



Five Acres Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123006
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281379
Inspection dates 27 February 2006 to 28 February 2006
Reporting inspector Vanessa Ward AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blackthorn Road
School category	Community		Ambrosden
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Bicester OX25 2LN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01869 253193
Number on roll	232	Fax number	01869 245380
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Mark Goodson
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Miss Michelle Mairs

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Five Acres is average in size for a primary school. Half of its pupils come from a local military base, and the movement of military personnel means that more pupils than usual transfer in and out of the school. Other pupils come from four local villages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, but is increasing. A small number of pupils are bilingual. The school has gained an award for its work in information and communication technology (ICT). It has links with schools in Poland, Germany and Cyprus. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection findings support the school's view that its effectiveness is satisfactory. It is implementing a number of initiatives, which are beginning to bring about improvements. The care, guidance and support it provides are good and enrich the pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave well. The school ensures that pupils feel safe and happy. The curriculum is interesting and contributes to pupils' enjoyment as well as successfully engaging them. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage enable the children to make satisfactory progress. This continues through Years 1 to 6. However, more pupils are capable of achieving higher levels than is currently the case, particularly in writing. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features, and this is helping to improve pupils' achievement. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, but provide insufficient guidance about what they need to do to improve. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior leaders are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and know what needs to be done to improve achievement. Several important developments are being put in place, but these have yet to make a significant impact on pupils' learning, achievement and standards. The issues raised at the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. Recent improvements, and the commitment of staff to support necessary change, indicate that the school is well placed to improve further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise achievement so that more pupils attain higher levels, paying particular attention to writing.* Improve marking so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly typical of most five-year-olds. They make satisfactory progress from the reception year to Year 6, where they attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science, although standards in writing are significantly lower. A large number of pupils join and leave the school more frequently than is usually the case. This presents a particular challenge in terms of enabling all pupils to make good progress. In 2005, whilst the school largely met its targets for the levels expected at the end of Year 6, fewer pupils than predicted met the targets for higher levels. This underachievement was caused by previous disruption to their learning, including some inadequate teaching. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress, but more are capable of attaining higher levels. The effective use of national guidance and strategies is contributing to the current improvement. However, such strategies have yet to impact on standards and achievement and thereby produce good progress. Pupils with learning

difficulties and those who are bilingual make satisfactory progress because they are supported well. Boys generally achieve less well than girls, but the school has taken action to ensure that boys are engaged fully in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good because they benefit from the high priority the school places on its shared values. The value currently being promoted is love and pupils say that this has a very positive impact on relationships and behaviour. Most pupils behave well, listen carefully and enjoy learning. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a growing understanding of moral issues and they use this to discuss their views and feelings during circle time. As a result of the school's programme of cultural events, the pupils have a secure knowledge of other cultures. The pupils feel safe and know that they can turn to an adult if someone is being unkind to them. The anti-bullying boxes, circle time and the playground buddies arrangements help them to deal with such incidents and bring them to an amicable conclusion. As a result of the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles, the pupils understand the importance of exercise and eating healthily. Pupils in Year 5 manage the resources for lunchtime activities very successfully. The pupils contribute well to the school community, for example by designing and making noticeable improvements to the playground. Older pupils take on a range of responsibilities, such as acting as mediators and running the office at lunch time. Their future economic well-being is fostered well through their improving literacy and numeracy skills, and their good use of ICT.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and this accounts for the sound progress that pupils make. During the inspection, some good teaching was observed and, in these lessons, pupils made good progress. The school is beginning to address some of the areas it has identified for development, such as teachers sharing the purpose of the lesson with their pupils, so that they know what they are expected to learn. Such developments are providing greater consistency in teaching and learning, but are not yet reflected in improved standards. Teachers successfully involve pupils in evaluating how well they are doing in lessons and this helps to motivate them as well as contributing to their positive attitudes to learning. Time is used well in most lessons. However, on those occasions when teachers do not make clear to pupils their expectations, lapses of concentration occur and pupils subsequently produce less work than they might. Teaching assistants play an important part in providing good support for pupils, particularly for those with learning difficulties. Pupils' work is marked carefully and they are given praise, but teachers too rarely make clear to pupils what they need to do next in order to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and interesting and meets the needs of most of the pupils. It is enhanced by a good and varied range of extra-curricular activities. These include German, rugby and a very popular computer club. The pupils value the many clubs and activities available to them. The curriculum is brought to life through visitors to the school and through a variety of visits to the local area and beyond. Events such as 'India Day', studies of a Kenyan village and Aboriginal art, provide the pupils with many interesting opportunities to learn about different cultures. The school is increasing the opportunities it provides for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum, to help improve writing standards. Significant improvements in the resources for, and use of, ICT have greatly enhanced the curriculum. The school is successful in enabling pupils with learning difficulties, and the small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, to enjoy a full curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides the pupils with a safe and positive atmosphere in which to learn, and to develop their personal qualities. All aspects of health and safety are successfully monitored. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported. These pupils have individual learning plans with clear targets to aid their progress. The school has developed a strong system for tracking pupils' progress, and identifying where they can improve. The information the teachers collect is used well for setting individual targets. The pupils know their targets and say that they help them to improve. Although not yet successful in ensuring that all pupils reach the highest levels of which they are capable, it is an important facet of the school's drive to raise standards further. The school has very good links with parents and a wide range of external agencies. Parents comment that 'the friendly and happy atmosphere is a good environment for children to learn in'. Close links with army welfare personnel help with difficulties that arise as a result of high mobility and the emotional tension that some pupils experience, when a parent is posted to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with some significant strengths. There have been several recent changes of staffing and the headteacher has quickly fostered a strong sense of teamwork and a shared determination to bring about improvement. She has shown good leadership in identifying important issues to be tackled and in developing her staff. The headteacher and senior leadership team are successfully implementing a range of initiatives to raise standards. These are comprehensive and have resulted from a thorough and accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are early signs that these initiatives are having an impact in lessons and are leading to greater consistency in teaching. However, any

resultant improvement in pupils' progress is not yet sufficient to ensure that most of them achieve well. Staff and governors are suitably involved in school improvement planning. Parental views and those of pupils are sought and acted upon. Subject leaders play an important part in influencing teaching and learning in their subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. However, they have not played enough of a part in helping to improve marking. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and are well informed about the school's priorities, such as current efforts to improve mathematics. They acknowledge that their monitoring role could be improved. The school has successfully tackled the key issues raised in the previous inspection and has the capacity to build on its success.

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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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	2	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	3	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

As you know, we inspected your school recently for two days. I am writing to tell you what we found out. We spoke to some of you, and we would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us about your school. It was very useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy doing.

Your school is a happy place and your parents and carers speak very well of it. Your teachers give you lots of interesting things to do. You told us that you enjoy being in your school, feel safe there and know that the grown ups will always help you if you are upset or worried.

The teachers provide you with learning targets and you told us that these help you to understand what you are trying to learn. We know that some of you could achieve more and have asked your teachers to help you to do this, especially in writing. When the teachers mark your work, they tell you how well you have done. We have asked them to give you, in addition, more information about what you need to do next in order to improve. Your behaviour is good and you carry out your responsibilities very well, such as managing the play equipment at lunchtimes. You show that you care for each other and this helps all of you to enjoy learning. We hope you will carry on enjoying school and helping your teachers as much as you can.