



Almondsbury Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 109157
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278141
Inspection dates 20 March 2006 to 21 March 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Sadler AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sundays Hill
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bristol
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		BS32 4DS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 612517
Number on roll	266	Fax number	01454 202080
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Celia Madle
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr Paul Smith

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almondsbury CE Primary School serves the village of Almondsbury, which is close to the junction of the M4 and M5 motorways, and surrounding villages. The area is economically advantaged. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is low, as is the proportion with learning difficulties. The school admits 38 pupils in each year, a number which presents challenges in the organisation of classes.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which provides good value for money. Pupils make good progress in their work and achieve above average standards. Their personal development is good; some aspects are outstanding. These are the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and their understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Teaching is good, especially in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The curriculum is satisfactory. A very good range of enrichment activities is provided but more needs to be done to ensure that pupils of the same age are taught similar material. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well and make good progress. Pupils are cared for well and are told about areas where they need to improve their work; however, they are not always taught how to do this. Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed headteacher has made a good start in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses but as yet has had insufficient time to complete this task. Currently the school's understanding of its overall effectiveness, strengths and weaknesses is satisfactory, and agrees with the inspectors' analysis in most areas. The Foundation Stage gives pupils a good start to their education and is well led.

The school has made satisfactory progress in tackling the matters raised in the last inspection and is now well-placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of planning and monitoring to ensure that pupils of the same age have common learning experiences.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Their skills on starting school are above average, and they attain standards which are above average at the end of each stage of their education.

In the Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress and by the end of Reception Year most can read and write a sentence. Their social skills are well developed and they talk to adults with confidence. This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, they can solve simple mathematical problems and write in paragraphs, using correct punctuation for speech.

In Key Stage 2, progress continues to be good, although it is more variable than in the earlier classes. In 2004 and 2005, there was some decline in the standards attained in English and mathematics in the tests taken at the end of Year 6, and challenging targets were not met. The staff have identified the reasons for this and have taken effective action to ensure this decline is reversed. The work of current pupils shows good progress. In Year 6, groups of pupils collaborated to write beautiful poems in the Haiku style. They then set these to music which they composed themselves, and

performed them to the rest of the class. Inspectors were moved by this work, which was of a very high standard. Pupils with learning difficulties make equally good progress but those of below average ability sometimes do less well. The school has recognised this and is tackling the issue, for instance by successfully encouraging more able pupils to support those who find the work more difficult.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Some elements, such as their spiritual, moral and social development, and their adoption of healthy lifestyles, are outstanding. There is a strong Christian ethos in the school which is reinforced through assemblies and excellent displays of pupils' work. Pupils' behaviour is good. Attendance is above average and the school is good at encouraging pupils to attend; pupils enjoy coming to school because of the wide range of activities they are offered. They are keen to learn. They understand how to keep themselves safe, for instance by avoiding unsuitable material on the internet. They are very enthusiastic about keeping healthy; indeed, the school council monitors the healthiness of school meals and has organised the sale of fruit in the playground. All pupils have at least two hours of physical activity each week. They have plenty of opportunities to take responsibility and to become independent learners. They make a good contribution to the community through links with the village church and through collections for charity. The skills pupils will need in adult life and at secondary school are developing well. Pupils have a very good understanding of the value of art, music and theatre but their understanding of the range of cultures present in modern British society is less well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good; it is consistently so in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 but is rather more variable in Key Stage 2. Teachers prepare well and make good use of resources and information and communication technology (ICT). They provide opportunities for pupils to work individually, in groups and as a whole class. They use a variety of strategies to engage the pupils and, in most lessons, do this effectively. Care is taken to provide for pupils of different abilities and ages, as occurred in a Year 3 mixed age class in which a teaching assistant and a parent supported the teacher in providing effectively for the different ages and abilities. In a few lessons, different tasks are not provided for pupils of different abilities and in these instances some pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Teachers organise support staff well so they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Teachers create a good working environment to which pupils respond well. They answer and ask questions willingly and collaborate well. Teachers mark work regularly, keep good records and set appropriate targets. Pupils appreciate the value that teachers

place on their work, but feel that although areas for development are identified, they are not always taught how to improve them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. In the main, it provides equal access to all pupils, including those taught in mixed age classes. Although the arrangements are better than at the time of the previous inspection, they still have their limitations and do not always ensure that pupils enjoy similar experiences; the school recognises this and is taking steps to remedy it. Communication about provision for pupils in some mixed age classes is too limited. The needs of children with learning difficulties are recognised and met. Their individual education plans are of good quality and are discussed with parents. The scheme for personal, social, health and citizenship education is effective in preparing children to live safely and healthily. The school provides a very good range of after-school clubs and enrichment activities, which are well balanced between sporting and cultural activities. Music is particularly strong, the choir having achieved success in local competitions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school rightly prides itself on the good care it takes of its pupils. Pupils speak highly of how well they are looked after and how positively staff respond to any worries or concerns they may have. Parents also appreciate the happy and friendly environment in which their children learn. Good arrangements for child protection are in place. The school has trained pupils well in how to respond to emergencies. Pupils move around the school and handle equipment with an assured calm. The school has appropriate safeguards for the use of computers. Some minor health and safety shortcomings were raised with management during the inspection. Pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties are well known to staff and are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. The school has good links with outside agencies. Older pupils willingly help younger pupils, taking the support they receive from their teachers as the example. Assessment is good and recording systems are detailed. Analyses of test results are being used to track pupils' progress and set targets, though these targets and the means by which pupils can achieve them are not always specific enough to help pupils improve.

Pupils are inducted into school well. They are also prepared well for the transition to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, who had been in post for six months at the time of the inspection, has made a good start by gaining the confidence of staff, parents and pupils, and by correctly identifying the priorities for development.

These include aspects of teaching, assessment and the organisation of classes. He has consulted parents and pupils and has monitored the quality of teaching and learning, so a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is developing. Parents in particular welcome the improvements in the quality of communication between home and school since his appointment. He has strengthened the religious and spiritual ethos of the school. The school's evaluation of its own performance is broadly accurate although inspectors judged the teaching as better than, and the curriculum not as good as, the school's own judgements. The quality of middle management is more variable although most areas, including the Foundation Stage, are managed well. This contributes to the limitations in the school's ability to monitor the curriculum offered to pupils of the same age in different classes. Governors support the school very well but their approach sometimes lacks challenge, for instance when targets are set.

The school has made satisfactory progress in dealing with the matters raised in the last inspection and under the new headteacher's leadership is well placed to make further improvements.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The inspectors who visited your school very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work. We want to thank you for spending the time to do this. This letter is to tell you what we thought of your school and how it can be even better.

We think your school is a good primary school. The best things about the school are:

you are taught well and you make good progress in your work

all the adults at the school take good care of you

your behaviour is good and we especially liked the ways in which older pupils help the younger ones

the school makes good use of its links with the church

you enjoy school because there are lots of interesting things to do, especially in music and drama

you are taught to lead safe and healthy lives, for instance through sports activities and healthy eating

the teachers, your parents and yourselves are right in thinking that the new headteacher is doing a good job.

To improve the school further, we have asked your teachers to give you a clearer idea of how you can improve your work. We have also asked them to make sure that pupils of the same age in different classes are taught similar things