

# Albury C of E Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	117419
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	339003
Inspection dates	16 - 17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Philip Mann HMI

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

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Christopher Bolton
Headteacher	Anne Atherton
Date of previous school inspection	2-3 July 2007
School address	Church End Albury Nr. Ware SG11 2JQ
Telephone number	01279 771253
Fax number	01279 771253
Email address	head@albury.herst.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents etc. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, the outcomes of the school's monitoring of its work, the school's plans for improvement, safeguarding documentation, documentation related to the provision for pupils' with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and analysed 15 parental questionnaires.

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

- the success of actions taken by the school to improve standards in pupils' writing
- the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school
- the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the use of assessment information to monitor the progress of all pupils and narrowing gaps in achievement.

## Information about the school

This is a very small village school with three mixed age classes and an Early Years Foundation Stage. Whilst some pupils live in the village, a significant number travel from surrounding villages and further a field. Families represent a range of socio-economic backgrounds and the percentage receiving free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about average, although there is a higher than average proportion of pupils needing extra support or with a statement of special educational need. Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds. In some years there is high pupil mobility and many pupils join or leave the school part way through their primary education. Staffing consists of one full-time newly qualified teacher, the headteacher who teaches for about half of the week, two further part-time teachers and an Early Years Foundation Stage practitioner in the Nursery.

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

Parents are justifiably pleased with the quality of education provided for their child at this good school. The headteacher, staff and governors work hard with limited resources to provide an extensive range of educational experiences within an inclusive and caring ethos where all pupils can flourish. Parental comments such as, 'Albury School has always put my child's needs first' and 'I feel so lucky that we have found this school' fully support this view.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage class with knowledge and skills that are broadly similar to levels expected of their age. All pupils respond very well to the good quality provision across the school and overall achievement is good in many aspects of their academic and personal development. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make significant and often rapid gains in their learning because the school is good at providing individual support to narrow gaps in achievement. More able pupils thrive on opportunities to use computers to produce films, publish their own magazine and carry out jobs of responsibility such as being the school photographer.

Teachers work hard to provide well planned and interesting lessons to classes of mixed ages and different abilities. Lessons are well organised and tasks are tailored to the needs of individuals. Improvements in the teaching of phonics are now being reflected in increasing levels of achievement in literacy skills. Marking is regular and provides good levels of praise for pupils about their written work. However, teachers' comments are not always linked closely enough to lesson objectives to provide clear guidance on what pupils need to do next to improve.

Well-constructed annual improvement plans have led to improvements in the quality of accommodation and overall educational provision. School leaders evaluate the school's work accurately through regular monitoring activity. However, sometimes the focus of these activities lacks the precision needed to improve provision even further. As yet, there is no current long-term plan for the school's future development but increasingly effective levels of teamwork between staff and governors ensure good capacity for further improvement. Taking all factors into account the school provides good value for money.

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

- Ensure pupils know clearly what they need to do next to improve further by:
  - reviewing the existing policy for marking
  - improving the quality of marking to make it is more meaningful to pupils
  - providing pupils with specific targets that are more closely matched to their individual needs.
- Make more effective use of self-evaluation to further raise standards and improve the quality of provision by:
  - monitoring lessons with a clear focus linked to pupils' outcomes
  - ensure all staff and governors participate in the process of self-evaluation and review
  - establish clear links between self-evaluation and planning for the future long term development of the school.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage class make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they join Year 1 most have attained all of the Early Learning Goals for this age group. Overall, pupils make good progress over the rest of their time in school to reach standards that are generally above average by the end of Year 6. Standards fluctuate year on year because of pupil mobility and variations in the very small numbers of pupils within each year group. However, analysis of all available data confirms a steady trend of improvement over the last three years. Achievement is good across a wide range of subjects but best in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). All pupils make good progress in their reading and phonic development and this, combined with a strong focus on writing, is improving standards in literacy. Detailed analysis of school data confirms that the achievement of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent and staff can be proud that they are successfully narrowing the achievement gap for this group of pupils. Furthermore, gifted and talented pupils benefit from carefully targeted activities, a stimulating curriculum and numerous opportunities to develop their ICT skills through movie making and giving multi media presentations.

Pupils state that they love coming to school and attendance is at least satisfactory year on year. Relationships are very positive and older pupils, as play monitors, make a good contribution to the active and harmonious playtimes. All pupils respond very well to the excellent provision for their spiritual, moral and social development. Their attitudes towards learning are excellent and they all demonstrate an outstanding level of enthusiasm for being healthy and active. Behaviour is excellent and there are no reported incidents of bullying or disruptive behaviour. In fact, pupils admitted because of previous behavioural difficulties in other establishments, respond rapidly to the nurturing nature of this school and to the great satisfaction of their parents.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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 <sup>1</sup>	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall with no inadequate teaching seen. Work is carefully planned to match the age and abilities of all pupils. All teachers make good use of resources. Interactive whiteboards are used particularly well to display a range of media to illustrate key teaching points and motivate the pupils. Pupils of similar ability across the school are taught well in guided reading and phonic sessions to improve literacy skills. All lessons are well managed and move along at a good pace. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. All teachers and support staff use questions well to check pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking further. The incorporation of ICT in many lessons is a very good feature of the overall provision. Teachers monitor pupils' work in class well and provide good oral feedback to them during lessons. Marking is regular and teachers provide good levels of praise and guidance to pupils in their books. However, too often the marking is insufficiently linked to the learning intentions set for the lesson to have a significant impact on the pupils' achievement; this is especially so in the marking of pupils' writing. Furthermore, pupils are set targets to work at but these are often too general and not specifically targeted to the personal needs of each pupil.

