

Albourne CofE Primary School

The Street, Albourne, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 9DH

Inspection dates

1–2 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has ensured that teaching and pupils' outcomes have steadily improved.
- Leaders' drive and ambition have brought about higher expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. All staff now expect more of pupils.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Teachers plan interesting lessons that capture the interest of pupils, enabling them to learn new skills and knowledge. However, teaching does not consistently build on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is now good, although outcomes for the most able are not quite as strong in writing and mathematics. In reading, teachers challenge the most able pupils well, but this is not always the case in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are respectful, tolerant and have a good understanding of other cultures.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as all other pupils in the school. Their progress is in line with that of all other pupils nationally.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils are carefully targeted and supported. Consequently, these pupils do well.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils show very high levels of care for one another. They are proud of their school, behave well and work hard.
- Children in the early years make good progress as a result of the effective teaching they receive. They are very well cared for and have very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Governors are supportive of leaders and are developing their understanding of their roles. They have recently begun to hold teachers and leaders effectively to account, but this is in the early stages.
- Some middle leaders fulfil their roles well. The less experienced middle leaders have yet to develop the necessary skills to improve teaching and pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress and attainment by ensuring that teachers challenge the most able pupils effectively in writing and mathematics by planning teaching which consistently builds on pupils' existing skills and knowledge and so deepens their understanding.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management through:
 - developing the skills of less experienced middle leaders so that they can improve learning in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that the governing body implements plans to hold teachers and leaders fully to account.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has successfully galvanised the whole school to be more aspirational for what pupils can achieve. She has ensured that staff now make pupils' personal development a priority so that they are positive and enthusiastic learners.
- The headteacher, working closely with the deputy headteacher, has effectively managed a period of change that has resulted in a large number of teachers leaving in the last two years. Through effective induction and useful support, newly qualified teachers and those who are new to the school know what they need to do to be effective teachers. Consequently, improvements in teaching have continued, so that it is now good.
- Leaders' drive and ambition to improve outcomes for pupils now permeates the school community, ensuring that the school's vision of 'On our learning journey together' is a reality; this is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive support from parents.
- Leaders have correctly identified the areas of priority that the school needed to focus on to improve pupils' outcomes. They have had a consistent focus on maintaining and developing teaching standards in the school.
- Some middle leaders provide useful support to senior leaders in driving improvements. For example, the special needs coordinator tightly tracks the performance of pupils on the special needs register and monitors the impact of any interventions. Less experienced middle leaders undertake relevant tasks, such as monitoring planning and looking at books. However, leaders rightly recognise that they require further development and training to be able to further improve teaching and outcomes within their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders now set more challenging targets that better reflect pupils' ability. In the past whole-school targets have not been sharp enough, resulting in some pupils not achieving as much as they can.
- Effective use of pupil premium funding ensures that disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as all other pupils nationally. There are a range of monitored interventions such as 'reading support partners' where pupils have daily reading with a teaching assistant, that are successful and provide value for money.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are plentiful and of high quality. Pupils show high levels of consideration, respect and care for one another. They have a well-developed understanding of different cultures. This is enhanced by having pen pals in a school in India and by discussing the similarities and differences of their learning environment with a school in Edmonton.
- The broad and balanced curriculum has recently been re-organised so that learning is grouped into common themes. Good-quality displays illustrate the richness of the learning opportunities offered. Pupils talk particularly enthusiastically about the 3D models they made, based on the sculptures of Henry Moore. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and purposeful visits, such as one undertaken by a second world war veteran, after which pupils wrote letters home from the 'front line'.

- There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to discuss and develop their understanding of what it means to be British. During one such opportunity, pupils discussed their poems 'Not because I'm British'. They wrote about the range of cultures that make up the United Kingdom.
- Sports funding is used effectively. It has allowed teachers to work alongside specialist coaches to enhance and develop their teaching of physical education. Greater opportunities for pupils to participate in sport have also been provided by the addition of more clubs after school.

Governance of the school

- A recently completed independent review of governance has been effective in developing governors' understanding of their role with regard to supporting and challenging the school. A skills audit identified gaps in expertise that have been addressed with the appointment of new governors. They have produced a detailed action plan which rightly focuses on improving the academic outcomes for pupils, to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential.
- While governors have always supported the school well, they have not challenged school leaders effectively and, as a consequence, they have not held leaders and teachers sufficiently to account. Governors now understand the importance of this and improved procedures for managing the performance of teachers and leaders performance are now in place. While they have made a good start, they realise that there is still much more to do.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a very high priority for the school and reflects the importance leaders and staff at all levels place on pupils' personal development. Highly effective procedures are in place to ensure the safety and welfare of the pupils. Staff and governors receive regular training on safeguarding and child protection. Any incidents are meticulously recorded and always followed up. Procedures for the vetting of staff are robust and regularly monitored and reviewed by the governing body.
- Regular checks on site security and site safety are undertaken so that staff and pupils have a safe environment in which to work and learn. Parents agree that their children are kept safe at school, and this was reflected in the feedback the school received inviting parents to take part in an internet safety event.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Regular and accurate checks on teaching result in leaders giving teachers concise feedback so that pupils know how to improve their work. Recommendations are successfully followed up in subsequent checks. More experienced staff provide good role models and support to less experienced colleagues. As a result improvements in teaching are maintained and developed further.
- Teachers' planning is effective. They work with subject leaders to make sure that the requirements of the curriculum are fully met. They plan interesting lessons that capture the imagination of pupils and make learning enjoyable. This is reflected in the good

