

Arthur Dye Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115597
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311995
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Chris Grove

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	341
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Connolly
Headteacher	Liz Ramsay
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Springbank Road Cheltenham GL51 0PH
Telephone number	01242 527766
Fax number	01242 227481

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than the average sized primary school. Most pupils come from an area of economic and social disadvantage, and the proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is high at nearly twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, principally moderate learning difficulties, is also well above average. A higher proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups than is the case in most schools, although few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The main reason that the school is not doing as well as it should is because the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team have not provided clear enough direction for improvement. Although a range of monitoring and self-evaluation activities has been undertaken, these processes have not been sufficiently rigorous, with the result that action has not been based firmly on the analysis of acknowledged weaknesses. Insufficient clarity of direction and inadequate self-evaluation have led to ineffective management systems. This includes a lack of rigour in the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, teaching and learning are inadequate. Significant weaknesses have not been identified, and there has been too little good teaching to increase progress and raise standards. There is insufficient challenge for pupils in lessons and tasks are not regularly matched to the attainment of different groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Marking does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how they could improve their work. As a result, progress across the school is inconsistent, resulting in inadequate achievement. Standards at Year 6 fell significantly in 2007. Standards in the current Year 6 are slightly higher, but are still below average in English, mathematics and science. Boys' attainment, in particular, is much lower than average. Provision and progress in the Foundation Stage are inadequate.

The curriculum is inadequate because it has not been sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. In addition, the school has not effectively monitored the progress of pupils until this year when it began to work more closely with the local authority. Although the first steps have been taken to introduce a system to track pupils' progress, this has not yet been established long enough to enable the school to make adequate use of the information gathered. Target-setting for pupils has started in English, but it is not yet fully effective. Target-setting in mathematics has been introduced only in the current term, and hence has yet to have impact..

Pupils' personal development and their well-being are satisfactory. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. The quality of pastoral care and support is satisfactory, but insufficient support is given to pupils to guide them in their academic work. Although most pupils enjoy school, this is not reflected in their attendance which has fallen over time and is now well below average. The school has taken steps to address this issue, but these have not halted the decline.

Partnerships, including links with outside agencies, are satisfactory. Although a majority of parents is satisfied and, in some cases, pleased with the school, a minority is seriously concerned about their children's progress. The steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection have not been sufficient. The school does not have an adequate capacity to make improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

When children enter the Reception class their knowledge and skills are below those expected for their age. Although some children make satisfactory progress, some are underachieving.

This is because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and weaknesses in assessment. When the teaching and curriculum meet their needs, children enjoy their activities and their behaviour is calm and purposeful. However, there is too little activity of this quality. Insufficient assessment is undertaken when pupils enter the school with the result that the school cannot accurately gauge the extent of children's progress. There is too much direction by adults, which restricts the development of children's independent learning and their creativity. Tasks do not challenge children enough, which means they have too few opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Children's relationships with one another are good. Arrangements to ensure children's safety and health are satisfactory. Links are established with parents before children start school. This leads to satisfactory involvement in their children's education. Although there is an awareness of some of the weaknesses in provision, too little has been done to improve matters.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that senior leaders rigorously evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and effectively implement measures to improve pupils' achievement.
- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2, especially for boys.
- Ensure that teachers match work accurately to the needs of all pupils in lessons, and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Use assessment, marking and target setting more effectively to track pupils' progress, and provide pupils with better indications of the next steps in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Inadequate teaching and learning in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, and too little good teaching across the school, have caused inconsistencies in progress and resulted in inadequate achievement. Standards at Year 6 fell significantly in 2007 and national test data indicate that pupils made too little progress in English. The proportions reaching the higher Level 5 were significantly below average. Standards in the current Year 6 are a little higher this year, but they have not returned to the broadly average levels of previous years and remain below average. Boys' attainment is lower than average, and is markedly so at Year 6 in all core subjects, and particularly in English. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate because tasks are not always well enough matched to needs. The school has taken some steps to improve academic performance through the introduction of very structured planning, but this approach has not yet had enough impact.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils are polite and courteous, and respond well to praise given by members of staff to acknowledge their efforts. This helps to raise their self-esteem. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Their moral and social development is good. They know the difference between right and wrong, and are very clear that name-calling and bullying are unacceptable. They understand the importance of being safe, and enjoy sports and games because they know that these activities keep them fit. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet, but some find it difficult to act on this knowledge, particularly at break times. Some older pupils are enthusiastic members of the school council. They have conducted surveys, and have been an effective part

