



Aboyne Lodge Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117141
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279995
Inspection dates 27 March 2006 to 28 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Martin Beale LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Etna Road
School category	Community		AL3 5NL
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01727 766117
Number on roll	233	Fax number	01727 766118
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Helen Ives-Rose
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs. Linda Crawley

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Introduction

This amended report replaces the version previously published by Ofsted on the 2 May 2006. The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school with a part time nursery situated in a residential area close to the heart of St Albans. There is a well above average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a higher than average proportion are from families where the home language is other than English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average and six pupils have a Statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Aboyne Lodge Primary is a very good school with several outstanding features. It provides good value for money. There is a very purposeful atmosphere throughout the school. The headteacher's strong leadership, and very effective staff teamwork, are successfully focused on meeting each individual pupil's needs. All are encouraged to achieve well, to enjoy learning and are made to feel valued. Good attention is paid to their care and welfare, including very strong links with professional agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Parents speak very highly of all that staff are trying to do. As one parent said, 'There is a genuine respect between staff and pupils, which influences the relationships between pupils themselves'. The school has coped well with the tragic loss of two teachers last year and the challenges this posed for the children and staff. The dip in performance in 2005 is being tackled robustly and with evidence of success in writing and mathematics in the upper part of the school. The good start in Nursery and Reception is built on well across the school and standards are above average by Year 6 and rising. There is plenty of good, imaginative teaching in the main school, although the more able are not fully challenged across Key Stage 1. Pupils generally progress well, although this is slower across Key Stage 1. Pupils learn rapidly in science through investigations, but this feature is not developed in mathematics where progress is consequently slower. The pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well developed and applied in many subjects. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate, although it has a slightly modest view of its achievements. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Continue the action being taken to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching by: - Providing more challenging work for pupils in Key Stage 1. - Developing pupils' mathematical understanding through investigations.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry fluctuates but is slightly above average overall. Children make good progress on starting school and the vast majority reach the expected goals for their age by the end of Reception year. This good start is built upon well in the main school, where progress is good, but more rapid in the older classes. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language benefit considerably from lessons that focus sharply on their targets, and they make very good progress as a result. The school sets itself challenging targets for the national tests at Year 6 which, although not quite met in 2005, are set higher for 2006. Standards at the end of Year 2 rose until 2003 but have fallen since then and are now broadly average. Potentially higher-attaining pupils do not achieve all that they could by the end of Year 2. The most recent group of Year 6 pupils made reasonably good progress during

their time at the school given the difficult circumstances they faced leading up to their national tests in 2005 to reach above average standards. Standards in writing were lower than in reading. The subsequent action taken to improve writing is having a significant effect and standards are now much higher. Pupils' writing is imaginative and they have plenty of opportunities to apply their skills in other subjects. Pupils make outstanding progress in science through the sharp focus on learning through investigation and experimentation. Standards have risen and are now well above average by Year 6. Standards in mathematics are above average and rising, but not as rapidly as in English and science. Basic number skills are secure and accurate. Pupils also have sophisticated ICT skills which they apply and develop confidently in a wide range of contexts.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The inspection team's judgement of outstanding is more favourable than the school's evaluation of good. Pupils respond positively to the warm and welcoming atmosphere. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school, work hard and maintain high levels of concentration during lessons. They enjoy coming to school very much and are keen to succeed. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are integrated fully so that they, and those who learn English as an additional language, take part in all aspects of school life. Attendance is above average and punctuality for most pupils is very good. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to life in the community, which they undertake with considerable commitment. They raise money for charities and present concerts for parents and friends. Pupils respond well to opportunities for them to have a say in the running of their school by acting as elected members of the school council. This stands them in good stead for their future education and economic well-being. Particularly impressive is the way in which the older pupils look after the younger ones. Most pupils bring fruit snacks and enjoy exercise such as skipping at break times to help them stay healthy. Many take part in additional physical activities arranged at lunchtime and after school. The pupils understand how to stay safe. They move very sensibly around the school and handle equipment carefully. Inspectors agree with the school's view that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school emphasises the spiritual and cultural aspects of pupils' growth through an understanding of Christianity, together with the teachings of other faiths. Moral and social issues are taught well and have had a good effect on helping pupils to understand justice and respect.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There is much good teaching, with some outstanding features that make lessons lively and challenging. Pupils have a clear picture of the purpose of each lesson and what they need to do to improve their work. Assessment is used well to identify the next

