

Aldryngton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109850
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	377966
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Head
Headteacher	Elaine Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons and observed 12 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and staff, and talked with pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, and assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined questionnaires from 191 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils are progressing in writing through Year 1.
- How well children in the Reception classes are developing their communication skills.

Information about the school

Aldryngton is a larger than average primary school. About three quarters of pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a range of backgrounds, with Indian and Pakistani being the next largest groups. About 10 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language but none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. These pupils have specific learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social problems. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is extremely low. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark. There are two Reception classes. Older pupils are taught in mixed age classes, comprising Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The school provides an outstanding quality of education. Due to inspiring teaching, underpinned by an exceptionally stimulating curriculum, the outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Levels of attainment are consistently high. Pupils' well-honed learning skills, together with their extremely mature attitudes, prepare them particularly well for their subsequent education and beyond. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Among their numerous positive comments were, 'Aldryngton is a great school, which develops children not only educationally but also socially and emotionally', 'We are delighted with the school. The teachers are enthusiastic, positive, hardworking and committed' and 'My child has made excellent progress and loves being part of a very cheerful and positive community.'

Relationships across the school are excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school is a harmonious community where pupils from all backgrounds get on well with one another and are mutually supportive. Pupils have a strong voice and know their ideas are valued. Their contribution to the school and the wider community is outstanding. Pupils' excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is evident in the enthusiasm with which they take part in the wide range of physical activities. A wealth of enrichment activities, including those in sport, music and art, contribute to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils fully appreciate the way the curriculum is flexible enough to allow them an element of choice about what to study, how to go about it and how to present their findings. Teachers are highly skilled in providing such opportunities for independent learning, while at the same time ensuring that pupils develop their skills progressively through challenging and meaningful activities. Staff keep detailed records of each pupil's progress and provide excellent guidance about how they can improve. Pupils themselves contribute to this process, frequently assessing their own and their classmates' work according to specific criteria. The complete confidence of parents and carers in the way their children are kept safe reflects the outstanding care, guidance and support provided.

The school's success owes much to the outstanding leadership at all levels. The headteacher plays a pivotal role in sustaining the collective determination of all staff to build on the school's many strengths and move even further forward. All aspects are kept under regular review. Equality of opportunity is the bedrock of the school's work. Parents and carers are frequently consulted and play a significant part in the school's cycle of self-evaluation. As a result of this approach, strategic planning is

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founded on a wide range of evidence. For example, this process revealed some weaknesses in how the outdoor area in Reception is used to promote children's learning, and this is, rightly, a school priority. The school has moved forward on several fronts since the last inspection. Teaching and the curriculum have improved and the rate of pupils' progress has accelerated from good to outstanding. This indicates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend opportunities for children in the Reception classes to learn outdoors by providing:
 - more opportunities for children to learn routinely in the outdoor area
 - prompts and materials outdoors to stimulate and support children's communication skills
 - stimulating outdoor role play areas to promote children's creative development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and make excellent progress. As children start school, their knowledge, understanding and skills are broadly in line with those expected. By the end of Year 6, levels of attainment are high in English, mathematics and science, indicating outstanding achievement. All groups of pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, progress exceptionally well from their starting points. Sensitive support for those with behavioural, emotional and social problems enables them, for the most part, to participate fully in lessons. Pupils with particular gifts and talents excel, especially in writing and mathematics.

Pupils quickly learn the relationship between letters and sounds and soon become confident readers. 'I have a digraph in my name, do you?' asked a Year 1 pupil. A focus on these skills has borne fruit in writing, as is evident from the very good headway pupils make in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 read widely, and their book reviews show a remarkable degree of maturity and insight. For example, one pupil wrote, 'This book is simply outstanding if you like a tense, action-packed thriller/spy story written for the more accomplished reader.' As they move through the school, pupils become increasingly adept at writing for different purposes. After researching life on board a Tudor warship, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 presented their findings in a variety of ways, with some choosing to make a poster and others annotated sketches or descriptive accounts. Pupils' writing becomes progressively more sophisticated. Introducing her autobiography, one pupil captured the genre perfectly with:

'As you read on, you will find the highs and lows of my life and my hopes and ambitions for the future. So buckle your seat belt and get ready for a long and bumpy ride. Aka my life.'

