

Alderman Jacobs Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110646
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number	288731
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Alan Alder HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	600
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barrie Vardon
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Sargent
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002
School address	Drybread Road Whittlesey Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE7 1XJ
Telephone number	01733 202403
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in the town of Whittlesey, six miles east of Peterborough. It has more than twice as many children as the average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, though growing, is small. This is also true of the proportion who are at an early stage of the acquisition of English. Although the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than the average for England, the proportion with statements of educational need is higher. The uptake of free school meals is lower than 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

This is a good school, with outstanding aspects. Leadership by the headteacher is excellent. She has developed a strong ethos within the school which ensures that pupils are educated in the broadest sense so that they develop well as individuals. The result is that they make good progress and achieve above average standards. Pupils are tolerant and develop good levels of empathy. They are friendly, confident and open. This stems in part from the frequent opportunities they have to work with each other and a good number of adults. They also benefit from the responsibilities they are given in school.

It is evident that all pupils are valued. New pupils to the school, including those whose home language is not English, integrate quickly and prosper. Pupils' health and well-being are given very good attention, and with good results. Their awareness of safety issues is well-developed. In this and other ways, pupils are able to demonstrate an outstanding contribution to the community.

The needs of all pupils are well catered for. This is illustrated by the excellent curriculum, including the very wide range of clubs available to pupils, and by the provision of a quiet area at lunchtimes for those who prefer it. A sensory garden has also been created for those who would benefit. Although not all pupils receive the recommended amount of time for PE, many do more because of their involvement with after-school sports clubs.

Pupils are very happy at school. Behaviour is excellent and attendance good, and pupils quickly develop the skills relevant to the workplace in later years. Parents' views are very positive. A typical comment was appreciative of the good communication with parents and noted that the members of staff are not 'content to rest on their laurels'. Another commented how her daughter had come on in 'leaps and bounds' and that her behaviour had improved since joining the school.

Teaching is of good quality. The progress made by pupils is good and is outstanding in the Reception year and in Years 1 and 2. However, not all of the school's challenging targets were achieved last year and pupils' writing and mathematics are not as well developed as their reading and science. A means of tracking pupils' progress so that support can be provided for individuals who may be falling behind is in place and effective. Assessment is very thorough and has led to the development of some whole class targets for improvement. These approaches are helping to increase the progress which pupils make.

The skills needed for the achievement of economic well-being are developed well, including the ability to speak confidently and to work collaboratively with others. In addition there is a good use of computers to aid learning and this is allowing pupils to use the equipment with confidence. Here, and elsewhere, improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school offers good value for money and has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the progress made in Years 3 to 6 in English and by boys in mathematics.
- Ensure that all pupils spend the recommended amount of time on physical education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from when they join the school. It is outstanding in the Reception year and in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, the standards which pupils achieve in the national tests are above average, and this marks a considerable achievement since they joined reception class. Reading and writing are particular strengths.

In Years 3 to 6, the standard of pupils' work continues to be above average, including in subjects such as art and history. The progress made in English and mathematics in 2006 was satisfactory. There is evidence that this is improving. Attainment was good in science.

Children who joined the school at an early stage of the development of English make good progress in English and especially good progress in mathematics. The progress of all groups is at least satisfactory, though girls make better progress in mathematics than boys do, which is contrary to the national picture.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are outstanding. They are courteous, polite and confident. Their enjoyment of school is abundantly evident and attendance is good. Any instances of poor behaviour are dealt with firmly.

Pupils are keenly aware of safety and very alert to any possible safety issues. This has led, for example, to the school purchasing brightly coloured jackets for those adults who are on duty at breaktime. This is so that they can be easily identified from a distance by pupils who may need them. Pupils are highly concerned to lead healthy lifestyles. For example, they are well aware of the importance of healthy eating. This is helped by the strong lead the school takes in this. They value highly the class certificates which are received by those classes with the healthiest snacks. Most do the recommended amount of time for physical education, but this is enhanced for many through their taking part in after school sports clubs.

