



Attleborough Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120780
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291854
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Heather Weston HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	7 Norwich Road
School category	Community		Attleborough
Age range of pupils	4–7		Norfolk NR17 2AJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01953 453127
Number on roll (school)	309	Fax number	01953 457494
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Mark Stamps
		Headteacher	Mrs Gill Cook
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2001		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007	Inspection number 291854
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Attleborough Infant School is a larger than average sized primary school, serving the growing town of Attleborough and surrounding communities. It shares its site with Attleborough High School. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. A lower than average number take free school meals. There is a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, some of whom have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is the same as in most schools nationally. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is similar to the national average, but several of these pupils have complex difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Attleborough Infant School is satisfactory.

The school has been through a period of significant instability prior to the appointment of the current headteacher last September. Attainment on entry is slightly below average. Standards reached by Year 2 pupils, having been slightly above average for two years, fell in 2006 to slightly below average in writing and mathematics, with a significant drop in standards in mathematics. This was because able pupils did less well than in previous years. In 2005, key decisions to change practice had been made without considering the need to evaluate their impact on standards. An example was the decision by some teachers to drop the daily teaching of mathematics. These actions contributed to the drop in achievement and standards in 2006. As a result of the re-introduction of daily numeracy and literacy lessons, current pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Assessment data is being used to track progress, but there has been a lack of rigour in the use of the data to improve provision for particular groups of pupils. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities when supported by teaching assistants make particularly good progress. However more able pupils, some pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, do not make as much progress as others because activities are not planned to meet their needs.

The curriculum meets is enhanced by the 'Do Different' project to develop a creative curriculum, which provides pupils with good enrichment opportunities. Teaching is satisfactory and much teaching in Reception and Year 2 is good. Exciting and engaging practical activities are provided in some classes to promote learning. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop independence and to collaborate. The planning of practical activities, to ensure that pupils gain the depth of understanding required to learn effectively, is limited, particularly in Year 1. This restricts pupils' understanding, particularly in mathematics and science. There is too little emphasis on problem solving and investigational work and so pupils are not given the opportunity to apply their skills in different contexts. Pupils in the Foundation Stage have too few opportunities for activity based learning.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory; they enjoy school, feel safe and have a good understanding of how to be healthy. Their attitude to learning is mostly positive and they are able to contribute to the development of the school through the school council.

The school has had problems because of changes in leadership and staffing. Faster progress has been made in the last term, because the headteacher gives clear strategic direction and together with the leadership team is moving the school forward. Its ability to evaluate its own impact and quality is now good.

The school provides satisfactory value for money and is well placed to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment to plan activities in lessons which meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Ensure that the curriculum includes opportunities for problem solving and investigational work and encourages pupils to collaborate and work independently.
- Ensure that pupils in Foundation Stage receive a curriculum that places greater emphasis on activity based learning, and that these learning opportunities are continued into Year 1.
- Ensure pupils throughout the school have access to practical activities and appropriate resources to support their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is slightly below average because pupils' communication, language and literacy skills and their personal, social and emotional skills are less well developed than those of pupils nationally. This affects all aspects of their learning. In their Reception year, pupils make satisfactory progress.

In 2004 and 2005, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were just above average, with pupils reaching standards in reading consistently higher than average, and higher than those attained in writing and mathematics. In 2006, standards dropped in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in reading remained just above average, but standards in writing and mathematics dropped to just below average with a significant drop in standards in mathematics. In 2006, pupils on 'school action plus' of the special educational needs register made good progress in reading and better progress in both reading and writing than those pupils on 'school action'. Standards attained by pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly in reading and writing, were below those attained by similar groups nationally.

Data from the academic year 2005/06 demonstrates that there was underachievement in both writing and mathematics throughout the school. Evidence from the autumn term in 2006 demonstrates improved, satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Several letters from parents say that their children develop into well rounded individuals because of the positive atmosphere in school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and they understand the importance of looking after themselves through eating healthily and exercising frequently. They feel safe and know that members of staff are ready to listen to any concerns they have. Pupils benefit from the good adult to pupil ratio and so have adults to help them with their work. Most pupils enjoy school. Pupils know right from wrong. Consequently, behaviour is mostly good and there have been very few exclusions, but a few boys play too boisterously in the playground showing a lack

