

Ashleworth Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115663
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357794
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Hugh Protherough

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Tyrrell
Headteacher	Gary Law
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. He observed a total of seven lessons and three teachers. The inspector met with parents and carers, members of the governing body and staff. In addition to informal conversations in lessons, he held a meeting with all the pupils in Years 3 to 6. He observed the school's work, and looked at samples of pupils' work, documents such as the school improvement plan, curriculum and lesson planning, and the tracking of pupils' progress. He analysed the responses from 20 parent and carer questionnaires, as well as those from staff and pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The profile of pupils' current achievements in writing.
- The impact of the thematic curriculum and how effectively teachers cater for the wide range of age and ability in each class.
- The extent to which the staff team benefits pupils' achievements by setting high expectations and working closely with parents, carers and wider partnerships.

Information about the school

This very small school takes its pupils from the village and surrounding area, which includes a site for Traveller families. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils from the Traveller community in attendance. All pupils are of White British or White Other background and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The headteacher is in his second year at the school. Currently, there are no pupils in Year 2 and two pupils in Year 6.

◆ The governing body provides daily breakfast and after-school care clubs which were visited as part of this inspection.

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

This good school continues to enjoy the unswerving support of its local community. Parents and carers recognise that their children do well because the small staff team know the personalities and needs of each individual. Pupils are happy, well motivated, feel safe and continue to behave in exemplary fashion.

Numbers in each year group are extremely small which leads to wide fluctuations in the school's test and assessment data. The analysis of pupils' past and current work shows that they achieve well in a wide range of subjects. Attainment in Year 6 is currently above average and the pupils have made good progress from their Year 2 starting points, especially in English. The development of the school's thematic curriculum and new approaches to homework has led to considerable improvement in the presentation and content of pupils' writing. Although their stamina for writing is increasing, there are too few opportunities for pupils to edit and improve their work.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning are fostered successfully in lessons because teachers plan thoroughly and offer a good variety of challenging and practical activities. Teaching assistants frequently make a valuable contribution by working with groups and individuals so that work is matched successfully to the wide range of age and ability in each class. Teachers provide regular, encouraging feedback to pupils about how well they are doing, but marking does not always tell them what they need to do to reach their targets. Pupils talk very positively about the school and all it has to offer. However, the length of the school day for those aged eight to 11 is much shorter than the current recommended minimum.

The headteacher has made a rapid and accurate assessment of the school. The strengths identified in its last inspection report have been sustained and pupils continue to thrive. He is ably supported by the close-knit staff team who have good oversight of their areas of responsibility. The departure of the Traveller community has led to decisive action to ensure the sustainability of the school. The headteacher and the governing body are building on the supportive relationships that exist within the village and looking to wider partnerships to enhance further the school's provision. Initiatives such as the breakfast and after-school club have been a welcome response to parents' child-care concerns. There is good capacity for sustained improvement.

Conversations with pupils suggest that relationships with pupils from Traveller backgrounds contributed positively to the life of the school. Their knowledge of the wider world and the social diversity of the United Kingdom is less secure.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2011, extend the length of the school day so that it more closely reflects the 23.5 hours recommended nationally for eight to 11-year-olds.
- Build on recent improvements to pupils' writing by:
 - increasing opportunities for them to write at greater length and to edit and revise their work
 - improving marking so that teachers' comments tell pupils the next steps they need to take to reach their targets. These features should be established by September 2011.
- Increase pupils' awareness of the social and cultural diversity within the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Conversations with pupils show them to be happy and enthusiastic about school.

They work diligently in lessons and are keen to do well. Many are able to talk maturely about their preferred areas of study and most are convinced that the school's themed curriculum helps them to learn effectively. This was evident as pupils in Years 3 to 6 rose to the challenge of constructing an irrigation device to transfer water to land. Discussions showed pupils are extremely knowledgeable about ancient Egypt and 'shadoufs', so that throughout this scientific and technological challenge their appreciation of the skills and ingenuity of ancient Egyptians was considerably enhanced. Analysis of the pupils' previous and current work reveals a good volume of activity across a range of subjects. Theme books, in particular, show considerable improvement, with strong evidence that pupils are taking increasing care in their presentation in response to teachers' higher expectations. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are making good progress and achieve well.

