

Robert Arkenstall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110635
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	310370
Inspection date	7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Fiona Brampton
Headteacher	Mr Dominic Sharp
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Camping Close High Street Haddenham Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 3UA
Telephone number	01353 740253
Fax number	01353 749556

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	7 February 2008
Inspection number	310370

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how effectively the school supports all learners; pupils' involvement and understanding of assessment and target setting and the impact of the school's self-evaluation procedures in improving aspects of its work. The inspector gathered evidence from school documentation; interviews with pupils, staff and governors; observing lessons and other activities and analysing parents' questionnaires and comments. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Robert Arkenstall Primary School is an average sized primary school that provides education for pupils from the villages of Haddenham and Aldreth. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is broadly in line with the national average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds, and virtually no pupils have English as an additional language. The school has gained a Healthy Schools award and the sports Active Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school correctly judges itself as a good school. It gives good value for money. Parents are very happy with the positive outcomes for their children and the wide range of activities and experiences offered by the school. They consider that theirs is a good school. A view typical of many was, 'The school has a happy and caring atmosphere and children enjoy a wide range of experiences. I am very happy with the school'. The strengths identified in the previous inspection report have been maintained and developed, and there have been further improvements, particularly in relation to higher standards in science and in the systems for checking how well pupils are doing. The school is well placed to improve further.

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils' moral understanding and social skills develop well and lead to consistently good behaviour and a family ethos in the school. A range of stimulating experiences promotes pupils' cultural development effectively. For example, during the inspection, Year 1 pupils performed a dragon dance to celebrate Chinese New Year. Many older pupils make a good contribution to school life as play monitors. The school council is active and advises the school on a range of issues to improve the school further. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school as demonstrated by the consistently above average attendance and in the very good attitudes they show to school and to their work. As they said, 'Lessons are usually fun and busy.'

Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of why it is important to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. This is because the school provides a range of opportunities for learning about this through the curriculum. The school is a secure environment that fosters confidence in the pupils and their parents.

Pupils' achievement is good because there is a good curriculum, which challenges and interests pupils, good teaching and the detailed information about how well pupils are doing. However, pupils are not consistently clear about their personal learning targets. There are some inconsistencies in marking. In the best examples it gives strong indications of how well pupils are moving towards their targets and of what they need to do to improve further, but in some classes this is not as well developed and therefore pupils' progress slows. The school understands that there is scope for greater accuracy in assessment to improve progress further.

When children start school their knowledge and understanding is broadly in line with national expectations. They make good progress, particularly in the Reception class and in Years 5 and 6, and by the time they leave school pupils attain standards higher than the national average. By the end of Year 6, progress is good in the core subjects. However, in English, reading is stronger than writing. The school recognises that writing is an area for development and interventions, such as additional writing support for Year 6 boys last year, have been effective in improving progress. Nevertheless, the school has identified the capacity for further improvement in writing, and is looking to provide pupils with even more opportunities to develop and hone their skills. Higher attaining pupils benefit from activities that are planned to consistently challenge them. The pace of learning accelerates because pupils are doing work that is not restricted to that expected for their age. A good example of this was in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, where pupils were achieving well ahead of their expected levels in problem solving skills. Pupils who find learning difficult also make good progress because support for them from all staff is effective. Pupils are well prepared for their future learning and life beyond school.

The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection and in observations conducted by school leaders is good. As a result, pupils are interested in the work, do their best and confidently develop their skills. Typically, teachers are clear in explaining the learning objectives for the lesson and what the expectations are.

Pupils and parents rightly praise the school for the way the curriculum is enriched by a wide range of clubs, visitors and visits. Pupils talk excitedly about the many experiences offered by the school, and enjoy the wide range of practical learning offered. The curriculum is adapted to meet individual and group needs. The school plans to develop further the use of the external areas around the school to provide opportunities to promote stimulating activities. These include the new outside theatre and conservation area.

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements and procedures for protecting pupils are firmly in place. Staff know the pupils and families well, know what to do in an emergency and pupils know they can turn to an adult, or other pupils, for help in any situation. The monitoring of behaviour, attendance and academic achievement is good, and this promotes pupils' confidence. Challenging targets are set through the effective tracking of academic progress.

Leadership and management are good and the headteacher leads the school very well. Self-evaluation procedures are well developed and this results in the accurate identification of aspects for further development. Despite significant staff changes in recent years, a strong staff team is developing. The good governing body is supportive and holds school leaders effectively to account for the school's work. It is actively seeking to improve its own effectiveness by monitoring the work of the school even more systematically. Plans for training to support this initiative are already in place.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in Reception thrive in a secure, lively and stimulating environment and their learning moves on at a good pace. Good provision results in many children achieving beyond the goals expected of five year olds by the time they enter Year 1. Effective teaching gives them a good start to their learning. Opportunities to teach a range of basic skills and help them develop as confident and independent learners are often taken. First-hand experiences are also used well to promote interest and enjoyment in learning, and to ensure that there is a sense of purpose in all activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' involvement in their learning through improving the use of marking linked to individual learning targets.
- Improve the school grounds to further enhance the curriculum and provide more first-hand learning experiences for pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	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	2
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	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?	2
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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

8 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Robert Arkenstall Primary School, Haddenham CB6 3UA

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently.

I would like to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. There are lots of things that I like about your school. Some of them are;

- you behave well and get on well with each other
- you achieve good standards
- you learn a lot in lessons and make good progress because the teaching you receive is good
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after
- Mr Sharp and all of the other people who help run your school make sure that you get a good education.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. I think that the most important thing to do is for teachers to improve marking and target setting to help you better understand what to do next. I have also asked Mr Sharp and your teachers to develop the outside areas of your school so that you can have even more exciting outdoor learning activities.

I enjoyed talking with you and finding out all about your super school. Keep on working hard, doing your very best and enjoying your time at school.

Ian Jones

Lead inspector