Pupils' contribution to the community is very positive. The school council has made decisions about safety issues, the appointment of play leaders and the quality of snacks provided by the school canteen. Pupils also have responsibilities such as being monitors and reading partners, for example for children in Foundation Year.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Lessons are lively and engaging. Practical resources, such as mini-white boards are used well. They ensure that all pupils are involved and are used well to allow the teacher to assess their understanding quickly. Lessons begin well with short activities to settle pupils and to prepare them for the work to be done. There is a strong emphasis on correct terminology, children in the reception class are confident about terms such as 'phoneme', for example. There is also a strong commitment to using a practical approach to lesson activities. In a history lesson, for example, a role play exercise was used very powerfully to help pupils understand the attitudes of a previous age.

Teachers' accurate lesson plans ensure that pupils of different abilities are challenged accordingly. The questions which teachers ask are perceptive and challenging. They provoke thought and stimulate often lengthy and articulate responses. However questions are often asked largely of those who are volunteering to answer. This can lead to some pupils not playing a full part and a small number lose concentration as a result.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and it meets statutory requirements. There are excellent opportunities provided by enrichment activities in, for example, science, creative arts, and international awareness. Residential visits take place, for example, for the Year 6 to York. There are also a very good number of clubs and these attract a high proportion of pupils. They make a good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. The clubs and enrichment activities successfully reflect both local and international culture. The school currently employs an artist in residence and the quality of some of the pupils' artwork on display is impressive. Good attention is paid to teaching pupils about the effect of bullying and racism. As a result, pupils report that instances of such behaviour are uncommon.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The safeguarding of children is carried out thoroughly. There are up-to-date records of the staff of the school, as well as of the many volunteers that work with children. Child protection arrangements are also thorough and all members of staff have received recent training. Risk assessments are given good attention, and this includes educating pupils in the awareness of risk.

The introduction to life at school is handled well for new pupils, and so is the transfer to secondary school. As a result, pupils are able to approach the change with confidence. Children from different ethnic groups are well-integrated.

The marking of pupils' work is good and sometimes outstanding, with very clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils are also able to assess their own work against criteria and this furthers their understanding of what to do to improve. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils in lessons and the education plans for those with learning difficulties are clear and specific about how pupils can be helped.

The arrangements for the tracking of pupils' progress are thorough and regular assessments are undertaken. These are used to identify which pupils need extra support, and also enable class teachers to identify common areas for development in the class.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She and her able leadership team are passionate about developing the school further. There is a very strong focus on developing pupils' personal development and the success of this is clearly evident.

Subject leaders are supported well. There is a very good management of their performance, and this helps to bring about accountability. They are given a good degree of responsibility,

which includes budgeting and planning the development of their areas. As part of this they are well involved in monitoring the work of their areas, along with senior leaders. The quality of teaching is maintained by a series of lesson observations, training and coaching sessions and the monitoring of lesson planning. The school's emphasis on continuing to improve and develop has been a key feature in its successful strategy to attract, develop and retain high quality staff.

The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate. It has identified that pupils' should improve their writing further, for example. It is used well to set the agenda for further developments.

Resources are used to good effect. The school has invested in sophisticated teaching aids such as electronic whiteboards. These are used adeptly and help to stimulate pupils' interest and imagination. Value for money is good.

The governors take a keen interest and have a good commitment to their own training. They give good support and increasingly provide challenge for the headteacher.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

23 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Alderman Jacobs School, Whittlesey, PE7 1XJ

Thank you for the help you gave me when I inspected your school. I enjoyed meeting you all very much.

Your school is a good school and in some of its work it is outstanding. One of the most impressive things is how well it helps you all to develop well as people. I was struck by how confident you are. You are friendly and very easy to talk to.

I found that your teachers do a good job of teaching you. They work hard to make sure that lessons are interesting. They give you a good variety of things to do. There are also a very large number of clubs for you to go to. I was not surprised that so many told me how much you liked school.

The way you are looked after is very good. Your school helps you to be healthy and safe. I was impressed that you help in this too, for example by the school council making suggestions about what could be made safer.

The progress you make with your work, especially in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 is very good. However, one of the suggestions I am making to your school is that it should make sure that you all make as much progress as you can in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics as well. I am also suggesting that all pupils should do at least two hours of PE a week.

Very best wishes for your future.

Alan Alder

Her Majesty's Inspector