

Aldermoor Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103681
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	308384
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew McDowall

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Hoyland
Headteacher	Lisa Sharratt
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Acorn Street Coventry CV3 1DP
Telephone number	02476 456272
Fax number	02476 636213

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school. It serves an area where levels of social disadvantage are amongst the highest in the country. Many families stay in the area for only a short time. Consequently, the number of pupils who leave or who are admitted throughout the school year is well above that found in most schools. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal is well above average. The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with English as an additional language are increasing, and are well above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The new school building opened to the pupils in the September 2007. The headteacher had been in post for less than a term at the time of the inspection.

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 quality of education. The new school building provides an outstanding environment for learning and has already boosted pupils' self-esteem. The headteacher has made a good start and, along with her deputy, is beginning to challenge the school to raise standards. These factors, along with strengthening management systems, give the school the capacity to improve.

Although standards are rising slowly, they are still extremely low. Pupils start the school with skills and abilities that are exceptionally low when compared with national expectations. Overall, considering their starting points, all groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all parts of the school. Those learning English as an additional language make good progress.

Because pastoral care is good, pupils feel secure in school. The most vulnerable pupils are well supported and the school works exceptionally well with other agencies to meet their needs. The comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) enables all pupils to develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, both in and out of school. The school is a calm and friendly place where relationships are good. Pupils respect each other, display good attitudes to learning and behave well. 'My child is treated with respect and gives respect back,' commented one parent. Almost all pupils enjoy school. They have a strong social and community awareness, and are keen fundraisers for many good causes. Their ability to work constructively with others, and their satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy, mean they are soundly prepared for their future.

The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Both effectively promote pupils' personal development and well-being. The curriculum widens the pupils' horizons on the world. The school provides a good range of clubs and regular residential opportunities that the pupils really enjoy. However, there are few opportunities for them to practise and improve their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Some of the teaching does not stretch the pupils enough to ensure they move on in their learning each lesson. Currently, the academic guidance the pupils receive is too variable. In some classes, the pupils do not know their targets or what it is they need to do to improve. The children in the Foundation Stage are not given enough opportunities to solve problems for themselves. On occasions, they spend too long sitting, when they could be learning through play.

The new headteacher has brought a sharper focus to the ways in which the school evaluates itself. This has resulted in improved feedback to teachers on how well they are doing. Consequently, there is sound and growing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. This strong leadership has already raised the expectations in the school and there are some early signs of improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Increasing numbers of children starting the school have very poor language and communication skills. Children make satisfactory progress overall in the Foundation Stage considering their starting points, but standards remain well below average as they move into Year 1. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is good. The staff provide good care for the children, and there are positive links with parents and carers to help ensure the children are safe in school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Sometimes the children are taught in groups

that are too big to allow them all to have their say and, on occasions, they are sitting for too long. Consequently, they do not have enough time to play and to learn by doing things for themselves. The new outside space is used well to provide good opportunities for exercise and play. Some of the creative activities are overly directed by the teacher and, as a result, the children are not offered enough opportunities to make choices for themselves. There is a good team spirit amongst the staff who have managed the move to the new school very well.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science by raising the expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure all teachers use assessment information effectively to move pupils on more quickly in lessons
- provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons
- ensure marking improves in order that pupils receive clear guidance on what it is they need to do to improve
- provide additional opportunities for the children in the Foundation Stage to make decisions for themselves, so they can be more actively involved in their learning and spend more time learning through play.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

After a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage, the pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2, where standards have been rising slowly in recent years but nonetheless are still exceptionally low. Satisfactory progress continues in Years 3 to 6. Due to the particular nature of the group of pupils in Year 6, standards fell in the national tests in 2007. However, work in the current pupils' books overall indicates that standards, although exceptionally low, are slowly rising by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities receive good support and make satisfactory progress in their learning. Those with English as an additional language settle quickly in the school and make good, and sometimes very good, progress. Progress is slowest in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. Their behaviour is good and they usually concentrate well on their tasks. Attendance is average and on a rising trend.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils work together amicably, respect the feelings of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. Those who join the school part-way through their primary education are welcomed by other children, who help them to settle in quickly. Pupils from different cultural backgrounds work and play together constructively. When given responsibility, pupils respond positively, for example as members of the active school council or as friends to pupils who need support at break times.

