

# Athelney Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100672
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lewisham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376436
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gulshan Kayembe

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	414
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julia Newton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Irene Cleaver
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Athelney Street London SE6 3LD
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8697 2945
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@athelney.lewisham.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	23–24 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They made visits to 21 lessons taught by 19 teachers. Inspectors met with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, members of staff and a parent. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including the school development plan, assessment records and safeguarding policies. The team analysed completed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 50 from parents and carers.

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

- Do boys make enough progress in English, especially in developing their writing skills?
- How effective is provision for able pupils in ensuring that they achieve consistently well?
- What has been the impact of the reorganisation of the Reception area, as a result of the increase in numbers, on children's learning and development?

## Information about the school

Athelney Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school which draws most of its pupils from the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The majority of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages. Some of these pupils speak English as an additional language when they begin school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement, is above average. The majority of these pupils have speech and language needs, are on the autism spectrum or have emotional and behavioural needs. The school houses a specially resourced provision for special educational needs. This discrete facility has 16 places, eight currently filled, for pupils on the autism spectrum and is referred to as the resource base. It is in its second year of operation. In addition, the school established a federation with another local school in September of this academic year. The headteacher of Athelney is the executive headteacher of this two-school federation, and a head of school has been appointed to lead and manage the day-to-day work of this school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage includes a nursery. Due to demand for extra places locally for children aged four to five, the school has run an additional Reception class in the last two years. These additional children have not attended the school's Nursery. Building work was undertaken earlier this academic year to create an additional Reception class. An after-school club run on site by an external provider was inspected separately. At the time of this inspection, a number of staff were newly or temporarily in post including some with leadership responsibilities.

**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

Athelney Primary School is a good school. It has improved significantly since its last inspection and is continuing to improve further. This is down to the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the success with which she has embedded the ambition and drive among staff to make the school the best it can be. Care, guidance and support are exceptionally good and major strengths of the school because staff very successfully identify and address needs individuals may have in order to get them ready for learning. A rigorous and robust approach to attendance means it has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is now above average and continues to rise. There is very little persistent absence. Behaviour is also good, and at times it is excellent, as a result of the consistently applied and effective behaviour management strategies. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe here.

Attainment is improving well across all key stages. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, many from very low starting points, especially in social and emotional development and literacy. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is in line with national averages. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are often good, especially by the time they are in Key Stage 2 and they make consistently good progress in reading. Progress in writing is often good, including for boys, but not consistently so. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have regular opportunities to develop early writing skills but writing activities do not captivate boys as much as they do girls. In Years 1 to 6, writing activities are often well structured, especially in literacy lessons, but in some classes, especially lower down the school, teachers make too much use of templates or frames to support the development of writing. There are many good opportunities for pupils to practise writing in other subjects and to express their ideas and thinking freely through their writing. However, this is not consistent across the school. Outstanding enrichment, through links with other schools for example, and visits and visitors, makes the curriculum interesting for pupils and supports the new topic approach very effectively.

Pupils in the resource base are exceptionally well supported. Their needs are very well understood and provision tailored very closely and individually to each. Pupils make outstanding progress in their learning as a result.

Teaching and learning are good and consistently so in Years 4 to 6. Adults are used well in lessons to support individuals or small groups of pupils, usually those who find

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learning more difficult and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They make good progress as a result. Although there is growing awareness of the needs of more-able pupils and work is increasingly pitched at a level that extends their learning, they are not always challenged enough. Sometimes, especially where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, teachers' introductions are overlong or the pace at which pupils work is a little too unhurried. Consequently, pupils do not produce as much work of their own as they might. Marking is frequent and thorough and written comments, especially higher up in the school provide clear guidance on how to improve.

Good leadership and management have secured tangible improvements in provision, and outcomes, coupled with a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, mean that the capacity to continue to improve is good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all of it is good or better by:
  - making sure that the pace at which pupils work is suitably rapid in all lessons and that introductions to lessons are not overlong so pupils complete enough work
  - ensuring work for the more able across the school and including in the Early Years Foundation Stage is sufficiently challenging.
- Improve the standards in writing, especially those of boys, by:
  - ensuring that pupils have enough opportunities to practise writing at length and on their own in literacy lessons and subjects across the curriculum
  - providing writing activities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage which engage boys as effectively as they do girls.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils begin in Year 1 with attainment that is below age-related expectations, especially in aspects of literacy and social development. They make good progress and achieve well. Low- and middle-attaining pupils make consistently good progress. This is because work is usually pitched at the right level of difficulty for them and, for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the support is very carefully tailored to their learning needs. In lessons, these pupils often sit near the front of the class with an adult working closely alongside them. Their levels of concentration and focus help them to make good, and often very good, progress. Pupils at the earlier stages of learning English as an additional language receive extra help based on careful assessment of their English language learning needs. They make rapid progress in developing good levels of fluency in English, often achieving very well by the end of Year 6. Able pupils are performing increasingly well. This is evident in the rising numbers who attain the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics and reading. Where pupils have opportunities to write at length

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unaided, it is to the benefit of their learning. This is evident, for example, in poetry by pupils in Years 5 and 6. They write expressively, experimenting fearlessly with new and unusual vocabulary because they have been given the opportunity and stimulating material to develop their ideas.

As pupils move through the school, they grow into reflective, mature and responsible youngsters well prepared for their next step in education. Pupils get on well together and work very effectively in groups and pairs. They respect the different backgrounds represented within the school though their knowledge of different cultures and religions is not always entirely secure. Pupils of all ages enjoy eating healthily and participating in physical activities. They especially enjoy the school's recently renovated swimming pool. They make a good contribution to the school community through the school council and, more widely to the local community, through raising funds for good causes and participating in local events.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons diligently and provide clear learning objectives and criteria by which to measure pupils' success. Teaching assistants are very well used in lessons to support those with additional needs. Their interactions with pupils, through questioning and extended dialogue, are very effective in promoting their learning. However, sometimes teachers' questioning does not probe the understanding of more-able pupils to sufficient depth. Relationships are good and behaviour is well managed. Teachers explain work well, although occasionally spend too long doing

<sup>1</sup> 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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so, leaving less time for pupils to work on activities. Nonetheless, in most lessons, tasks and activities are interesting and well structured to promote the intended learning outcomes. Pupils in the resource base are taught well and their work is exceptionally well assessed to identify the next steps in learning for them. This makes a significant contribution to their outstanding progress.

The curriculum is well-developed and supports pupils' learning effectively. The new topic approach is popular with pupils and helping them to make good links between different subjects. Strong links with the local community, including other schools, enhance the curriculum exceptionally well. For example, able pupils have the opportunity to engage in higher level mathematics and design and technology challenges with a local secondary school. The curriculum for Year 1 pupils has maintained many of the features of the Early Years Foundation Stage, such as an easily accessible outdoor area, to help them make a successful transition from Reception.

Care, guidance and support for individuals and their families is exemplary. The school acts quickly to draw in expertise from a very wide range of external professionals to support its pupils. New arrivals to the school are settled in seamlessly, including the many who arrive with little or no English. The school has worked especially successfully at getting transition right between different key stages to ensure continuity in learning, especially lower down the school. Exceptionally good care is taken of pupils in the resource base and their confidence nurtured. As a result, those who return to mainstream education are very successfully reintegrated.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher's passion and vision for the future development of the school have resulted in a culture where everyone wants to improve and where 'satisfactory' is no longer good enough. Management of the school's work is well structured so that staff not only work very effectively in teams to lead subjects and different phases but continue to work well despite the headteacher's recent and wider role as the executive headteacher of the newly formed federation. The new head of school is well supported by the executive headteacher and settling well into her role. Others who have recently taken on leadership positions, whether on a temporary basis or permanently, are also getting to grips effectively with their new roles. Senior and middle managers analyse performance well on the basis of wide-ranging data. They

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use the results of their analyses very effectively to inform future actions. Intervention is swift to support any pupils or groups identified as being at risk of underachieving. Different groups are monitored well and strategies put in place to tackle any differences in the performance of these groups. Hence equality of opportunity is well promoted and no form of discrimination is tolerated. Teaching and learning are frequently checked, though this is more robustly done by senior leaders than at middle leader level. Nonetheless, teaching is improving with increasing amounts of good and outstanding teaching.

The governing body is well led by the Chair of the Governing Body and vice-chair and has developed its roles well since the last inspection. Members monitor the school's work effectively and ask challenging questions. They work in close partnership with school staff and are already engaging with the governing body of the partner school in the federation to set common objectives for the future. Members of the governing body are developing their engagement with pupils well through, for example, having tea-parties to meet older pupils and listen to their views. Governors are in discussion about taking a similar approach to enhance their engagement with parents and carers. Safeguarding procedures are well in place, including robust vetting of prospective staff to check their suitability for working with children.