of the school's decision-making process. They raise funds for charities, and make a satisfactory contribution to the community. Preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is inadequate because of below average standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning over time is inadequate. Much teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory, and some was good. However, there was also some teaching which was inadequate because of lack of challenge and pace, or poor timing of lesson activities. This lack of consistency in the quality of teaching plays a major part in pupils' inadequate progress. Some aspects of teachers' planning for lessons are satisfactory, but tasks are not sufficiently adapted and matched to the different groups of pupils. Teachers and their assistants mostly manage their pupils satisfactorily in class. However, teachers do not build sufficiently well on their positive relationships to set high enough expectations for pupils' achievement. The quality of marking of work is inconsistent, and provides pupils with too little indication of what they could do to improve, or of the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum does not adequately meet learners' needs and interests. Curriculum revisions have been slow to develop because ineffective monitoring fails to identify what needs to be done to improve. Curriculum planning does not reflect the need for greater challenge for the more able pupils, and activities are not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of pupils with different levels of ability. Inadequate provision has led to weaknesses in basic skills in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2. The provision for ICT is inadequate and is severely restricted by limitations in resources. The school has a varied range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended. Learning opportunities outside school are limited by a lack of funds, and few educational visits are made. Visitors to the school, such as theatre groups, help to address this and provide some enhancement to pupils' learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The school provides satisfactory pastoral care. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are adequate, and there is satisfactory attention to pupils' health and safety. In the current year, the school has introduced targets to support the development of pupils' learning in English, and this has recently also been extended to mathematics.. The academic guidance for pupils is inadequate because target-setting and marking do not sufficiently indicate to pupils the next steps in their learning. Vulnerable pupils are identified and given satisfactory support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

As a result of weaknesses in leadership at all levels, the school's strategic planning is not sufficiently prioritised or focused on improving pupils' achievement. The school did not meet most of the statutory targets set for pupils in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2007, in part because of the lack of robust assessment data. The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities, but these are limited by pupils' underachievement. Governors are committed to the school and provide support, but have not ensured that all their legal responsibilities have been met. They are aware of some of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but have not acted robustly enough to challenge the school to improve.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arthur Dye Primary School, Cheltenham GL51 0PH

We would like to thank all of you, and your teachers, for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. There are some positive things to say about your school:

- You enjoy school, and you are polite and courteous.
- You have good relationships with the teachers and other adults, who take care of you.
- You have an enthusiastic school council which plays an important part in making decisions about the school.

However, your school is not yet as good as it needs to be because:

- You do not make as much progress as you should and test results in English, mathematics and science are not high enough.
- The curriculum and some of the teaching are not good enough.
- The school is not checking up well enough on your progress.
- Leaders and governors are not clear enough about how to improve things in your school.
- Attendance is not as high as it should be.

We have said that your school needs 'Special Measures', which means that it will get more outside help, and inspectors will do more checks in the months ahead to see that things are getting better.

What your school needs to do now:

- Make sure that leaders are clear about what is good in your school and what needs to be better, and take action to so that you learn more quickly.
- Help all of you to make better progress, especially so that your test results are higher by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, especially for the boys.
- Improve the teaching by setting you work which is better matched to your needs, and by expecting more of you.
- Ensure that teachers know how well you are doing, and that they point out to you the next steps in your learning through better marking and target setting. You can help too by working hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your school will be making. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely Chris Grove Lead inspector

9 June 2008

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GL51 0PH**

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Lead inspector