

Aylburton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115610
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311999
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Wakeham
Headteacher	Nichola Ford
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2003
School address	Church Road Aylburton Lydney GL15 6DB
Telephone number	01594 842426
Fax number	01594 844 992

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Inspection number	311999

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school, with three mixed-year group classes. Approximately half of the pupils come from the local village, with the rest coming from further afield. Nearly all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these have numeracy and literacy difficulties and a minority have behavioural difficulties. Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year, but over time is broadly at the level expected. Reception children are taught in a class with Years 1 and 2 pupils and follow the Foundation Stage curriculum.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which is strongly supported by pupils and parents. Pupils enjoy their time here and they behave well. Leaders know pupils and their families well and ensure that the pupils are well cared for and included. Parents' support this view and comment that the school is an important part of the local community. One typical comment that summed the school up well was, 'The staff are very caring and enthusiastic. The school has a good community spirit.' Pupils like their teachers and lessons and say, 'The teachers are really fun and help you if you are struggling.' They have a clear voice in the school and are very ready to offer opinions and suggest improvements. Pupils show concern for each other's welfare and safety. A strength of the school is in the range of visits to support pupils' learning. Pupils clearly enjoy these as they talk about them with great enthusiasm.

Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Children settle quickly in Reception and grow in confidence. Across the school, pupils are currently making satisfactory progress from their different starting points. Progress in reading is stronger than in other subjects. In mathematics, the school is implementing a plan to improve pupils' progress which is beginning to improve standards. Leaders have also rightly identified that standards are not high enough in writing at Key Stage 1 and have taken steps to promote improvement. However, these are at an early stage of development. Progress is satisfactory rather than good, mainly because the teaching does not always provide a consistent challenge for the pupils, with some work being too easy or too difficult. Teachers create a friendly and positive atmosphere for learning and pupils have positive attitudes. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and, consequently, they express themselves clearly and confidently.

The headteacher is working well with a fairly new staff team to develop the work of the school. A number of initiatives are in place. However, the evaluation of the success of these actions is not yet sufficiently sharp or regular and results in improvement being steady rather than good. Targets are set for pupils across the school and this is providing teachers with clear information about pupils' progress. Although pupils have individual targets, too little is done to help them identify the next steps for learning so that they can set personal goals.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

It was not possible to see the children being taught during the inspection because they went on an educational visit. From the information provided by the school, the quality of provision was judged as satisfactory and improving. Children come into school with a wide span of ability. At the beginning of the day, the children settle quickly and show independence and confidence. Activities provided cover all the areas of learning. The classroom is carefully set up so that the children have opportunities to choose activities for themselves and have regular access to the outdoor learning environment. Displays show these areas being used regularly. Guidance provided to teaching staff is promoting good improvement. There are some good adaptations in place to support the children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the plan to improve progress and standards in mathematics and strengthen plans to improve writing across the school.

- Improve the consistency of teaching across the school to ensure that work given provides challenge to all pupils.
- Check up more rigorously on the success of improvements being made so that developments can be evaluated more effectively and regularly.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

There is considerable fluctuation in attainment on entry to the school, due to the small numbers of children. However, when considered over time, the children come in to school with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with expectations. They make satisfactory progress in their learning. In the 2007 Year 2 tests, pupils reached well below average standards; this reflected a higher than usual number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Similarly, in the current Year 2, standards are below average and these pupils have made satisfactory progress from their starting points in school. The Year 6 results in 2007 show that pupils reached above average standards. Current standards in Year 6 are broadly average. However, both groups of pupils have made satisfactory progress from their starting points in Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress similar to that of other pupils. Pupils are making sound progress in basic skills and are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils behave well and are very welcoming. They come into school sensibly and there is a good social atmosphere at the start of the day. Most play together well, with due regard for the safety of others. They move around the school very sensibly and show mature attitudes. In the playground, older pupils say they are careful 'not to knock over the smaller children'. Good support for the few pupils whose behaviour is not always as good as it should be is bearing fruit. Attendance is satisfactory but not as good as it could be because of pupils being on holiday in term time. Pupils say that they enjoy many aspects of school and like coming to school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are calm and thoughtful in assembly and talk confidently about the lives of people from different places.