Community cohesion within the school is promoted well and is very strong at local community level. A local church using the swimming pool for baptism under water; working with parents who speak English as an additional language to support their skills by providing laptops and training; working with a local Imam to promote inter-faith understanding and work with the Probation Service Community Payback Scheme to promote work with members of the community at weekends are just a few examples of this. The school evaluates the impact of this work carefully. Work at national and international levels is not as well developed.

The resource base is exceptionally well led and managed. The level of understanding of the needs of pupils in the unit is high. The day-to-day organisation to ensure needs are met is outstanding as are the links with parents and carers and a very wide range of external professionals. The resource base provides short-term places and expertise to other local schools to support them in meeting the needs of pupils they have on the autism spectrum.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their attainment levels, by the end of Reception, show a good rising trend and are much closer to national averages than when they begin. Staff consciously focus on children's personal, social and emotional development and promote it well. Children have a wide range of good quality activities which support their development and cover all areas of learning well both indoors and outside. Although there are lots of writing activities, these do not always attract boys as effectively as they do girls. For example, the 'baby clinic' had lots of clipboards to note down the baby's details. Girls relished this activity but the boys were more reticent about playing with dolls though a few did do so. In contrast, chalking on the pavement and painting the shed with water and paintbrush appealed as much to boys as girls. Almost all adults interact very well with children, guiding, supporting, asking questions and extending thinking. Children's positive responses to such interactions help them to make good progress, especially in their social, and language and literacy development. Such interactions also help children master English where they speak it as an additional language. Able children are extended well when working with adults or in activities that are adult led. However, activities that children work on independently are not always challenging enough for this group.

Children's work is monitored well and adults take lots of photographs and notes on how well children are developing. These are used effectively to inform future planning and to share with parents and carers. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The recent reorganisation and building work have been managed as smoothly as possible to have minimal adverse impact on children's learning. The Reception classes work together as a unit with free flow between the three classes and the outdoor area for most of the day. This is well balanced with part of the day spent in smaller groups in each class on more focused tasks and activities. Children of reception age who are in the resource base make exceptional progress. One parent wrote, 'When my son started in the resource base he didn't speak at all. He now talks, can count to 15 and identify colours. Without the help and support of staff, my son would not have developed so well in so short a space of time.'

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Although the rate of response to the questionnaire was low, those parents and carers who did reply were very positive about the school and the experiences of their children. Most parents and carers who provided written comments were very positive about the school. Two or three raised individual issues or concerns about the work of the school which, where possible, were followed through anonymously with senior staff and/or governors.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Athelney 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 414 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	74	13	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	68	16	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	26	52	23	46	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	40	28	56	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	56	22	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	26	52	21	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	50	22	44	3	6	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)	18	36	27	54	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	21	42	27	54	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	52	19	38	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	40	26	52	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	50	22	44	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	60	20	40	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	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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



28 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Athelney Primary School, London SE6 3LD**

Thank you for giving us such a friendly welcome when we visited your school recently and for sharing your views with us. Your school provides you with a good education which helps you to make good progress. Children get a good start in the Nursery and Reception. You told us how much you enjoy school and the frequent visits out and visitors to the school. We also noticed how well you get on with one another. As you move up the school, you become more responsible and mature and your attitudes to learning become very positive. We were impressed at the way in which those of you in Year 6 check your own attendance levels and have created a computer program to help you calculate how good it is. Staff take exceptionally good care of you and provide enormous support for those of you who need extra help with work or dealing with personal issues. The work done in the resource base is excellent and gives exceptionally good help to the pupils who use it.

Your headteacher is an outstanding leader who has led the school successfully through some very difficult times. Adults support you very well in lessons and teachers keep a close eye on how well you are doing. They give you interesting tasks and activities which help your learning. Staff and the governing body are keen to make the school even better than it is. To help them do this, we have asked them to:

- improve the teaching even more by making sure that you always work at a good pace and that work is challenging enough for those who find it easy
- make sure you have enough opportunities to practise writing on your own so that it gets better, and that boys in Nursery and Reception are encouraged to write more often.

To help your school improve, continue to do your best work at all times. We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshanbir Kayembe  
Lead inspector

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