progress that pupils are now making. Pupils enjoy being able to discuss their ideas with their peers, and this contributes to pupils' good attitudes to learning.

- Teachers work closely with a team of well-trained teaching assistants. They are used effectively to support pupils of all ability levels, providing good support for those who find learning difficult and useful challenge for those pupils who need to deepen their understanding.
- Teachers provide relevant and interesting activities that support learning well. Where teaching is most effective, assessment information is used well to identify what pupils already know and what they need to do next. However, this is not yet consistently the case so, sometimes, the work provided is too easy or too hard for pupils and does not extend or deepen pupils' previous knowledge or skills. This is particularly the case in writing and mathematics, where the most able pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- The teaching of reading is effective throughout the school. Younger children use their knowledge of phonics well to help them sound out words and develop word recognition. A structured approach to phonics ensures that pupils build on previously learned skills and develop confidence to use what they have been taught. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils have positive attitudes and can read with fluency. The most able readers are given a range of opportunities to extend their deeper understanding. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, these pupils were developing their inference skills by extracting meaning from a complex play script. One pupil described it as 'reading between the lines'.
- The teaching of writing is good. Teachers tackle spelling errors and develop grammar and punctuation skills effectively, helping pupils to structure their work. There are instances when the task given does not fully stretch the most able pupils to enable them to develop their writing skills. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to improve the provision for the most able writers.
- Mathematics teaching is good. Teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to use problem solving in their mathematics work. Number is taught well throughout the school and pupils' knowledge is reflected in their understanding when questioned and in the quality of work seen in books. Pupils can add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers confidently and they have a good understanding of how to do this with fractions. The most able pupils, however, are not challenged well enough to deepen their mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Marking is in line with the school's policy with teachers providing good-quality feedback. For example, in writing, teachers identify words or phrases that they want pupils to edit to improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders are highly effective in providing opportunities for pupils to develop their interpersonal skills and reflect on their personal qualities. This is seen in the very high quality of care and understanding that pupils show to one another.

- Pupils share the school's strong sense of community; they are very proud of their school and the part they play within it. Older pupils regularly look after younger pupils and they do so with great understanding and patience. When asked why pupils choose to do this, one child commented, 'It is our responsibility. Someone looked after me so I do it for the little ones.'
- Pupils are tolerant and very respectful of other people's cultures and beliefs. Older pupils talk with maturity about issues such as differences, disability and race. This reflects the highly inclusive nature of the school.
- In assemblies and worship, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on aspects of faith and belief. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility and act as good role models. One of the pupils' favourite activities is reading at lunchtime to younger pupils in the refurbished library.
- Pupils feel safe, secure and well cared for in school and this is overwhelmingly supported by parents, one of whom commented, 'Teachers are really bothered about our children.' Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay healthy, including eating healthy foods and taking regular exercise. They have an appropriate understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and say they know what to do and who to go to if they are upset or unhappy in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding about different forms of bullying. A small number of parents raised concerns about bullying. However, inspectors' checks on records and procedures and discussions with pupils indicate that school staff deal with any rare incidents promptly and effectively.
- Pupils' welfare is a priority in the school. There are excellent structures in the school to support pupils, both academically and emotionally. Leaders have invested in a learning mentor, who provides excellent emotional support for a number of pupils. One parent commented, 'The level of care here is excellent.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to their work and enjoy coming to school, as reflected in levels of attendance that are above the national average.
- In lessons pupils' behaviour is almost always good; pupils are attentive, work hard and try their best. This is reflected in the better presentation of their work which is now seen in books. Just occasionally some pupils become restless in lessons and lose focus and concentration so that their progress slows.
- Pupils have good manners, are polite and very welcoming. They understand the school's updated behaviour policy and like the rewards that are given when they behave well. Parents are positive about the school's management of behaviour. One parent commented, 'Things needed to be tightened up.'
- Pupils form good relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school. They demonstrate respect for adults by opening doors and standing aside, allowing adults to pass by in front of them.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2015, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards and made progress similar to national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. This represented a continued improvement over two years.
- In 2016, Year 6 pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was similar to that in schools nationally but progress in writing dipped to below that achieved nationally. However, detailed scrutiny of the work in the books of current pupils shows that they are currently making good progress in writing.
- In Reception the proportion of children that reached a good level of development was above the national average and follows a three-year trend of improvement.
- After two years of pupils achieving above national expectations in the phonics screening check, pupils' achievement in 2016 was below the national expectation. Leaders provided inspectors with evidence to show that these results were specific to this particular year group. Inspectors observed phonics teaching in all key stage 1 classes, looked at current work on phonics in books and listened to those pupils who had not met the phonics standard last year, read. The provision of phonics for pupils currently in the school is good and pupils are making good progress and achieving at least expected standards.
- Pupils are confident in reading and show high levels of engagement in lessons, reflected by progress seen in books. The proportions of pupils on track to achieve the national expected standard and a standard better than expected are above those currently being achieved nationally.
- In writing, pupils learn effective strategies to improve their writing and make it more interesting. Younger pupils begin by making simple edits in their work, replacing simple words with more interesting vocabulary. This is systematically built on so that older pupils change whole phrases, re-punctuate and order their writing into paragraphs. Work in books across year groups shows that standards in writing are at least in line with national expectations. The most able writers are not challenged well enough to develop higher-order skills, such as complex sentences using a variety of vocabulary. Consequently, some of these pupils are not making the better than expected progress of which they are capable.
- In mathematics the proportion of pupils currently on track to achieve the national expected standard is above that achieved nationally in 2016. However, the most able pupils do not develop their skills of reasoning and problem solving as well as they could. As a result some do not make as much progress as they should.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress similar to other pupils nationally from similar starting points. These pupils are very well supported. Their progress is carefully tracked, with extra resources and help efficiently targeted to make sure that they do well.
- The small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils are making progress similar to that achieved by other pupils nationally. The school has identified some most able disadvantaged pupils who are receiving good-quality targeted support. These pupils make good progress and are achieving higher standards.