of concern for others. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils contribute to the school's development through the school council, and as monitors and helpers. Pupils join the junior school adequately prepared academically and personally.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features and pupils make satisfactory progress. They enjoy school and generally show a good attitude towards their learning. However, in some lessons activities do not match the needs of all the children and some pupils become fidgety. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and planning across the year groups is consistent and detailed. In some classes assessment is used systematically to plan appropriate activities for particular groups of children, for example gifted and talented pupils, and pupils with English as an additional language, but this practice is not consistent in all classes. There is a variety of different group activities in most lessons and, particularly where teaching is good, opportunities are provided for children to work independently and develop collaborative working skills. Interactive white boards are at times used well to motivate and stimulate pupils, but much of their use is not truly interactive and is too formal. Practical activities for pupils are planned, but too often, particularly in Year 1, there is a reliance on work sheets and pupils do not have access to appropriate resources to support their learning. The newly introduced marking system is being used well in some classes, but practice is as yet inconsistent.

Behaviour is generally managed effectively and pupils are encouraged to work well by adults' regular use of praise. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide very good support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides satisfactory provision for basic skills and meets the needs of most pupils. The introduction of the 'Do Different' project is being enthusiastically embraced by the school community and is successfully providing enrichment opportunities for all pupils. Modular work on space is providing stimuli for all areas of the curriculum, in particular writing and science. A video about an alien, made in a Year 2 class, is very motivating. Pupils enjoy the clubs provided through the project and the out of school activities, which effectively enrich the curriculum. Pupils are taught ways to stay safe and be healthy. In the Foundation Stage there are not enough opportunities for pupils to make choices and develop their learning through practical activities. The school has identified pupils who find learning literacy skills difficult but does not provide sufficient additional small group teaching to accelerate their progress. More able pupils are not fully challenged, either in class or beyond the classroom. The

school is not doing enough to support the few pupils with early English by, for example, teaching them key phrases and words each day in small groups.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The staff provide pupils with a supportive learning environment in class. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem because of the good relationships between all members of the school community. Pupils have targets in literacy and numeracy, but most do not know their targets, and only some older pupils use them to check how well they are getting on.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Since the headteacher joined the school, she has given good attention to all areas of welfare, health and safety and staff have received suitable training. The partnership with parents and outside agencies ensures that the needs of pupils with statements of special educational need are met well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher quickly identified a range of areas for improvement, and took swift action to address the most urgent issues, such as safeguarding pupils and fire procedures. Staff did not share a common purpose or have shared expectations regarding standards, although they had a clear commitment to the pupils. The headteacher, supported by the leadership team, has ensured that there is a clear focus throughout the school on the need to improve progress and raise standards.

Subject leadership is an identified area for development and action is being taken to ensure that subject leaders fully contribute to school self-evaluation and to school improvement.

The governing body is aware that they did not have a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and were not entirely fulfilling their role in monitoring practice and holding the school to account. Improved communication between the school and the governors, together with a greater expectation of challenge and accountability, has led to the governing body becoming more strategic in their practice. They are actively seeking training and have agreed a monitoring framework to enable them to effectively monitor and evaluate provision.

Although self-evaluation has been limited to senior leadership, the school's capacity to improve is good because the action taken since September 2006 has begun to raise standards.

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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?	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	3
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?	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	2
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	3
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.

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	3
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

31st January, 2007

Dear Pupils,

Attleborough Infant School, 7 Norwich Road, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2AJ

Mrs Bayliss, Mr Fry and I enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work. We thought your space work looked very exciting and enjoyed watching the video some of you had made about aliens. We could see that you work hard, especially when your lessons are interesting and you can work with each other. We liked the fact that you have a school council and that you can be class monitors. We thought that you behave well most of the time but there are times when some boys are too boisterous in the playground.

Your teachers and all the adults at your school work hard to look after you well and help you learn. Your new headteacher has made some very good changes, and we feel there are some more things that your headteacher and the other staff need to do to improve your school. They need to make sure that you can use equipment more often when you are working in order to help you learn. They need to make sure that you are all given work which is challenging, without being too hard, and that you have the chance to investigate and solve problems. All of you need to have the chance to work together more often and those of you who are younger need to be able to become more involved in choosing the activities you do in class.

We send our best wishes to you all and hope that the things we have suggested will make your lessons more fun and help you to learn more easily.

With best wishes,

Heather Weston Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools