

Aveley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114836
Local Authority	THURROCK
Inspection number	290051
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Liz Kounnou

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	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pastor Alan Field
Headteacher	Miss Nicola Shadbolt
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002
School address	Stifford Road Aveley Essex RM15 4AA
Telephone number	01708 865868
Fax number	01708 869375

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving an area of economic disadvantage. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups, and almost all the pupils speak English as their first language. A small minority of pupils come from the Traveller community. Although the proportion of pupils who leave or join the school during the primary years is broadly average, in some year groups it is much higher than usual. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is well above the national average. In some year groups almost half the pupils are identified as needing additional support. A small group of boys and girls receive extra support in the school's learning development centre. In addition a separate children's centre shares the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and is working hard to improve. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement. Although leadership and management are satisfactory overall, the leadership team provide good direction for staff and has introduced a range of good initiatives to raise standards. Currently, these are not implemented consistently across the whole school so that standards by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science remain below average. The list of priorities for school development is too long and lacks focus, which slows the school's progress. When children start school in the Reception year many are at levels that are well below those expected for their age. They achieve well in the Reception class because the quality of education for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils' progress slows because it is uneven when they move through Key Stages 1 and 2, although their achievement overall by Year 6 is satisfactory.

The satisfactory care and guidance provided for pupils includes a good new system to involve both them and their parents in termly learning agreements with their teachers. The agreements record each pupil's success, and targets to achieve next. However, the information gathered from these, and the regular assessments of pupils' work, is not used well enough to ensure that lessons are sufficiently challenging for all pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Nonetheless, pupils do not enjoy all of their lessons. In many there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and organise themselves.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory with some good features. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons, but a few do not behave well in the playground. The school council is a good example of the effective contribution that pupils make to the school community. Staff regularly draw on their ideas. Good partnerships have been formed with parents and are beginning to make a difference to children's achievement, especially in the Foundation Stage. The majority of parents have positive views about the school, one wrote 'I moved my child here and it's the best move we have made.'

The curriculum is satisfactory. School leaders are well aware of this and are bringing about improvements. A good initiative has been to review the type of curriculum activities that are provided to make learning more interesting for pupils, and to provide more opportunities for them to be creative. The aim is for pupils to develop better skills in communication and thinking. This is a work in progress and whilst there is some evidence that it is beginning to make a difference, there is inconsistency in the way that teachers are implementing improvements.

School self evaluation is satisfactory and uses a number of suitable ways to check how well things are going. However, these are not always linked clearly to pupils' achievements and this means that some evaluations are not accurate. Currently the school provides satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to bring about the improvements that are needed to raise standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make clearer links between the information gained from regular assessments, the termly learning agreements and teachers' planning, to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Reduce the number of priorities for school development and regularly evaluate what difference these make for the pupils, to ensure that school initiatives have a positive impact on raising attainment.

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be creative and to develop their communication and thinking skills, in order to increase pupils' motivation and raise standards further.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are typically below average in English, mathematics and science. Taking account of pupils' attainment on entry to school, their overall progress and achievements are satisfactory. Pupils' progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is uneven because there is not a sharp enough focus on ensuring that pupils build on their skills well enough from year to year. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress, including the small group who receive extra support in the learning development centre. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, making good progress because they enjoy the wide range of challenging activities that are provided for them throughout the day. By the time they leave the Reception class they have caught up considerably and many pupils meet the goals expected by the end of reception.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Most pupils understand the set of core values drawn up to underpin moral and social development. This has improved pupils' behaviour so that most behave well, particularly in lessons. Nonetheless, some pupils are concerned about their safety. They feel that there is a small minority of pupils whose aggressive behaviour is not dealt with effectively enough.