Behaviour is of a consistently high standard and pupils offer a friendly and courteous welcome to visitors. They are very proud of their school and community. The 'ministers' of the school parliament work hard at their chosen responsibilities. Projects such as the creation of a nature trail and the forthcoming exhibition in the village memorial hall are further examples of the school's substantial contribution to the wider community. Pupils say they feel extremely safe, secure and valued, though their ability to assess risk is less well developed. They think deeply about their experiences and act in a principled manner. They engage enthusiastically in artistic and cultural opportunities, although their understanding of the values and beliefs of other societies is less secure. Observations of vulnerable pupils show they are well cared for and helped to develop independence and to play a full part in the life of the school. Pupils have a good appreciation of what it means to live a healthy life and talk knowledgeably about the importance of diet and exercise. Setting historic data against current high levels of attendance, overall attendance is broadly average.

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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 ¹	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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The school's thematic curriculum has a positive impact on learning. Teachers are adept at finding ways to engage pupils' interest by creating links between subjects. Art, science, history, role play and the use of new technologies frequently help to bring learning alive. Practical activities, such as measuring the amount of cloth to wrap an Egyptian mummy or calculating volume in science experiments, support the reinforcement of key mathematical skills. The curriculum is also enhanced effectively through a wide range of activities pursued in partnership with local schools. The length of the school day is considerably shorter than that currently recommended for eight to 11-year-olds. This limits the time available for teaching all subjects in sufficient depth.

Teachers plan thoroughly to address pupils' wide-ranging needs and engage them in learning. Their classroom management skills and subject knowledge are secure and, as a result, relationships between pupils and staff are extremely positive. Lessons are often enlivened by practical activities and a good variety of resources which enhance pupils' understanding. The frequent use of talk partners supports the development of pupils' speaking and listening and deepens their understanding. Well-trained teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support groups and individuals, frequently making a significant contribution to helping the few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to catch up and improve their work. Teachers are adept at providing encouraging feedback during lessons and marking always identifies when pupils have achieved the purpose of

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the lesson. Written comments to tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets are less firmly established.

Good attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. The school provides a welcoming environment that celebrates pupils' work. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils, including groups such as those from Traveller communities, are well considered and help them settle in swiftly. Effective links with parents and a range of agencies, such as speech therapy and education welfare, ensure prompt support for vulnerable pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

Conversations with parents and carers show that the leadership of the headteacher and his staff team is held in high regard. They are delighted that their children are known as individuals, and several offered telling illustrations of how the school has helped to develop confidence and enthusiasm for learning. The headteacher canvasses the views of parents through questionnaires as well as meeting many informally at the start and end of each day. These consultations have informed decisions such as the recent refinements to homework, which mean that many pupils are eager to continue their learning and research at home.

The headteacher provides an excellent role model for the staff team. His impact in helping colleagues improve further the quality of their teaching is openly acknowledged. Approaches to monitoring the work of the school are rigorous and clearly linked to the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment. As a result, morale is high and staff at all levels demonstrate their strong commitment to equality of opportunity by sharing their detailed knowledge of each individual pupil to ensure the best possible outcomes.

The school adopts thorough approaches to all aspects of risk assessment and the safeguarding of pupils. The headteacher and staff work very productively with other agencies such as educational welfare and speech therapy to support the specific needs of individual pupils and their families.