Early years provision

Good

- The school's focus on pupils' personal development starts from the moment children enter the Reception class. A sensitive welcome, stimulating environment and caring approach make sure that the children's first days at school are enjoyable. One parent encapsulated the views of many others by saying 'The children and parents are made to feel so welcome that I had absolutely no fear in leaving my child on her first day.'
- Children settle quickly and well-developed routines ensure that they are secure, safe and confident. This builds on the good transition and induction procedures, such as staff visits to feeder nursery settings and taster days in Reception.
- Children sit quietly, listen with concentration and work in pairs to discuss their learning. They have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well, both inside the classroom and while taking part in outside activities. As in other areas of the school, they show high levels of care to one another and respond confidently to adults.
- Every opportunity is used to reinforce children's understanding of phonics, particularly when identifying initial sounds such as 'd' in December when talking about the date.
- The early years is well led and managed by the deputy headteacher, who teaches in the Reception class weekly. She provides good-quality support and guidance for the class teacher and her assistants, so that provision is good and outcomes for children continue to improve. Effective use of pupil premium funding ensures that these children do as well as all others in the early years foundation stage.
- Teaching is good. Activities are well planned with a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children can choose. Teacher-led activities develop the interest of the children with a good range of interesting tasks that they enjoy. For example, a teaching assistant was working with a group of children who were using tweezers to pick out cotton snowballs from 'flowery snow' to use in their picture based on the book 'One Snowy Night'. While developing their fine motor skills, they were describing where they were going to put their snowball and why. The teaching assistant took the opportunity to ask a series of questions that developed both the children's language and their understanding of the story.
- Some activities provided for children to choose do not always enable children to develop their skills and language. Children are not clear about exactly what they are supposed to be doing. Teachers and assistants are working hard to provide timely interventions to help children develop their learning further.
- Safeguarding is effective. All welfare requirements are fully met, including the provision of a paediatric first aider. All staff are vigilant in ensuring the environment is safe; they are well qualified and receive annual training in safeguarding and child protection.

School details

Unique reference number	126014
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10019900

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Cuttress
Headteacher	Alison Sturgeon
Telephone number	01273 832 003
Website	http://www.albournecep.co.uk
Email address	head@albournecep.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Albourne Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average school.
- Of the seven class teachers, four have been teaching for less than two years and most are new to the school.
- The governing body has recently completed a review of governance, following which some new governors were appointed.
- Most pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons across the school, including seven joint lesson observations with senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of staff, pupils, parents, members of the local governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, school improvement planning, assessment information, monitoring of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, local authority reports and school policies.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the day and observed them during playtime, lunchtime and while moving about the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6 and met formally with a group of pupils to discuss their learning, behaviour and safety. They looked at pupils' books, displays of pupils' work and the school's assessments of the progress made by pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through speaking to parents informally and undertaking a formal parents' meeting, together with 55 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View.

Inspection team

Bill James, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Bruce Waelend

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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