

Almondsbury Church of England Primary School

Sundays Hill, Almondsbury, Gloucestershire BS32 4DS

Inspection dates

21–22 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, expertly supported by senior leaders and governors, leads the school with clear vision and strong ambition. Leaders know pupils exceptionally well and have an unwavering dedication to meeting their academic and pastoral needs. As a result, outcomes for pupils are impressive.
- Teachers forge extremely warm and supportive relationships with pupils, consistently challenging and supporting them. Consequently, pupils' ability to write at length across the curriculum and apply calculation skills to solve problems in mathematics is extremely strong.
- Pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and a range of subjects across the curriculum is very strong. Year on year, high proportions of pupils exceed expected standards. However, currently, pupils in key stage 2 make more substantial progress than those in key stage 1.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported by very focused and well-targeted teaching. This ensures that their progress is sustained and continues to improve.
- Early years provision is outstanding. Teachers create a vibrant, welcoming environment to engage children. They use their incisive knowledge of children to plan a range of exciting and stimulating activities. This motivates children to sustain high levels of concentration. As a result, they explore confidently and develop secure knowledge and skills across all areas of learning.
- Pupils are extremely friendly and polite. Adults have very high expectations of pupils, and pupils' attitudes to learning are impeccable. The pride they have for their school shines through.
- The rich and broad curriculum is constantly evolving to provide a wide range of opportunities that really motivate pupils to learn. They enjoy taking full advantage of the exciting experiences on offer, which are further enhanced by visits and extra-curricular clubs.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and comment how lucky their children are to come here. One parent remarked enthusiastically, 'The school makes us feel so welcome and is always there for anything that we need.'

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment at key stage 1 by:
 - embedding the work already underway so that pupils make more substantial progress from their different starting points.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher is exceptionally committed and ambitious. His clarity of vision and drive have paid huge dividends, and the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. He is devoted to creating a supportive, welcoming and inclusive school. As a result, the positive climate in the school is palpable and adults and pupils are treated with the utmost care, courtesy and respect.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders in the school, along with governors, work as a highly cohesive unit. Their unwavering dedication to securing the best possible outcomes for all pupils at the school is contributing strongly to school improvement. Their leadership is very much respected and valued by staff.
- Robust assessment systems enable leaders at all levels to consistently and accurately track pupils' progress in all subjects. The information provided is expertly used to adapt teaching and resources as required. For instance, leaders ensure that pupils continue to develop and apply their writing skills in areas such as science, history and religious education. In physical education, teachers and pupils jointly evaluate pupils' creativity, stamina and physical skills.
- Leaders regularly meet with teachers and teaching assistants to identify how well pupils are doing and set challenging targets. This ensures that leaders swiftly improve teaching so that pupils achieve their very best. As a result, pupils are developing extremely secure subject knowledge and skills, and make sustained and often substantial progress across the curriculum.
- Staff at the school are extremely well supported by highly appropriate and well-targeted training, advice and coaching linked to the school's priorities. Leaders rigorously and jointly monitor the impact of teaching, learning and assessment to gauge the effectiveness of their support. They provide helpful feedback to teachers to celebrate successes and inspire them to continue to drive improvements.
- Leaders, including governors, evaluate the school's provision forensically and accurately. The detailed information provided is used to develop precisely focused action plans. The step-by-step detail of these clearly sets out the collective responsibilities of staff and drives improvement effectively.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed excellently and additional funding is spent very effectively. The special educational needs coordinator has an insightful understanding of pupils' needs and is dedicated to her role as their advocate. Highly effective partnerships with parents and outside agencies ensure that pupils are provided with teaching that is specifically adapted to their needs. As a result of the support that they receive, pupils make similar progress to others. Often this is marked and substantial.
- The school makes decisive use of pupil premium funding. This ensures that disadvantaged pupils are provided with targeted and skilled teaching to support their learning. Leaders and governors consistently and routinely evaluate the impact of expenditure to assure themselves that it is being spent effectively. Funding has a very positive impact and disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to others in the school.