Pupils have a good understanding about why they should eat healthily and drink water regularly. Most pupils are very active in the playground during break and lunchtimes, playing football or using a range of other equipment that they organise themselves. They say 'We have fruit each day' and are proud of their Healthy School Award.

Most pupils express their views with considerable self-confidence and take on additional responsibilities such as being monitors or working on the playground committee. They contribute well to decision-making in the school and express strong views about what they would like to see improved. They are also pleased with improvements such as the refurbished toilets, and comment that they have 'antibacterial soap'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in most lessons enhances pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils say they find their lessons interesting. Pupils' relationships with adults and with each other are positive. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to engage the interest of pupils. Strategies to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills are well established. Teachers have clear expectations of behaviour and manage pupils well and with sensitivity. There are a few occasions when pupils are not given work that is challenging enough. On some other occasions, pupils are kept too long on the carpet and learning is not moved on quickly enough. Therefore, there are times when pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Questioning mostly enables pupils to explain their understanding but opportunities to extend learning are occasionally missed because pupils are not given sufficient time to respond at length. Teaching assistants provide good support to children in the Foundation Stage.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Personal and social education is strong and sensitively provides for pupils' needs. Provision to improve key skills in numeracy is being systematically strengthened through a number of curriculum changes. Although these changes are fairly new, they are beginning to improve pupils' calculation skills. Leaders recognise that further development is required to boost writing skills. Pupils enjoy working with other schools in a local small-school network such as the booster classes for Year 6 pupils.

There is a good range of visitors to enrich the curriculum and visits to such places as the local cathedral. Pupils really enjoy these and talk enthusiastically about the adventure activities during the residential trip. Assemblies provide a strong Christian message and promote values such as truth and trust well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The staff's good knowledge of pupils and their families provides a firm foundation for the good care provided for individual pupils. Consequently, pupils have confidence in the staff and feel free to approach them for advice and help. The good relationships between all members of the school community are a keystone in pupils' good personal development. There is good, targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly those with behaviour difficulties. Formal arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are satisfactory. The school is rightly taking a firmer stance about pupils being on holiday in term time.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils find the marking of their work helpful and appreciate the 'tickled pink' comments written in pink pen and the 'green for growth' written in green. Pupils have individual targets for literacy and numeracy, but are not clear about exactly what they need to do to reach the next National Curriculum level. This is one of the reasons why they make satisfactory rather than good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully worked with staff and governors to create a school with an inclusive and welcoming ethos, which reflects its Christian foundation. Parents agree that the school has a warm and caring atmosphere and it is clearly a focal point of the village community. The relatively new staff team are pulling together well to develop the school further. The programme to raise standards in mathematics is well planned and is improving pupils' mental mathematics skills. The plan clearly identifies how these skills will be further extended. Some changes have been made to improve writing but it is too early to see the success of these and planning here is not as well advanced.

The tracking system shows the progress and attainment of each pupil clearly so that support can be provided if any pupil falls behind. However, the evaluation of the success of specific actions taken to improve standards is not always clear or regular enough to be sure that they are successful. Current steady development shows that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Governors are well informed about how well the school is doing. They are now beginning to ask leaders more challenging questions.

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?	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?	2
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	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?	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	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

12 March 2008

Dear Pupils Inspection of Aylburton Primary School, Lydney GL15 6DB

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed with your friendliness and confidence. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. We think your school provides you with a satisfactory education and you are making satisfactory progress. The leadership of your school is satisfactory.

What we most liked about your school:

- Most of you really enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The youngest children settle into school quickly because of the good links with parents and carers.
- The school provides good care and ensures you are safe and secure.
- Lessons are often interesting, which is helping you to enjoy learning.
- Visits are interesting and contribute well to your learning and enjoyment.
- Adults make sure that the school is a friendly and welcoming place with a strong community spirit.
- Improvements are being made in mathematics.
- You have good opportunities for speaking and listening and express your views confidently.

We have asked your headteacher and others to do these things:

- Implement the plan to improve your progress and standards in mathematics and strengthen plans to improve your writing.
- Make sure that the work you are given is not too easy or too difficult.
- Check up more carefully on how changes being made are helping you to improve.

With your hard work and help, we think that your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector