

Aberford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane, Aberford, Leeds, LS25 3BU,

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching in reading, writing and mathematics is not good enough to promote pupils' knowledge and skills quickly enough throughout the school.
- Teaching quality is variable in most classes.
- The work set is sometimes too hard or too easy for some pupils.
- There are not always enough daily opportunities in the Reception class for children to read and write and count for a purpose.
- Pupils do not have regular chances to learn and practise spelling and punctuation.
- Questions that teachers ask do not always encourage pupils to think more carefully about their learning.
- The governing body is not evaluating in sufficient detail the progress that the school is making towards raising pupils' achievement to good.
- Middle leaders have not yet extended their monitoring to include regular observations of teaching and to enable them to identify quickly any weaknesses.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher's strong leadership is resulting in improvements in teaching and leadership and management that provide secure foundations for further improvement.
- Teaching in the Year 5/6 class is consistently good.
- Although pupils' achievement is not yet good, they are nevertheless making sound gains in their learning and progress.
- The behaviour of pupils is good, both in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils feel safe in school and show a good understanding of how to stay safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher. She observed two support groups and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspector took account of the 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection.
- She observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school development plan, the data about the achievement of pupils in all year groups and samples of their work.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a very small primary school compared to others of its type.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils that is supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- It is part of the local Schools' Partnership Trust. Seven primary schools and an academy work together to share resources and training.
- A breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body, is held daily. An after-school club, also provided daily, is run by an external provider and is inspected separately.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently at least good across the school by ensuring that:
 - activities are closely matched to pupils' different levels of prior attainment across the full ability range
 - questioning promotes pupils' wider and deeper consideration of their learning and their curiosity
 - there are more daily planned opportunities in the Reception class for pupils to read and write and count for a purpose
 - pupils have regular opportunities to develop their punctuation and spelling skills.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - middle leaders extend their monitoring and evaluation to include regular observations of the quality of teaching in their subjects, to enable very prompt identification and the tackling of any weaknesses in practice.
 - the governing body evaluates in detail the progress that the school is making towards ensuring that achievement is good for all groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards generally are in line with the national average at the end of all three key stages in reading, writing and mathematics. There is some variation from year to year, however, depending on the composition of the small cohorts. For example, the school's data and inspection evidence indicates above average standards for the current Year 6 pupils.
- The pace of progress is variable throughout the school, because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. It requires improvement to become consistently good. Although pupils in Year 6 last year made good progress overall over the year because of good teaching, which escalated progress for the majority, several pupils did not achieve the expected standards at the end of Key Stage 2. This was because teaching was not able to fully compensate for earlier gaps in learning, for a few pupils.
- In Years 5 and 6, progress accelerates and pupils achieve well, especially in reading and writing where teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils made excellent progress in describing an autumnal setting using powerful vocabulary and language, such as alliteration and metaphors. There is also some effective teaching in literacy in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' punctuation and spelling skills throughout the school show some inaccuracies.
- Children join the Reception class with expected skills and knowledge for their age. They enjoy an appropriate range of activities, indoors and outdoors, and make the progress expected of them. They have lots of chances to learn together and develop lots of skills, including personal and social competences.
- By the end of Year 1, pupils' reading levels are above average. Many pupils are able to work out the sounds that letters make in order to articulate them accurately and describe the events in a story. A few of the less able readers guess words but their repetition helps pupils to recognise them. The library has been re-vamped and is used more widely by pupils. Standards are average by the end of Key Stage 1 in writing and mathematics.
- Progress quickens in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils develop good independent learning skills through regular problem-solving tasks and challenges in mathematics. They make good progress in selecting methods and processes to solve problems.
- All groups of pupils make progress at a similar rate. This includes disabled pupils and those with special educational needs whose progress is becoming more uniform due to more carefully planned interventions.
- Those pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding, made good progress last academic year in developing their reading skills because of individual support.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching is variable in its quality. It ranges from outstanding to a little that is inadequate.
- Pupils settle down to learning promptly, encouraged by teachers' expectations of their behaviour.
- The carefully organised, daily and systematic teaching of reading provides pupils from Year 1 onwards with the skills to develop their understanding of the place of letters and sounds in both reading and writing.
- Teachers usually provide interesting beginnings to learning. In the Reception class, the children both enjoyed and benefited from singing a song that enabled them to use actions to help them with their counting. However, opportunities to practise their knowledge of letters and sounds and numbers in all activities are not regularly built meaningfully into learning throughout the day.
- Questioning of pupils can be very helpful in encouraging them to consider their actions and thoughts more widely. A teaching assistant's questioning in the Reception class encouraged the

children to transfer their number operations to a construction activity. In Years 5 and 6, the teacher's very specific questioning about describing a setting provoked exciting combinations of words with the same starting letter. However, in some lessons lower down the school, chances to develop further pupils' understanding of the link between sounds and letters and to encourage their curiosity are missed.