- Additional sports funding is used very effectively. The sports leader takes concerted action to develop new clubs, such as karate, and improve teachers' confidence in the delivery of physical education. Pupils now assess the development of their own physical education skills and are acquiring sports leadership skills.
- Leaders are dedicated to developing positive working relationships with parents. The overwhelming majority of parents speak extremely favourably about the school, praising the rich and varied curriculum and the nurturing approach of staff. A parent remarked, 'I feel that teachers are enthusiastic, engaging, imaginative and kind'. Parents and carers are especially positive and appreciative about the level of extra support that pupils are given to reach their full potential.
- The curriculum is rich and varied, providing a wealth of engaging experiences for pupils in a many subjects beyond English and mathematics, such as music, physical education computing, history and science. Trips such as the visit to the Houses of Parliament and a trip to Weston-super-Mare enhance pupils' learning. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs such as running, football, gardening and film club motivate pupils to become involved in the wider life of the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is very strong. Governors provide a good balance of skills and expertise, and have a very clear understanding of how successfully the school is improving. They are particularly well organised, and their roles and responsibilities are distributed fairly and effectively.
- Governors are acutely aware that they, along with all other staff at the school, are responsible for keeping children safe. They undertake relevant training to support their understanding and regularly review the school's safeguarding procedures to ensure that they are watertight.
- Governors are proactive and visit the school regularly. They systematically challenge leaders and teachers by asking pertinent questions and observing the working life of the school. This helps them to evaluate how effectively the school is addressing priorities. They work collaboratively with leaders to drive targets for future improvement, so that pupils and staff are fully challenged to excel.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders take a rigorous and consistent approach to safeguarding. There is a clear culture that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and staff recognise the need to be vigilant at all times.
- The record of checks on all staff is comprehensive and accurate. Leaders take account of the latest guidance and provide timely and appropriate training to all staff. As a result, they can recognise signs that a child might be at risk of harm. Clear and well-understood procedures ensure that all adults know how to refer concerns within school and to outside agencies, should the need arise.
- Leaders, governors and external professionals regularly undertake checks to ensure that the site is secure and safe. Well-rehearsed drills and procedures mean that pupils

and adults know what to do in the event of an emergency. Detailed and very well-planned risk assessments help staff to mitigate the potential risks associated with trips and outdoor activities. Clear policies and practices are in place which help to ensure that all staff follow correct and safe procedures when administering first aid and medicines.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching across the school is of a consistently high standard. It is imaginative and motivating, and very well suited to pupils' interests and needs. Teachers have an uncompromising aspiration for all pupils to achieve well.
- Teaching time is appropriately exploited by teachers so that pupils are challenged and supported to achieve the very best that they are capable of. Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to give very clear explanations, modelling work carefully so that pupils understand precisely what they have to do.
- Adults provide learning which is highly effective in meeting the particular needs of all pupils. Teachers are very reflective and are quick to adapt teaching, when necessary, so that the momentum of learning does not falter.
- Teaching strategies ignite pupils' enthusiasm and inspire them to develop their persuasive writing. For example, pupils in Year 1 develop their use and range of vocabulary when reading texts such as 'Come to Mexico' and identify adjectives such as 'fun' 'exciting' and 'friendly'. They use these ideas to help them to write convincingly about their favourite season.
- Teachers and teaching assistants develop caring, supportive relationships with pupils and have very high expectations. They use their perceptive understanding of pupils to support their academic and pastoral needs very well. As a result, pupils respond extremely positively, and the degree to which they engage in their learning is remarkable. They work industriously and sustain concentration for long periods. They are very interested in lessons and clearly love learning.
- When teaching, adults sensitively and appropriately intervene, asking searching questions which efficiently check pupils' understanding. For example, in mathematics, pupils are routinely asked 'How do you know?' and 'Can you explain how you did that?' This prompts them to explain how they solve problems.
- The deployment of teaching assistants is skilfully and precisely planned, which allows adults to provide highly focused support to groups and individuals. This is extremely effective in helping pupils to develop the skills they need to sustain high levels of progress across the curriculum. Consequently, pupils can write at length in a variety of subjects and solve complex problems in mathematics. Pupils have the confidence to explain and justify their methods.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported by focused and well-targeted teaching. Consequently, their progress is in line with, and often better than, other pupils in the school.
- Teaching of mathematics is very secure. Pupils routinely solve increasingly complex problems and are not afraid to try again when they make mistakes. They confidently practise and apply previously learned skills and explain their methods. For example, in

Year 2, pupils practise adding and subtracting numbers and explore whether reversing the calculations gives the same answer.

