

Aston Rowant Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Aston Rowant, Watlington, Oxfordshire OX49 5SU

Inspection dates

9–10 February 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since her appointment a few months ago, the new headteacher has demonstrated a determination to improve the school.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers provide pupils with the right level of work that meets their needs.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A large percentage of current pupils in both key stages are on track to meet, and sometimes exceed, the expected standards for their age.
- The curriculum is imaginative and enables pupils to develop both their academic and creative skills.
- Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils demonstrate an eagerness to learn.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure when at school. They have had detailed training in how to stay safe in a variety of circumstances.
- From starting points that are typical for their age, a higher percentage of children, when compared to the national average, reach a good level of development in the early years. However, children do not get enough chances to practise their number and writing skills.
- Progress for the most able pupils is sometimes not rapid enough. This is because teachers often do not sufficiently challenge these pupils or have high enough expectations regarding what they can achieve.
- The school has a new, effective system of assessing the amount of progress pupils make. However, there are still some glitches in the system and currently those pupils who are lower attainers in writing are not tracked well enough. Some of these pupils do not make such strong progress.
- Governors are highly supportive of the school. They usually provide appropriate challenge to leaders. However, as yet they do not receive clear enough information regarding the progress that pupils are making.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to secure even more rapid rates of progress by:
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations and routinely challenge the most able pupils to do their best
 - providing children in the early years with every opportunity to practise their number and writing skills
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - improving the effectiveness of the assessment system so that the progress of lower attainers in writing is carefully tracked
 - providing governors with clearer information about the progress that pupils are making from their starting points.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her recent appointment the headteacher has built effectively on the school's successes. Staff and governors have worked tirelessly to make further improvements and provide a good quality of education.
- Parents speak very positively about the school's close feeling of community. One parent expressed the views of many: 'The school is like an extended family, all pupils feel a tremendous sense of belonging'.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress to reach the standards expected for their age. Careful use of the funding ensures that disadvantaged pupils are able to participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- The primary school physical education and sports premium funding is used effectively. It has recently been used to purchase sports equipment and specialist coaching in a range of different activities both during and after school. The impact of this has been that more pupils now participate in a greater range of sports.
- The school is very inclusive and meets the needs of most learners well. Special educational needs funding is used well. Teachers, learning support assistants and other adults help to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' development and progress. This is because it has been carefully planned to support pupils' academic development and creativity.
- Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the varied activities they had completed when developing their global awareness. Pupils know about the similarities and differences that exist between this country and other countries. They speak with maturity about their decision to support the education of a child in Gambia. In art, pupils develop an understanding of the painting techniques of other cultures, such as the Australian aboriginals.
- Pupils benefit from well-organised themed weeks in the curriculum, when they explore an area in greater depth. For example, pupils reported how much they enjoyed science week and how their understanding of the solar system had been developed. Pupils were pleased to show their parents what they had learned at the end of the week when they put on an exhibition of their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are encouraged to develop an 'Aston attitude' where they learn to respect one other and care for the natural environment. For example, during the inspection pupils enjoyed taking part in identifying the birds that came to the feeders in the school playground.
- Extra-curricular activities are numerous and include choir and Italian club. These activities have a positive impact on broadening the experiences available to pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors fulfil their roles diligently. They check that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, and the physical education and sports premium, is used effectively.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and current improvement priorities. They have a wealth of expertise, and in most aspects of school life are able to provide a clear strategic vision for the future. However, governors recognise that currently they are not receiving clear enough information about the progress that pupils are making from their differing starting points. This limits their ability to ask searching questions about pupil progress, including those pupils who are lower attaining in writing.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding processes are well managed. Policies are regularly updated. Staff are ever vigilant and well trained in many aspects related to safeguarding, including child protection.
- Pupils said that they felt safe and secure at school. Parents were unanimous that their children are well looked after. They praise the effective flow of communication between home and school. Many said that they appreciated the fact that the headteacher is often available in the mornings to discuss any aspect of school life that they are concerned about.
- Issues related to the personal safety of pupils are carefully interwoven into the curriculum. Pupils, even the youngest, know how to keep themselves safe when online, and are aware of the need to tell an adult if they have any concerns or worries.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers are usually skilful in planning learning to meet the needs of pupils. This is because teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils already know and can do. Most pupils make good progress in all subjects.
- Leaders have spent time in developing their own system that assesses where a pupil is at in their learning. This is carefully matched against the expectations of what the pupil should be able to do at different ages in reading, writing and mathematics. In most cases, the system is highly effective and enables teachers to identify both where a pupil has gaps in their learning and the next steps required. Bespoke homework tasks reinforce learning in specific areas pupils may have found more challenging. However, because the assessment system is so new there are still some anomalies. For example, in writing, leaders do not currently track where lower-attaining pupils are at in their learning. These pupils' precise needs are not identified, and they are not given the additional support they need to make the same rapid progress as their peers.
- A love of books and the joy of reading is carefully promoted in all classes. For example,

photographs around the school show the most extreme places that pupils have found to read a book, such as reading in a clothes cupboard.

