



# Aston Clinton School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 110332  
**Local Authority** Buckinghamshire  
**Inspection number** 288637  
**Inspection dates** 13–14 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jo Curd

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Twitchell Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Aston Clinton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Aylesbury HP22 5JJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01296 630276
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	243	<b>Fax number</b>	01296 632413
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sue Hall
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Helen Shepherd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Aston Clinton is a school of average size in a village location. It has a language unit which caters for ten pupils aged four to eleven. These pupils are fully included in the school, having recreation and lessons with others of their age. Although most pupils live close to the school those in the unit usually come from further away. Most pupils are of White British heritage, a few have Asian or mixed race backgrounds. The social backgrounds of pupils are varied. Very few speak English as an additional language. Although a smaller proportion of pupils than average have learning difficulties or disabilities a greater proportion of pupils have statements of educational need. Following a term of interim headship the current headteacher started at the school in April 2006. Numbers on roll have dropped recently and pupils are now taught in mixed age classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. In the recent past there have been significant weaknesses in teaching and learning, standards and achievement and assessment. These have now been identified and are rapidly being addressed by the new headteacher. Her leadership, self evaluation of the school and management of rapid change is excellent. Her prime vision for the school, which gives priority to raising standards and achievement, has involved a big cultural shift for all involved. Governors and other leaders, such as curriculum managers are gradually understanding and embracing these changes. Overall leadership and management of the school are now good. Improvements in the monitoring of teaching and learning are proving successful.

Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. Improvements in teaching and learning have led to better progress and higher standards. They are good in the Reception class and Years 5 and 6 but weaker in Years 1 and 2 where work is not always well matched to pupils needs. The lack of pace in lessons and low expectations of staff reduce pupil's motivation and slow down progress. All the staff are highly committed to promoting pupils' personal skills and attitudes and personal development and well being are good. Staff are dedicated and hard working and all care for pupils well. Although some parents have expressed concern about the mixed age classes most are happy with the school. As one parent wrote 'My child has been given a well rounded education in a very caring environment'.

There have been improvements in assessment. New systems for tracking pupils' progress through the school have made all teachers more accountable for pupil's progress and have helped teaching become more effective. This has resulted in better achievement which is now satisfactory. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress from their broadly average starting points. Progress is slower in some Year 1 and 2 classes, especially in writing, because of low expectations, and the very limited time many pupils spend in the Reception class. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils and their parents are well informed about how well they are doing and the next steps for learning. Guidance in learning, which is now a strength of the school, has contributed greatly to better progress. The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched well through music, visits and visitors.

Pupils behave well. Their ideas and views are valued and they eagerly contribute to their school and wider community. Some do this by serving on the school council and helping younger pupils in the playground. Most enjoy school and attendance is above the national average. Vigorous exercise at playtimes and good amounts of physical education are contributing well to their good attitudes to health. They take safety seriously and are keen to help each other in this. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for later economic well being as they successfully work together and take responsibilities.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement, especially in writing, at Key Stage 1

- Improve teaching and learning particularly in Key Stage 1, by ensuring pupils are always suitably challenged and motivated and that work is well matched to their individual needs.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In the past, achievement has been inadequate, but due to significant changes already introduced by the new headteacher it is now satisfactory. Even though most children only spend a short time in the Foundation Stage, they progress well because of good teaching. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 has not been as good as it should have been because some children have had insufficient experience of school and because the teaching is weaker in some of the classes. The school is tackling this and some recent improvements in teaching are slowly raising achievement. Standards are improving in reading but remain lower in writing because few pupils reach higher levels. In Years 3 to 6 progress is now good. In 2006 standards at the end of Year 6 remained in line with the national average because of the slow progress earlier in the school and the significantly lower standards of some pupils with statements. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make the same progress as their peers because of satisfactory support in the unit and class.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are polite, confident and well behaved. They are generally keen to learn but are less well engaged and motivated in weaker lessons. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Of these, pupils' moral and social development are stronger. Appreciation of some cultures through music and art is good but awareness of cultural diversity is limited. Pupils contribute well to their community, for example, by helping care for younger pupils in the playground, raising money for charity and taking part in local and national concerts. They are clear about right and wrong and confident that rewards and sanctions in the school help them all to behave well and stay safe. They are keen to lead healthy lives through eating fruit and exercising at playtimes and in physical education. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for future economic well being because of their willingness to work together, take responsibility and satisfactory basic skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features. Good relationships between teachers and pupils provide an enjoyable learning environment. New rigorous