- The quality of teaching of writing is very strong. Pupils' books confirm that they can write in different styles with the same expectation of quality in all subjects. For instance, pupils write reports of investigations into waterproof materials and stories about the Great Fire of London and the ancient Egyptians. Pupils plan their writing carefully and edit to improve it. They make good use of displays, spelling logs and phonic mats to prompt their learning and support their planning.
- Phonics teaching is extremely robust and has dramatically improved this year. Precisely focused teaching ensures that pupils are very well supported to develop and apply their phonics skills. This helps them to read accurately and fluently, with good comprehension.
- Adults make highly effective and consistent use of praise and feedback. Teachers routinely adhere to the school's marking policy. This helps pupils to celebrate achievements and understand how to improve.
- Pupils are regularly provided with opportunities to build on and consolidate learning, which leads to pupils in both key stages maintaining strong progress. However, over time, pupils in key stage 2 make more substantial progress than pupils in key stage 1. Leaders' high aspirations and targeted actions are starting to address this to ensure that younger pupils make even better progress.
- Parents clearly notice how effectively teaching supports their children. They remark positively on teachers' attention to detail, the support for pupils' emotional well-being and strong progress. One parental comment, typical of many, expressed her sheer delight at the school, stating simply 'I'm immensely happy... the teachers are great!'

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very well looked after. Their needs are understood and acted upon by adults, ensuring that learning and pastoral support is strong. When pupils and families need additional support, staff quickly seek the involvement of external agencies. Pupils say that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. At the start of the day, they quickly immerse themselves in productive activity with the minimum of fuss. Adults have high expectations of pupils and they respond well to this, listening carefully to adults and showing respect for others' views.
- During lessons, pupils confidently and independently take ownership of their learning, readily accepting different levels of challenge. Some pupils ask to have more work when they finish tasks. Most pupils, including some of the youngest in the school, persevere with their learning with minimal supervision.
- Pupils demonstrate an admirable capacity to stick with their learning, even when it becomes tricky. They are keen to 'have a go' and are not afraid to take risks to find

solutions.