The staff provide an extensive range of extra activities out of lessons to fully enrich the planned learning experiences. Nearly all pupils attend at least one after school club that includes activities such as short tennis and chess. Residential trips, visits to

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<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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a Sikh Gurdwara and museums in London all help to provide pupils with an insight into the wider world and their place within a multi-cultural society.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good and this effectively supports the personal development of all pupils. Teaching assistants provide excellent guidance for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Support for these pupils is enhanced by the good links maintained with specialist support services. Pupils receive good advice on their futures and are well prepared for their move to secondary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

### How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governing body have been successful in driving forward a number of improvements to both the accommodation and quality of provision since the previous inspection; for example, the well equipped outdoor play area for the Early Years Foundation Stage, a new school hall and establishing a trend of improvement in pupils' outcomes overall. The quality of teaching has improved as a result of regular monitoring by the headteacher and school improvement partner. Observations are detailed but as yet lack the precision to raise the quality of teaching and learning to higher levels. The self-evaluation by the headteacher, supported by regular focused visits by individual governors, accurately identifies what the school needs to do next to improve. Annual planning for school improvement both identifies action that successfully focuses on improving pupils' outcomes but is also realistic in the demands it places on the very small number of staff. Partnerships are developing well. Planning for the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has a good understanding of the needs of its local community. It has identified effective strategies to link with a school in London and also support a child in Africa; providing both a national and global context to its work. However, currently there is no published long-term plan to encompass all these elements of school improvement.

Safeguarding procedures are robust with all staff and governors and volunteers working with pupils being fully vetted to do so. Regular risk assessments are made and governors take their responsibility for health and safety seriously. Financial management is good and resources are used efficiently to improve the level of accommodation and maintain good levels of staffing.

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*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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The fully equipped Early Years Foundation Stage area provides opportunities for all children to make a good start to their formal education. Good teaching, a well organised classroom and fully equipped outdoor area ensure that these children make good progress in all aspects of their learning. Provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection and good outcomes are now having a positive impact on standards in Key Stage 1. The Early Years practitioner demonstrates secure knowledge and understanding for working with this age group. Learning experiences are planned effectively to provide a good balance between adult led sessions, activities for children to choose themselves and opportunities for creative play. Comprehensive assessment records provide a detailed progress profile for each child which is then used well to inform future planning. The arrangements for the shared leadership and management of this key stage work well and are firmly focused on identifying areas for further improvement.

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

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

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## Views of parents and carers

Overall, the vast majority of parents are very pleased with what the school provides for their child. The responses to the school's own questionnaire showed a very high level of satisfaction. A number stated that they are particularly pleased with the new accommodation and impressed with the quality of personal and social education for their child. Most had little concern about their child's progress and several stated that their child had come on leaps and bounds since being at the school. This was also found to be the case by the inspector. A very small minority questioned whether using most of Friday mornings for swimming is the best use of time when the new hall could be used for alternative physical activity. Discussions between the inspector and the governing body confirm that this issue is under review.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Albury CE VA 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 15 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 38 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	87	1	7	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	67	3	20	2	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	87	2	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	10	67	4	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	87	2	13	0	0	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)	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	12	80	1	7	1	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	80	2	13	1	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	80	2	13	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	80	2	13	1	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	13	87	1	7	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 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

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>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 pupils' 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.



18 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Albury C of E Voluntary Aided Primary School

Thank you for the help that you gave me when I visited your school. I was very impressed with your good manners and behaviour. You were very sensible when you spoke to me and I quickly understood that you love being at this school. This is not surprising because you go to a good school where everyone is treated as an individual to make sure they make good progress. Many of you told me that the school is a happy place in which to learn in and I agree with you. The young children in Reception are doing well. This is because they now have everything they need to learn quickly both in the classroom and in the new outdoor area. Those of you in Years 5 and 6 play a big part in helping them to settle in, by being playground monitors and taking on other jobs around the school.

Your headteacher has built up a good team of teachers and support staff around her. They all work hard together to allow you to do your best while you are at school. The teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to make your lessons interesting and provide good opportunities for you to work together with your friends on the computers. The teachers have also worked hard to improve your knowledge of sounds and letters to improve your writing. The teachers mark your written work regularly but it is not always as helpful as it could be. In the future their marking will tell you exactly what you need to next to improve and link it carefully with your learning targets. You can play your part by thinking carefully about their comments, writing accurately and trying to use interesting words in your sentences.

The staff provide good levels of care and support for you all; always taking the time and trouble to listen to your concerns. The governors are keen for the school to improve and they will be working more closely with your headteacher and the staff to plan what to do next to make it even better.

Yours faithfully

Philip Mann  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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