Pupils enjoy school, especially the good range of clubs and activities, but do not always enjoy lessons. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved due to vigorous monitoring. Pupils take part in lots of local activities and regularly raise funds for charity. In addition to the effective school council, who manage their own budget, there is an Eco-council responsible for the school environment. Pupils have a good understanding of ways of healthy living, and take plenty of physical activity, particularly in after school clubs. They are learning basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT), literacy, and numeracy at a satisfactory rate. This, with some opportunities to work in teams and manage a budget, is preparing them reasonably for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils particularly appreciate the support they receive from teachers. 'We like it because Miss always helps us and we know what to do so that we don't get in a muddle'. They know what to do because teachers regularly share learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons and are beginning to ask pupils to assess how well they have done at the end of each lesson. This provides staff with a clear view of pupils'

confidence and progress in lessons. Whilst teachers regularly plan separate activities for children of differing abilities, these are not always well matched to pupils' existing skills and level of understanding. There is often a lack of challenge for pupils of all abilities and this contributes to pupils' lack of interest in some lessons. Learning support assistants work effectively in partnership with teachers and contribute well to the good relationships that exist between staff and pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school is working to make it more interesting and relevant by teaching core learning skills and linking subjects together and this is beginning to improve pupils' enjoyment of lessons. There is a good range of enjoyable and popular extra-curricular activities and trips, such as designing costumes for a European Giant carnival. All pupils learn French. In the Foundation Stage children have a lot of fun as they learn, getting very sticky finding out how many ways there are to glue spots on a ladybird to make ten.

Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are grouped by ability for English and mathematics to provide more relevant lessons for pupils of all abilities. This has led to some success, but the curriculum is not tailored sharply enough to meet the needs of all the pupils in each set. The satisfactory provision for those who have learning difficulties and disabilities is extensive. However, it is not planned systematically and is currently under review. The learning development centre provides a safe and secure environment for pupils who have particular learning difficulties.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pupils trust the adults and feel they are listened to. The learning development centre is representative of the good support for all vulnerable pupils and those with emotional difficulties. This includes counselling, and extra support through the good links with parents and other agencies. There are robust procedures to ensure pupils' safety and protection. However, safeguarding policies have tackled, but not completely eliminated, racism and bullying.

Work is assessed regularly but pupils do not make the consistently good progress that is needed to raise standards. This is mainly because there are not clear links between:

- the information gained from assessments
- the short-term targets that are set for pupils
- the planning for different groups of pupils in lessons.

This leads to inconsistent progress as pupils move from year to year. Pupils, parents and teachers are engaged in termly learning conferences to review and set individual targets. Although pupils find this academic guidance useful, many do not remember their targets. Teachers vary in how often they refer to them, for example, through their marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has successfully created a team ethos in the school so that all staff are committed to raising standards and making

learning more enjoyable for all the pupils. School leaders are well aware of the most important weaknesses. A number of potentially good initiatives have been introduced. For example, helpful support from external consultants has been purchased to completely review management systems and the whole curriculum. The initiatives have had variable success for two main reasons. Firstly, school leaders do not evaluate the impact of each initiative on pupils' achievement and personal development rigorously, and this leads to inconsistency in the way that new policies are implemented. Secondly, the list of priorities in the school development plan is too long so that there is not a clear enough focus among all staff and governors on the most important areas for improvement. Governance is satisfactory, with strengths in the support that governors provide for the school and the good level of challenge for the leadership team.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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

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

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?	3
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	3
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	3
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

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils,

Aveley Primary School, Stifford Road, Aveley, Essex, RM11 4AA

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. Your school is satisfactory and Miss Shadbolt, all the staff and governors are working hard to improve it so that you learn more quickly.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school.

- Children in the Reception class have a lot of fun and learn well.
- The school council and the Eco-council show how well you work together to make the school and your local community better.
- Everyone has worked hard to involve your parents in the school so that they know your targets and can help you more with your work.
- You behave well in most of your lessons.
- You know how to keep yourselves healthy.

We have asked the governors, Miss Shadbolt, and your teachers to do three things to help make your school even better:

- to look carefully at how well you are doing and what you need to learn next before they plan your lessons, so that you build on what you already know and make better progress in your work.
- to check and see if all of the new systems that have been introduced to improve the school are helping you to learn more quickly.
- to try and make some of your lessons more enjoyable and more challenging for you; so that you think hard, find the work interesting, and reach higher standards.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully

Liz Kounnou Lead Inspector