Pupils are safety conscious and are very concerned for the welfare of others. They participate enthusiastically in a good range of physical activities and understand the importance of healthy eating.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A strong feature of the teaching in the school is the high quality of the relationships between staff and pupils. This contributes to the pupils' good attitudes to learning and their enjoyment of school. The staff team work well together to ensure all children are included in lessons. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that promotes good personal development and satisfactory academic progress.

Staff make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons to help to engage pupils and foster enjoyment of learning. The presentation of work is variable and some of the pupils' books are untidy. In some lessons, pupils are not moved on quickly enough, because expectations are too low. Staff are not continually assessing how the pupils are doing and offering more challenging work to those who are ready for it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. The programme of PSHE is good and pupils say that what they learn at school helps them to know how to stay safe in the community. The school offers a good range of clubs for sport, dance, music, drama and ICT. The school has good links with the Performing Arts Service and many pupils play musical instruments. Educational visits successfully broaden the experience of the pupils. Those visits targeted at the able and talented pupils provide good opportunities for these pupils to work with similar pupils from other schools. The older pupils have very good opportunities to attend Outdoor Residential Adventure Centres.

Good use is made of ICT to enhance the curriculum. The provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents and carers value the good care the school provides for their children. The school's inclusion team and learning mentors have excellent links with numerous outside agencies, which together provide good support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Procedures to ensure pupils are safe are good. The staff are very watchful at playtimes and pupils say they feel safe in school and know who they can talk to if they have a problem. There is a strong commitment from the staff to respond to the needs of each pupil. This good provision enables pupils to settle well in the school and make good progress in their personal development.

Although pastoral care is good, care, guidance and support overall is satisfactory. This is because the academic guidance pupils receive is less effective and does not support good academic progress. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work, but not all teachers provide comments that tell

the pupils what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils are unaware of their targets. Teachers are beginning to use the information the school has on how each pupil is doing to identify and address any underachievement, but this has yet to impact on overall standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school leaders have very successfully managed the move to the new school. The leadership team is relatively new and shares the headteacher's strong commitment to raise standards. Subject leaders are beginning to monitor the work in their subjects but as yet they are not able to clearly identify the impact they are having on achievement. The progress of individual pupils is carefully tracked and this information is increasingly being used to identify target groups in each class.

The governors provide good support to the school. Their strong vision that the school should be at the heart of the community has been realised in the fantastic new building. They are actively involved in monitoring the work of the school and use their collective talents well to meet their many responsibilities.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 November 2007.

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aldermoor Farm Primary School, Coventry CV3DP.

Can I start by saying how much we enjoyed visiting your school. Like you, we think the new building is fantastic. We were very impressed by the way you all behaved in school, how you all look after each other and the way in which everyone gets along with everyone else.

Overall, your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. It is good at helping you all to develop positive attitudes towards school and teaching you how to stay safe and live a healthy life. It was good to see so many of you bringing fruit to school. You obviously enjoy school a lot. You are offered a good range of school clubs and it is great that so many of you are learning an instrument.

Mrs Sharratt and all the teachers are working very hard to help you to improve your reading, writing and numeracy work. You can help by reading what the teacher has written on your work, remembering your targets and trying hard to achieve them. To do that you must come to school every day.

You all make satisfactory progress. Here are a few things we have asked the school to do to help you improve even more:

- to make sure you all have work to do that is not too easy
- to find more ways for you to use your literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons, such as in science or topic work
- to mark your work in a way that helps you to know what you need to do to improve; this is happening sometimes, but we think it would be good if it happened all the time
- to plan activities in the Nursery and Reception classes that allow the children to make decisions for themselves and spend more time playing and less time in large groups on the carpet.

Thanks again for being so friendly, and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andy McDowall Lead Inspector