

# Arbury Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110664
<b>Local Authority</b>	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310379
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Raymond Jardine

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	344
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Tony Males
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ben Tull
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Carlton Way Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB4 2DE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01223 359568
<b>Fax number</b>	01223 518130

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well pupils make progress, particularly in English, the support given to vulnerable pupils and those at an early stage of learning English, and the involvement of middle managers and governors in improving the school's effectiveness. The inspector gathered evidence from observations of lessons, analysis of school documents, discussions with senior and middle managers, groups of pupils and with the chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than average and serves an area that is more socially and economically disadvantaged than is typical in England. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is the proportion that has learning difficulties or disabilities. About two thirds of pupils are of White British heritage, but a significant proportion come from a number of minority ethnic backgrounds. These are mainly Asian and a few Eastern European, some of whom are at an early stage of learning English. More pupils than average join or leave the school other than at the usual times.

The school has gained Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark and Artsmark Gold Award in recognition of its work in promoting expressive arts

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Arbury Primary provides a good education for its pupils and good value for money. The staff work closely as a team, upholding the school's aims and values extremely well to provide very high standards of care and welfare. The very encouraging environment for the learning that they provide enables pupils to achieve well, both academically and in their personal development. Pupils grow in confidence and much enjoy their learning. The school's strengths are well understood and appreciated by parents, the great majority of whom strongly endorse its work. One said, 'Arbury Primary has provided a nurturing, caring and stimulating environment for my son'; and another, 'I am impressed by the teaching standards at this school'.

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide good leadership and direction for the school. Between them, they share a great deal of specialist expertise, for example in behaviour management techniques and bilingual provision for those at an early stage of learning English. Standards of care, guidance and support are outstanding. There are robust systems in place for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their security, health and safety. Pupils respond very well to the system of rewards and consistent behaviour management provided by staff. A distinctive and exemplary feature of the school is its many innovative strategies for tackling barriers to individual pupils' learning so that they may gain fully from their education. For example, through the Red Hen Project, a charitable partnership with two other local schools, a home-school worker is able to tackle potential social and behavioural difficulties at an early stage by working with specific pupils and their parents to help integrate their children into school life. This provision has been extended through a separately funded parent support adviser. Staff working with bilingual pupils who are at an early stage of learning English receive expert guidance from a very knowledgeable school leader. Some pupils, for example from Eastern European backgrounds, join with little or no English. Through the school's very effective programme for promoting early reading and writing, they make progress quickly in English language skills. Key strategies for helping bilingual pupils also feature prominently in all classrooms. This strongly inclusive commitment to each child is reflected in the quality of assessment and support given to those who find learning difficult, such as pupils who have Autistic tendencies.

Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills which overall are below those expected, particularly in their language and literacy. They progress well throughout the school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are average and have risen in the last three years, mainly through the introduction of very effective teaching methods for promoting early reading and writing (phonics) from Reception to Year 3. Standards by Year 6 are also broadly average, which represents good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points. Achievement is most consistently good in mathematics and science. In English in 2007 for example, pupils' standards of writing lagged behind reading and other core subjects, particularly for boys. The school has identified weaknesses in basic skills such as punctuation and grammar and in extended writing for different purposes. The improvement in basic skills among pupils lower down in the school is also still working its way through. The school's focus on improving writing is having some success currently, including for boys. A key strategy has been the introduction of specific 'success criteria' (targets) for pupils to use when writing at length. This is enabling them to be more independent in reviewing and correcting their own work. Teachers link these targets to their marking and feedback very effectively. While pupils also have learning targets for their reading and mathematics, these are less specific and not as well developed. Teaching and learning are good; lessons are interesting and well planned for the wide range of needs. Senior

managers and other curriculum leaders monitor teaching quality regularly. Consequently, there is consistency in many of the good features, such as the use of very clear learning objectives for pupils and their active involvement in learning that many of them say they particularly enjoy. The good teamwork evident between teachers and teaching assistants helps to ensure that pupils of different abilities are challenged and supported appropriately.

Pupils from diverse backgrounds work and play very harmoniously at Arbury Primary. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are polite, care for each other, and behave well. Incidents of bullying or harassment are rare and pupils say they are confident that these are dealt with effectively. Attendance is a little below average but the school is working hard to improve it. Pupils gain much from their involvement in additional activities and clubs, especially through the choir, wind band, dramas and other involvement in expressive arts that feature strongly in the curriculum. Through personal, social and health education, pupils know the importance of staying fit and healthy, although not all demonstrate this in their lunch choices. Good personal qualities and broadly average levels of basic skills prepare pupils soundly for their future by the time they leave the school.

The headteacher and senior leadership team have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through effective self-evaluation. Curriculum and subject leaders have become more involved in monitoring and reviewing performance in their subjects and overall the school is well-placed to improve further. There are strengths in the rigour with which the school reviews its performance in national tests and tracks the progress of individual pupils. Targets are generally used well at all levels to raise standards. Governors provide good support and advice, and monitor some areas of the school's work. The school improvement plan is detailed and specific in its improvement strategies and expected outcomes. However, there are too many priorities listed so that the key ones do not feature prominently enough, and governors are not involved sufficiently in monitoring and review progress in them.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is planned well to provide a stimulating range of activities that cover all the areas of children's learning. An emphasis on their communication, language and literacy, and their personal, social and emotional development prepares children well for their next stage. Most reach the goals expected by the end of reception, although fewer in their early reading and writing. Provision is led and managed well by a knowledgeable leader. Teachers and other adults work very effectively to ensure that the range of tasks within lessons promote most areas of learning as well as the specific area of focus. Staff are well-trained to support the specific needs of individual children. There is a very good range of resources available, including for outdoor play. The lively displays and resources provide a rich environment for children to learn and play.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly their basic skills and writing for a range of purposes and contexts.
- Sharpen the focus on the school's key priorities in its improvement plan and involve governors more fully in monitoring and reviewing progress in them.

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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
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	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?	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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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

1 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arbury Primary School, Cambridge, CB4 2DE

Thank you for the warm and polite welcome that I received when I visited your school recently. I spoke with many of you and the information you gave me helped to confirm what parents, staff and governors had to say about your school. I think that Arbury Primary is a good and very caring school. The staff and governors look after you very well, as many of you told me. They do a lot to help each of you so that you can all get the most from your education. That is one reason why so many of you enjoy coming to school. The teaching is good and this helps you to make good progress, particularly in subjects like reading, mathematics and science. I was also very impressed by the following things:

- Children get off to a good start at the school in their Reception Year.
- You play and work very well together and behave well.
- You are learning how to use your success criteria and targets to review and improve your own work, especially in your writing - well done!
- Your involvement in the many music and drama opportunities provided is helping to develop your confidence and self-esteem.
- You know how to live fit and healthy lives, although not all of you make the best choices at lunchtime.

Mr Tull, the staff and governors work very hard to improve things still further for you. For example, they have rightly decided to make a real effort to improve your writing skills and I agree with them. You can help too by regularly using your targets for writing to help you do your best. I have also asked governors to check regularly how well the school is doing in this and other priorities to make sure that the school keeps improving.

With all good wishes for your future at Arbury Primary School

Ray Jardine

Lead inspector