The school is a close and cohesive community. Staff and governors recognise the importance of broadening pupils' opportunities to mix with other children in the larger groups and settings that are not possible on a day-to-day basis. Strong local partnerships with other schools enable this to happen on a regular basis and considerably enhance provision. While pupils are confident and secure within their immediate locality, their

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knowledge and understanding of the diversity of beliefs and cultures across the United Kingdom is less developed.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and are fully involved in the life of the school. They work effectively with staff in determining school priorities and are currently correctly focused on establishing the sustainability of the school following the departure of the Traveller families to another part of the country. Prudent use of the school's budget, and imaginative plans and initiatives for the future, offer a promising starting point for the school's further development.

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	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	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 three children of reception age have settled happily into the routines of school life alongside their six Year 1 classmates. They show increasing confidence and join in enthusiastically with daily activities such as 'wake up, shake up', on the playground. The parents and carers who spoke with the inspector are delighted with the progress their children are making.

Staff ensure that children are well prepared for school, meeting them in their pre-school settings and homes as well as providing opportunities for them to visit the school. Teachers' past assessments of children at the start of their Reception Year show a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding, but are broadly in line with those expected of four-year-olds in all areas of learning. The data for the past two years show that each individual is making a good start to their education and achieving well across each of the areas of learning.

There has been positive response to the findings of the last inspection. Staff plan thoroughly and now ensure a successful blend of activities covering each of the areas of

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learning in both indoor and outdoor classrooms. There is a good balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead and an appropriate focus on helping children master the early stages of reading, writing and number. Literacy and numeracy sessions where children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils are rightly preparing children for more formal learning. These work well because great care is taken not to make the children sit and listen for too long and subsequent tasks are carefully matched to their interests and abilities. A recent visit to a museum has fired the children's interest in ancient Egypt. They are eager to share their knowledge of mummies and invite visitors to join them in the 'pyramid' to read their hieroglyphs.

Arrangements for assessment are thorough. Staff record daily observations of what children know and do, including photographs and samples of significant pieces of work. Care is taken to ensure the next steps in learning are recorded and shared among the staff team. The development of these individual learning journals is building a helpful picture of each child's progress which is shared regularly between home and school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. There is a sharp focus on children's all-round development. Excellent attention is paid to ensuring that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully supported in class and able to receive appropriate external expertise from other agencies.

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

At 100%, the proportion of questionnaires returned is exceptionally high. The overwhelmingly positive views expressed by all those parents and carers who send their children to the school are supported by the inspection evidence. The school works successfully to address the needs of individual pupils. Arrangements for the induction of new children and transition to secondary school are secure.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashleworth Church of England 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 inspector received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 20 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	75	5	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	30	14	70	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)	12	60	7	35	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	80	3	15	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	55	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	45	11	55	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	65	7	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	80	4	20	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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.



16 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashleworth Church of England Primary School, Gloucester, GL19 4HT

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I was pleased to be able to talk to almost all of you during the two days and the things you told me were extremely helpful. I agree with you (and your mums and dads) that Ashleworth is a good school. All the staff work hard to make lessons fun and interesting and because you listen and do your best, you are all making good progress and achieving well. School is a happy place where you get on together very well. Your behaviour is excellent and you know how to keep safe and look after each other.

You are taking much more care over the presentation of your work. Some of the writing in your theme books is really interesting. I have suggested that the teachers give you more opportunities to write longer pieces as well as having time to go back to edit and improve them. You might even do this as part of your homework. You told me that your teachers encourage you and I noticed this in lessons and in the way they mark your work. I would also like them to tell you how you can make your work even better and reach those targets you were telling me about.

I know that some of you feel that there is not always enough time to do all the things you want to at school. I agree. The school day at Ashleworth is quite a bit shorter than at other primary schools, so I have asked the governors to talk with your families to explore ways of making it a little bit longer.

You told me how safe and happy you are at school, and that the trips and activities you do with other schools are very important in helping you to meet and learn about other people. My final recommendation is that your school starts to make links with some schools a bit further away so that you can find out more about the many different people who live in the United Kingdom.

Yours sincerely

Hugh Protherough

Lead inspector

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