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Pupils make similarly swift gains in mathematics. By Year 4, most have a very secure grasp of number facts. For example, their instant recall of multiplication tables enabled pupils to find quickly $\frac{2}{7}$ of 63 and $\frac{5}{8}$ of 64. Pupils in Year 6 confidently solve problems because of their underlying understanding of mathematical principles, such as the commutative law and the relationship between fractions, decimals, percentages and ratio. Those with particular strengths in mathematics rise to the challenge of tackling more advanced work. For example, a group of high flying pupils accurately plotted algebraic expressions, such as $y=x^2$, to create parabolic curves.

Pupils’ high level of maturity has a significant impact on their learning. They are self-disciplined and well motivated. They work extremely well together in lessons and enthusiastically take on responsibilities, such as school councillors, sports captains and peer mediators. Pupils frequently take the initiative and have been influential in developing the school’s anti-bullying policy, improving school meal choices and developing the grounds. Pupils feel very safe in school and are well aware of how to avoid hazards when out and about. They have a clear understanding of the potential pitfalls in using modern communication technology. The awards of Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark reflect pupils’ high level of understanding of the importance of nutrition and exercise. Pupils’ strong moral values are evident, not only in their daily interactions with other pupils and staff, but also in their keenness to support those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils demonstrate an expressive and creative impulse, not least in their thoughtful art work and highly expressive singing.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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

¹ 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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How effective is the provision?

Pupils' progress and learning are exceptional because the quality of teaching is consistently good or better. During the inspection, all the teaching was at least good and over half was outstanding. Teachers plan lessons so that all groups are suitably challenged. Their highly effective questioning takes into account pupils' level of understanding and motivates them to learn at a fast pace. Lessons are planned to be fun and relevant and provide opportunities for independent and collaborative group work. Pupils frequently evaluate their own work and that of their classmates. For example, one pupil advised her partner: 'Try to include some figurative language.' Teachers use modern technology skilfully to engage pupils and extend their understanding. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 were spellbound as they watched a video clip about the artefacts found on the Mary Rose. In a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, pupils used their well-developed computer skills to create formulae in a spreadsheet for automatically calculating percentages. Practical approaches feature strongly and deepen pupils' learning. This was evident as a group of more able Year 6 pupils shone a beam of light on to a parabolic mirror and saw how it was reflected towards the same point from every position. Their learning was all the more relevant to everyday life when they looked at the parabolic structure of a satellite TV dish.

Such innovative approaches reflect the school's success in designing a curriculum which is meaningful and relevant. Learning opportunities are carefully planned in all subjects. In English and mathematics, pupils work in three ability sets across the mixed-age teams. Teachers ensure that there is a high level of challenge relative to each set and, within lessons, further differentiate the work. The well-qualified and experienced teaching assistants play a significant part in supporting individuals and small groups. Pupils have ample opportunities to practise, consolidate and extend their key skills in different contexts. One described a recent residential trip as 'the best week of my life'. A visit to a Tudor mansion involved writing descriptions and persuasive letters, and the study of mathematical shapes within the structure of the building. The quality of pupils' work arising from this and other similarly engaging activities showed excellent presentation, pride and progress over time. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' learning and personal development. Specialist teaching in sport and music enrich the curriculum extremely well. Pupils are very proud of their success in many sporting events, such as cross-country running. All pupils learn a musical instrument when in Year 3 and some choose to continue as they move through the school.

The outstanding level of care, guidance and support for pupils is evident in the warm, purposeful and stimulating environment. Robust systems ensure that each pupil is well known and a close watch is kept on their academic and personal development. Staff are quick to identify where pupils and their families need specific help. One parent's comment succinctly summed this up: 'Aldryngton excels at identifying where extra assistance is required and provides it very well.' This approach is evident, not least in the exemplary way in which pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with particular gifts and talents are

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supported. Excellent transition arrangements ensure that children joining the school settle in smoothly and staff take great care to anticipate and resolve any concerns pupils might have when moving into different classes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels have worked very successfully since the previous inspection. Provision has improved considerably and, since outcomes for pupils are outstanding, the school gives excellent value for money. There is a clear sense of direction. Through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and very careful tracking of pupils' progress, the school has recognised its strengths and ensured that weaknesses are properly identified and tackled. In particular, the headteacher and deputy have a detailed knowledge of the school and community. They share a determination to raise attainment further. The thorough way that staff check carefully the progress of different groups of pupils reflects the school's very strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. The school puts its commitment to equal opportunities at the centre of its ethos, and the success of its plans to remedy minor anomalies in pupils’ progress shows that its policies are having a very strong impact.