monitoring of teaching is successfully raising achievement and the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Improvements are inconsistent and progress is slower where teaching and learning are less effective, for example in some Year 1 and 2 classes. Some lessons are slow and work is not always well matched to individual learning needs. Clear learning objectives, which successfully aid progress, are shared with pupils in many lessons. Pupils say that these 'help us to know what we have to do and;hellip;' In these lessons pupils are sure of what they are expected to learn, know when they have achieved it and are set challenging targets for the future. Most marking is good and pupils are told what they need to do to improve. Although several parents expressed concerns about the mixed aged classes, inspectors found that where teaching is good the needs of all pupils, whatever their level of ability, are met well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a curriculum which is broad, balanced and adequately adapted to meet the needs of most pupils. Booster classes were recently introduced to improve achievement and the 'Year of Physical Activity' has focused on the need for more physical exercise. Resources in the local community are used well to enrich the curriculum and support pupil's learning and personal development. For example two specialist teachers from local secondary schools teach French to all pupils in Years 3 to 6 and pupils in all years go on visits and receive visitors. Links between subjects are insufficiently developed and provision in some subjects is dull. Pupils lack interest and motivation in these and progress is slowed. Pupils and their parents speak highly of the wide range of lunch time and after school activities available, including sports, gardening, cookery, music and drama.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support. The school values the views of pupils highly and successfully encourages them to take responsibility. There are robust procedures for child protection and the school regards health and safety as paramount. Pupils say that adults are easily approachable if they have any concerns. One said, 'I like our teachers - they help us if we're sad and help us to understand things'. A comprehensive programme of personal, health and social education ensures that pupils are encouraged to stay healthy and safe and to respect others. Those who have particular needs or difficulties are well supported. Assessment and guidance in learning are now a strength in most classes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher's highly accurate self evaluation and extremely clear vision for the school's development has successfully informed and inspired other leaders and managers, including those responsible for curriculum areas. She has delegated

responsibilities well and has included others in strategic planning and action. All leaders and managers are gradually embracing their new roles and are becoming more successful in these. Over a considerably short period of time many changes in management, staff organisation, teaching and assessment have been successfully introduced. These have already improved provision and raised achievement. Other changes such as admissions into the Foundation Stage are planned but not yet implemented. The impact on standards is slower and there is an urgent need for increased achievement at Key Stage 1 particularly in writing and further improvement in teaching and learning. Since April, development on key issues from the last inspection has been good. Given the success of changes that have occurred already, capacity for further improvement is good.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently. We were pleased to see how keen you are to learn, how well you behave and how well you are cared for.

We think that your school is satisfactory with several good features including your attitudes and the way you are guided and helped with your work. We were pleased to hear that most of you enjoy school, like your teachers and your new headteacher. We can see that she has made some important changes which we know will help you with your work.

We understand that there are plans for reception children to stay at school all day earlier in the year. We think that doing this will help their learning through the whole school. We know that most of your lessons are interesting and that you learn a lot. We are asking that all of them should be like this so that more of you are excited about learning and so that you can do even better in your work. We think that this is particularly true for pupils in Year 1 and 2 and hope that you will progress well especially with your writing.

Perhaps you could tell your teachers what you particularly enjoy in lessons and what really helps you to do well.

Thank you once again. We wish you all well now and in the future.

Jo Curd

Additional Inspector