- The physical education curriculum and a range of sporting activities help pupils to understand how to keep healthy. Pupils are inspired to develop stamina, creativity and a competitive spirit. The school creatively captured pupils' enthusiasm for physical activity by introducing the 'Tour d'Almondsbury', which promoted keen interest from pupils who took part in a variety of cycling challenges.
- The school teaches pupils about different forms of bullying and they are clear that discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet.
- The richly enhanced curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Core British values are threaded through several aspects of the curriculum. For example, during worship, younger pupils listened to a story and reflected on the question 'What is fairness?' They made thoughtful contributions such as 'We can share together' and 'We can be kind to each other' to illustrate their understanding.
- Pupils access a wide range of clubs such as cross-country, singing, basketball and dance. They appreciate the opportunity to take on extra responsibilities such as becoming reading buddies, playground leaders and members of the school parliament. Consequently, they are encouraged to become thoughtful, caring citizens with the confidence to actively contribute to school and the wider community.
- Most parents find staff very approachable and supportive. This gives them the confidence to speak to the school when they have concerns, in the knowledge that they will get a rapid and helpful response.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave beautifully in and out of class. They have a very good understanding of school routines and walk around the school happily, sensibly and purposefully.
- Pupils enjoy school and are considerate towards others. Off-task behaviour is very rare, but is swiftly addressed by adults when it occurs. This means that there is minimal disruption to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are confident and keen to learn, and they take part in lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They listen respectfully to teachers and settle to work quickly.
- The vast majority of pupils attend school punctually and regularly. Overall attendance at the school is broadly in line with the national average. Historically, a very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities had lower attendance. Leaders' highly sensitive and accurate knowledge of pupils and their families has led to the development of robust and bespoke strategies to support them. As a result, attendance for these pupils is improving rapidly.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy the social aspect of school and relish break times, when they enjoy chatting to their friends. Pupils are well supervised, and the very attractive and extensive school grounds provide a haven in which to explore, run and play.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Over time, pupils achieve extremely well in English and mathematics. Each year, pupils attain notably better than the national average in both key stages. The vast majority of pupils meet at least expected standards and a large proportion of pupils attain the highest standards or 'greater depth'. This has increased considerably this year in both key stages, but most impressively at key stage 2. There are marked improvements in progress for current pupils, which mean that, from their different starting points, all groups of pupils in both key stages make strong progress in English and mathematics.
- Teaching enables pupils to make a fantastic start in reading and there have been exceptional improvements this year. In 2016, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening test was broadly in line with the national figure. This year, 91% of pupils have met the required standard. Excellent support has meant that the few pupils who did not meet the required standard in 2016 have now achieved it.
- Pupils who read to inspectors did so with confidence and accuracy, displaying fluency and very good use of expression. When necessary, they use their knowledge of phonics to break down sounds within words to read words correctly. When pupils make errors, they re-read words and rectify these for themselves. Regular reading and skilful questioning in lessons prove to be highly beneficial for developing pupils' excellent comprehension.
- The standard of pupils' writing is very high across the school. Pupils form and join letters neatly and use appropriate grammar, punctuation and spelling, and their work is tidy and well presented. In mathematics, pupils practise and apply their calculation skills consistently well. Their secure knowledge and understanding allow them to accurately reason, solve problems and explain their methods.
- Over time, pupils entitled to the support of pupil premium funding and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve in line with the national average in English and mathematics. Evidence from the inspection confirms that intervention and specialist support help pupils to achieve as well or better than other pupils. A very small minority of pupils have additional and complex needs, and precisely targeted teaching is helping them to catch up.
- Most-able pupils are provided with work that routinely challenges them so that they achieve the high standards of which they are capable.
- Leaders at all levels have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in curricular areas beyond English and mathematics. Pupils reliably practise and reinforce skills across different areas of the curriculum, and their learning and achievement are strong.
- Leaders and teachers thoughtfully and expertly plan and implement appropriate transition activities for pupils before they start school and during their time in the school. This helps to ensure that they are well supported and prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The early years environment is welcoming, well resourced and inviting, both indoors and out. A wealth of thoughtfully planned and stimulating activities is provided for children. This encourages them to explore, make links with prior learning and develop knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of areas. Children are very sociable and happy, and enjoy coming to school.
- Children leave the early years exceptionally well prepared for Year 1. The majority of children meet expected standards and a considerable proportion exceed them. Each year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is well above the national average. This year, progress has been substantial. At the start of the year, one third of children were at expected standards and this has now risen to three quarters.
- Leadership and teaching are outstanding. Adults have high aspirations for children and use robust, accurate assessment to make sure that children are on course to meet and exceed expected standards. Children who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly. This helps teachers to make sure that the additional funding received is appropriately targeted and children's learning is supported effectively, for instance with visual timetables. This helps these children to make the same progress as others.
- Teachers use their perceptive knowledge of children to skilfully plan activities to develop children's reading, writing and mathematics. For example, following a recent trip to the seaside, children listened to stories, described what happened and were supported to write stories for themselves. Other children use clipboards to write orders in the 'ice cream parlour' or create repeating patterns of ice creams.
- Children are encouraged to follow their interests and initiate their own learning. This helps them to practise skills and find things out for themselves. For example, children use buckets and spades to make sandcastles, with children observing 'wet sand makes sandcastles, dry sand doesn't'. Other children use magnifying glasses to look at shells and mix paint to create beautiful paintings of watery rock pools.
- Leaders and teachers establish very effective and sensitive working relationships with parents. Communication is strong and parents very much appreciate receiving information about their children's progress in emails and 'look what I did today' sheets. They find home visits and workshops very helpful in supporting their children, as confirmed by a recent workshop which attracted 90% attendance.
- Adults have very high expectations of children's achievement and behaviour. They ensure that children's safety remains paramount at all times. They develop warm and engaging relationships with children, which fosters outstanding attitudes to learning. Children understand school routines very well, listen politely to adults and are keen to become involved in learning at all times.

School details

Unique reference number	109157
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10034473

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	310
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Simon Church
Headteacher	Paul Smith
Telephone number	01454 612517
Website	www.almondsburyprimary.co.uk/
Email address	office@almondsburyprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average primary school and has 308 pupils on roll. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the support of pupil premium funding is considerably lower than pupils nationally.
- The number of pupils in the school who require support for special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than that found nationally.
- Over several years, the school has met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, some jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. They also looked at a range of pupils' work in different subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings and discussions with the headteacher and other leaders, members of staff and governors. An inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority on the telephone.
- The inspection team observed pupils' behaviour at a break time and lunchtime. Formal and informal discussions were held with pupils and an inspector listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the day and considered 79 responses to the online survey, Parent View. They also took account of written comments from several parents.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of key documents, including safeguarding records, the school's evaluation of its work, strategic development plans and governor minutes.

Inspection team

Catherine Beeks, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Jenkins	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bragg	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector

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