- Writing skills are carefully developed as pupils move through the different year groups. Effective links with other subjects, such as history, give pupils ample opportunities to write extensively about specific topics that they find fascinating.
- In mathematics, teachers and learning support assistants regularly check pupils' knowledge of new concepts. There are ample opportunities provided for pupils to solve problems, undertake practical activities and explore investigations.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons because staff give them the self-confidence to try new activities.
- Older pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility within the school community. For example, they help younger pupils to develop their reading skills by reading with them.
- The breakfast club provides a calm and pleasant start to the day. Pupils enjoy the chance to chat quietly to their friends while enjoying toast and cereals.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They know about fire safety. They also have a good awareness of other factors that can affect their safety in the rural environment. For example, they know what to do if there is a swarm of bees or if hunting dogs run through the school grounds.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They know to tell a teacher or other adult if it does occur. Pupils say that any bullying is effectively responded to by teachers. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire consider that the school deals well with bullying.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School records show that there are few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Around the school, including on the playground, pupils conduct themselves well.
- In lessons, pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning. They listen attentively to the teacher and respond quickly to instructions. Only a very few pupils reported that the behaviour of others affected their ability to learn in lessons.
- Parents consider that the school is effective in making sure that their children are well behaved.
- The attendance of pupils is similar to the national average. The school has appropriate procedures in place for ensuring that all pupils attend regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Progress is usually strong. Work in books, and the school's current assessment tracking information, demonstrates that pupils are making good progress. Year 6 pupils, in particular, are on track to achieve, and sometimes exceed, the age-related expectations by the end of the key stage. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics and attain results that are above the national average. They continue to make good progress in reading throughout key stage 1 and attain above national expectations by the end of Year 2. In writing, many pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 make exceptionally rapid progress. Across key stage 1, pupils make good progress in their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, is good. This is because leaders and governors carefully analyse the impact that the pupil premium grant is making to pupils' outcomes, ensuring that they are given the additional support they need.
- Typically, in the different year groups, the most able pupils make expected progress. However, there is some variability in the impact of teaching on their progress. This is because sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations and do not fully challenge these pupils to do their best. Some parents of most-able pupils also reported that their children were not always sufficiently helped to do well. The school has recognised this issue and has acted to improve the situation. Some most-able pupils attend workshops at the local secondary school to stretch their skills in writing and mathematics. The impact of this initiative is yet to be fully evaluated.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the effective additional support they receive.
- Published data indicates that Year 6 made slower progress last year, particularly in mathematics. This was due to a period of staffing turbulence which has now been resolved.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make good progress, and a higher percentage reach a good level of development than found nationally. Consequently, children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Children make strong progress in their communication and language skills, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. Last year all children in Reception met the expected goal in their understanding of technology and speaking and understanding skills.
- There are strong relationships in early years, and children develop positive attitudes to their learning based on the care, guidance and support they receive from staff. Behaviour is good and children were seen to share resources well. Parents are pleased

with early years, and said that their children had been sensitively helped to settle quickly into this small class.

- Leadership of the early years is aware of the strengths and areas that are left to develop. The headteacher is currently planning further improvements to the provision in the outdoor area.
- The impact of teaching on children's outcomes is generally positive. Activities provided are often interesting and imaginative. For example, children enjoy acting out famous fairy tales to the rest of the class and this develops their self-confidence. However, in both the indoor and outdoor learning areas children do not have enough opportunities to practise their number and writing skills. As a result, a lower proportion of pupils reach a good level of development in writing and mathematics than in many other areas of learning.

School details

Unique reference number	123124
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10024680

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	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Rogan
Headteacher	Eve Roberts
Telephone number	01844 351671
Website	www.aston-rowant.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.3180@aston-rowant.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about governors on its website.
- In this smaller-than-average-sized primary school, the very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- Pupils are taught in four classes. Children in the early years are taught in one full-time Reception class. The second class caters for pupils in key stage 1. The third class is for younger key stage 2 pupils and the fourth class caters for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- There has been some staff turbulence since the previous inspection. The headteacher has been in post nine months; she took up the role after several years teaching in the Years 5 and 6 class. Currently, two of the four teachers are from supply agencies.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than that found in

most schools. There are no disadvantaged children currently on roll in the early years.

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- The school has a breakfast club that is run by the governing body.
- The school is part of the Thame partnership, which consists of one secondary and seven primary schools. Schools within the partnership conduct joint training and moderate work together.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. All observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils regarding what it was like to be a pupil at this school. The inspector looked at work in books and listened to some pupils reading from Years 2 and 6.
- The inspector took account of 38 responses to the online 'Parent View' questionnaire. She also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation and policies including the school's improvement plan. Information about the performance of the school in comparison with other schools nationally was considered along with documents about pupils' current attainment and progress. Documents checking the quality of teaching and learning, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding were also examined.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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