The governing body works well with other leaders and managers to ensure that safeguarding procedures are of excellent quality. Stringent checks are made at the single point of access to the building. The governing body is well informed about the school. The governing body takes its statutory responsibilities seriously and provides effective support and challenge. Individual members have recently been assigned to link with a curriculum subject in order to gain more first-hand evidence of the school’s provision and outcomes. This initiative has yet to have full effect but there are positive signs in governors’ better understanding of how well pupils are learning.

Parents and carers have a strong voice in influencing key decisions. Provision for music was enhanced at their suggestion, and they are heavily involved in developing the school grounds. Home/school links are very well established through the school’s informative website, regular consultation evenings and pupils’ home learning projects. Links outside agencies are harnessed very effectively and the school plays a leading role in the local network of schools. Community cohesion is promoted very well at a local level. The variety of cultures within the school community is drawn on effectively. Pupils talked enthusiastically, for example, about a recent ‘international

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week'. The school has identified the need to expand national perspectives and plans are in hand to make links with a school in a contrasting locality.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children soon settle in to the Reception classes and become very confident learners. They behave very well and are highly enthusiastic. Children make good progress and, as they enter Year 1, their levels of attainment across all areas of learning are above those expected. They show high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration. Due to a concerted effort by staff to accelerate the development of children's early language skills, most children make rapid gains in expressing themselves and most speak confidently. 'Look at my butterfly', one said. 'I'm putting it an envelope and posting it to my friend.' Children gain a secure knowledge of letters and sounds which enables them to tackle such writing tasks independently using viable spellings, such as 'ples' (please) and 'firwck' (firework).

Adults track children's progress very thoroughly. They work closely together to plan small group and one-to-one teaching, together with opportunities for children to initiate activities. Provision indoors is carefully organised so that children can make independent choices. There was a hive of activity during one session, for example. Children playing in the 'doctor's surgery' revealed their very good understanding of how the heart beats and pumps blood. 'OK, I'll send an ambulance', said one 'on the telephone' as her friends prepared to receive the patient. Other children were busily engaged and developing their sense of shape as they used construction apparatus, played with containers in the water tray or cut out coloured paper to make 'stained glass windows'. The outdoor provision is less well resourced and includes fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills. Role-play areas do not

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draw the same creative responses, and opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills are rather sparse.

The joint leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective in providing a cohesive programme from Reception to Year 2. For example, the improvements in children’s writing skills have been due in no small part to a joint approach to linking speaking, reading and writing. The managers are aware of the current limitations in the creative and communication opportunities in the outdoor area.

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires was well above average. All thought the school kept their children safe. They were almost unanimous in their happiness with their children’s overall experience, the quality of teaching and how the school helps their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. The inspection found that parents and carers were given good advice about helping their children at home and that they played a significant part in influencing key decisions. There was no pattern to the concerns raised by a very small minority of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aldryngton 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 191 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 318 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	112	59	77	40	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	60	74	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	31	114	60	11	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	75	39	99	52	7	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	108	57	72	38	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	32	104	54	16	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	87	46	96	50	2	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)	84	44	77	40	9	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	79	41	89	47	9	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	86	45	81	42	11	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	70	37	92	48	16	8	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	110	58	75	39	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	109	57	78	41	3	2	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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



5 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aldryngton Primary School, Reading RG6 7HR

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the very friendly way you received us. We spoke to many of you and you were very helpful in sharing your views. We enjoyed watching you learn in lessons and seeing your enjoyment in assembly. We were particularly impressed by your tuneful and expressive singing. Well done to all of you in Year 3 who are really working hard to learn your brass instruments. Your playing of 'Jingle Bells' certainly put us in the mood for Christmas!

Yours is an outstanding school. Your behaviour is excellent. Most of you enjoy school and we could see why. Teachers make lessons as interesting as possible and make sure your work is pitched at the right level. It was good to see how much you contribute your own ideas, make sensible choices and work so well with one another when you have group tasks. You have a really good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Many of you show this in your eager participation in sports. You learn to work and play very well together and willingly help each other. We were impressed with how you all do so much to help the school, especially those who help at playtimes and in the classrooms and those of you involved in making decisions through the school council. Yours is a strong and happy community of learners. Those of you in Reception get off to a really good start. What a happy and friendly bunch you are! We saw how much you enjoy all the activities indoors and have suggested that the outdoor area could be made just as inviting.

Adults at school look after you exceptionally well, so that you are safe and happy. Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better. We think that everyone at Aldryngton can work together to do these things and that all of you will want to play your part by continuing to work hard and attend well.

We hope you have a happy Christmas and wish you all the best for the New Year.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton
Lead inspector

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