

Inspection of Aldbury Church of England Primary and Nursery School

Stocks Road, Aldbury, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5RT

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love attending this small village school. They are kind, open and welcoming to visitors. Pupils are proud of their school and like to celebrate what makes it unique, such as how newcomers are welcomed and made to feel part of the close-knit community. Pupils are happy and safe.

Pupils respond to leaders' high expectations, behaving well around the school. They usually carry out work tasks quickly and with enthusiasm. This means that pupils achieve well. A few pupils display low-level, negative behaviour in some classes, and teachers address this, but it can slow the pace of some lessons.

Bullying is rare. Occasionally, a few pupils fall out with each other. They have learned strategies to deal with this. This helps to build their independence and self-confidence when dealing with difficult situations. They also know that adults will help them with this if needed.

Pupils recognise differences between each other and learn to appreciate these. They show mature attitudes and compassion for each other. Some older pupils have jobs and roles, such as school councillors and sports ambassadors. These help pupils to learn about being responsible citizens, preparing them well for the next stage in their education.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Leaders have set out the small steps of knowledge that pupils need to help them build on prior learning. Staff have good subject knowledge. This means they can explain tasks clearly to pupils. New senior leaders have promptly introduced changes to address some weaker past outcomes. These ensure that pupils in this school keep up with their peers elsewhere. Leaders have made sure that more formal checks on pupils' knowledge positively affect teaching. For example, some topics are given more teaching time, giving greater opportunity for pupils to deepen their knowledge of newer or more challenging concepts. Pupils now achieve well.

Children in the early years learn through themes and topics that capture their enthusiasm. Children are then enabled to develop their interests in this topic. Staff have many resources available for children to use so that their imaginations can flourish. Children are engaged for long periods in these tasks. This helps them to become independent learners.

Reading has been prioritised in several ways. Leaders have bought a wide variety of interesting texts for pupils to read. Pupils are encouraged to share and read books through a reward system, which they like. Younger pupils learn to read by using a phonics programme. They learn to recognise, read and write letters and the sounds they make when they begin school in Reception. Pupils' knowledge is checked

regularly. Any pupils who fall behind have keep-up sessions. Some older pupils who follow this new programme have gaps in their knowledge because they previously learned phonics in a different way. This is being addressed through catch-up sessions, but these gaps can mean that some pupils do not yet have all the necessary knowledge.

Leaders of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make sure that those who need them have individual targets. These break down pupils' learning further to help them understand what they are taught in a more manageable way, focusing on what is most pertinent for them to work on next. Leaders monitor the impact of these targets and how well pupils achieve them. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Leaders have integrated the teaching of diversity in several curriculum subjects. Pupils learn about the achievements of a wide range of different people, including positive role models. Leaders make sure that pupils are well prepared for their transition points, such as preparing them for secondary school.

Pupils behave courteously. They understand that this is how to establish a friendly school environment for everyone. Pupils are keen to work hard and learn more. In some circumstances, a few children do not show that they are focused on learning as well as their peers. Teachers regularly encourage pupils, to ensure this is minimised. However, when teachers need to address some inappropriate behaviour, it can slow teaching.

Leaders and governors have the same vision and values for the school. They have established positive relationships with pupils, parents and staff. Staff feel well supported within their roles. They know that their well-being is considered and can ask for support when needed. Governors understand and carry out all of their statutory roles. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the leaders and the teachers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn about how to keep safe online. They also learn about fire safety and crossing the road safely.

When new staff are employed, leaders carry out all necessary safer recruitment checks. Leaders make sure that all staff receive regular and up-to-date training, and they check staff's understanding of the school's safeguarding processes. Staff understand and follow the procedures in place at the school that keep children safe. The updated safeguarding systems mean that communication and records are even more accurate than in the past, helping to identify pupils who require more support, such as for their mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few pupils in some circumstances display low-level, inappropriate behaviour. This means that they are not as ready to learn as other pupils and may miss some important learning. Leaders must develop a whole-school approach to managing pupils' behaviour, which all pupils and teachers can follow and understand.
- A few pupils have some gaps in their phonics knowledge. This means that they cannot fully build up new learning, as their past learning is not secure. Leaders need to ensure that teachers assess all pupils' phonics knowledge accurately so that gaps in their knowledge can be identified and addressed.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	117382
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10268648
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Georgina Ledward
Headteacher	Jacqueline Moore
Website	www.aldbury.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	23 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Lessons are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in January 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within the next eight school years.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- The school has after-school provision, which is provided by an external company.
- The headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and the chair of governors are new to their roles this year.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the arrangements that are in place to safeguard pupils, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader, considered school records and spoke with staff and pupils. The lead inspector scrutinised the single central record of pre-employment checks.
- The inspectors carried deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector considered the 66 responses and 52 free-text responses made by the parents to the survey, Ofsted Parent view. Inspectors also considered the 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for school staff.
- The inspectors viewed a range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school website.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Richard Fordham

Ofsted Inspector

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