steps in their learning and enables lessons to be sharply focused on meeting individual needs, including those of pupils with learning difficulties or learning English as an additional language. Teaching generally challenges the pupils, but this is not consistent throughout all classes in the lower part of the main school. Targets for Year 2 pupils are not as high as they could be. Skilful questioning is used to make the pupils think carefully about their responses. They participate confidently because they feel that their contributions are valued. Pair and group work is used very effectively and a wide range of interesting methods is adopted. Learning through investigations has proved to be particularly successful in science, but is not used to the same extent in mathematics where progress is consequently slower. Resources are used imaginatively to motivate pupils and put learning in context. Computers and other items of modern technology are integrated particularly effectively to make lessons in many subjects interesting. Support staff make a significant contribution to progress whether this is in classrooms or when working separately with individuals and groups. Parents are now happy that homework is set consistently and is benefiting their children's progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Inspectors judge that the curriculum is outstanding, which is higher than the school's evaluation of good. The school provides a wide range of highly relevant and interesting learning opportunities for all pupils, including opportunities to learn French. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very well implemented. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is an outstanding feature of the curriculum. Additional support groups for English and mathematics enable pupils to achieve good results in their national tests in Year 6. Pupils learning English language are very well catered for. The use of ICT resources is planned imaginatively into the programmes of many subjects. Provision for personal, social and health education has a significant impact on pupils' personal development. Accommodation is good and the high quality display of pupils' work greatly enhances classrooms and other areas. The interesting outdoor play areas are very popular with pupils and enhance both learning and enjoyment. A wide range of well-attended clubs, such as the very popular Year 4 signing club, enrich learning. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits to places of interest and by visitors to the school, including parents. Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre, which promotes well their healthy lifestyles, enjoyment of school and economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a caring environment which also promotes high academic achievement. All members of staff are aware of and apply the child protection and health and safety procedures which are very clear and up to date. Pupils say they feel safe in school and have someone they can go to if they have anxieties or concerns. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are highly effective, as are those for transition into the Reception class and to local secondary schools where they settle

quickly to the respective school routines. Teachers provide pupils with clear guidance about their performance and how they can improve. This information is used carefully to plan their next steps in learning, to keep a check on progress and to set suitably challenging targets. Regular opportunities are provided for parents to meet the staff and to receive newsletters and progress reports. The support for those children who have specific learning or language needs is very good. The parents of these pupils are kept well informed of their children's progress, enabling them to give relevant support at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership which is clearly focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of all the pupils. She is ably assisted by other members of the management team. Subject coordinators are enthusiastic, committed and knowledgeable. Their roles form an integral part of the school's self-review cycle, which is thorough, and they do much to provide training and guidance to colleagues. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are monitored in a variety of ways, and the school's systematic use of assessment ensures that pupils' progress is tracked, with effective interventions undertaken whenever necessary. The school has valuable and rigorous self-evaluation procedures which take into account views of staff, governors, parents and pupils. The governing body is led effectively. Governors know the school well through their regular visits and reports from many sources. Finances are managed and targeted appropriately, including a large surplus from last year's budget, and their impact is checked to ensure that the school achieves good value for money in its spending.

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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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to my team of inspectors when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and watching you learn. There are many aspects of your school that we liked. You and your parents are right in thinking that you go to a good school. What we liked about your school: - You are cared for and looked after very well in school. - You really enjoy your work and join in your lessons well. - You work hard and do very well in tests, particularly in science. - Your written work is getting better and more interesting all the time. - You enjoy using computers and all of the other exciting resources. - You all behave very well around the school. You play nicely with your friends at lunchtime and speak very politely to your teachers and visitors. - You support each other well, such as through the 'buddy' system, and have helped the school to introduce important changes. - Your teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to make sure that you all get the right sort of help you need to help you learn. - Your headteacher runs the school very well. We are very pleased to see how all of your teachers and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. We are suggesting to them that some of you in Years 1 and 2 could do even better if the work was harder and that you could all do slightly better in mathematics. We wish you well for the future.