- Usually work is set at the right level for pupils of all abilities, but sometimes it is too hard or too easy, particularly in mathematics, so that the pace of learning slows. When teachers assess pupils' learning as the lesson proceeds, this mismatch is sometimes picked up quickly. Pupils capable of reaching higher levels in their work do not always do so because teachers' expectations for them are not high enough.
- Marking of pupils' work is regular and usually tells pupils clearly what they have achieved and the next steps to take. In several lessons, teachers check that this has been acted upon. Pupils are starting to assess other pupils' work more critically.
- Help for pupils who need support has improved and is more specific to their individual needs. Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately, including with any pupils whose tracking data identifies that they are starting to fall behind in their work.
- Pupils' personal development, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are incorporated into a range of activities, although not yet as a comprehensive, structured and progressive programme. This is also the case with developing literacy skills in other subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons. Pupils learn and play together happily most of the time and offer support to each other.
- They understand the rules, which are applied consistently throughout the school from the Reception class onwards.
- A few pupils have behavioural issues, which the staff manage well. Such pupils are not yet regularly able to manage their own behaviour, which prevents this aspect from being outstanding.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They feel secure and express confidence that the staff will address any issues that they have. Parents strongly agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- Bullying is not an issue according to pupils. There is some 'falling-out' and a little name calling which they say is quickly sorted out by the staff.
- Pupils show knowledge and understanding relative to their ages of the possible dangers they may meet. Children in the Reception class speak confidently about road safety and why they should not talk to strangers. Older pupils can explain why it is wrong to show prejudices. Internet safety is regularly re-visited during the school year.
- Attendance is above average. The school continues to monitor all pupils' attendance and their punctuality to school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is providing strong leadership. She has the support of the staff who understand the importance of their contribution to school improvement and are being empowered through their roles and responsibilities.
- The school uses regularly collected and detailed data to identify the main priorities. Central to improvement is the major focus on strengthening the quality of teaching, which is reflected in school improvement planning and in the professional development opportunities for the staff. Teachers' progression through the salary scale is linked fully to their classroom and, where appropriate, to their leadership performance.

- The headteacher has a very accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching. She is acting promptly to eradicate weak teaching and to implement initiatives to raise standards in pupils' reading, writing and numeracy.
 - Several leaders are relatively new to post and are already improving some teaching practices. The numeracy coordinator provided, for example, training for staff, following identification of division as a weaker skill, and the calculations policy has been adapted to better suit the school's needs. Middle leaders are not yet monitoring teaching and learning as part of their roles so that they are not able to always identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching practices. However, they contribute significantly to the school's capacity for further improvement.
 - The school is benefiting from the partnership with the local authority which is providing effective support for the teaching of numeracy. For example, consultants have worked with staff to develop skills in number operations, using counting apparatus. The partnership with other schools is also strengthening staff's teaching skills.
 - The curriculum focuses correctly on promoting reading, writing and numeracy. Literacy is incorporated into other learning but not often enough as part of a structured programme to reinforce specific aspects. The range of subjects and activities both in and out of lessons is well-balanced to promote creativity and to enable pupils to develop wider interests and skills.
 - As part of the coordinator's overhaul of special educational needs, detailed recording of learning is promoting better continuity of support. As a result, the provision for under-achieving pupils and for those with disabilities or who have special educational needs, is improving.
 - Almost all of the parents who responded to the on-line survey expressed their satisfaction with the leadership and management of the school and 'the huge improvements' being made by the headteacher. Communication between home and school is comprehensive, including ways to support learning.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - requires improvement because governors have not checked in sufficient detail the progress the school has made over recent years towards improving the achievement of pupils
 - has ensured that the budget is now balanced
 - has made sure that safeguarding procedures meet the statutory requirements, including in the breakfast club
 - is increasingly focused on the quality of pupils' learning.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107985
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	405144

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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Phillips
Headteacher	Philippa Boulding
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2010
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