	55	17	17	9	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	32	53	53	10	10	1	1

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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



15 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alfred Sutton Primary School, Reading, RG6 1JR

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You spoke quite enthusiastically about enjoying school and all the things you take part in. Alfred Sutton Primary is a satisfactory school, which means that some things are good but some things need to be improved.

These are the things that the school does well:

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The school is helping you to do better in your learning, especially in your writing.
- You all know how to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You are encouraged to play your part in the life of the school. I did like the new areas and equipment in the playground that you helped to plan.
- The school provides you with many clubs and interesting visits and visitors.
- Your parents and carers are encouraged to play their part in the life of the school and to support you in your learning.
- You understand and respect the different faiths and cultures of pupils in your school.

We have asked the school to work on the following things:

- Teachers must make full use of the information they have on how well you are doing to plan work that is just right for each one of you - not too easy, but not too difficult either.
- Leaders must make a careful check on the work your teachers are doing to ensure that all of your lessons are of the highest quality.
- Leaders must ensure that the support for those of you who find learning especially difficult is well organised and effective.

Thank you again for your help. You can do your bit to help by working hard in lessons and enjoying all that you do in school.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell

Lead inspector

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