

Ashleworth Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115663
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312018
Inspection date	17 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clive Annetts
Headteacher	Sarah Bunce
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	The Green Ashleworth Gloucester GL19 4HT
Telephone number	01452 700340
Fax number	01452 700340

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

The overall rates of progress for pupils, especially in writing.

The quality of assessment and guidance in supporting good progress for all pupils.

The impact of leadership in improving systems and securing good progress with changing cohort needs.

Evidence was gathered from analysis of school data, the previous inspection report, pupils' work, parent questionnaires, school policies and other documents. Lessons were observed and discussions were held with pupils, senior staff, the chair of governors and the school improvement partner. 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 in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Ashleworth is a very small school with only two classes, one for Reception and Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2. Several year groups consist of as few as three pupils. There are few pupils with learning difficulties. The majority of pupils are of White British origins. A significant minority of pupils are registered in more than one school and are from the travelling community, attending the school for one third of the year. There were no traveller pupils attending at the time of the inspection. The headteacher joined the school at the beginning of this academic year in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ashleworth is a good school. Pupils achieve well academically and make good progress in their personal development. The small size of the school leads to a strong and happy family atmosphere which, the pupils were keen to explain makes them feel, safe and valued. The school has very strong links with the local community and the pupils enhance their many skills by playing a full part in village activities. When pupils join Reception, their attainment is usually above that expected for their age, although this varies considerably with the small size of some year groups. Standards, however, rise to well above national averages throughout the school. This high level of attainment is sustained through good quality teaching and strong leadership.

Teachers know pupils very well and their expectations are very high, which is why pupils make good progress and reach such high standards overall. The good progress is evident for pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with learning difficulties and those in Reception. Progress is good, not only in the key subjects such as English, mathematics and information and communication technology but also in several other subjects, including art and design, physical education and design and technology. This results from very good subject knowledge on the part of teachers across a wide range of the curriculum and careful planning so that lessons meet the needs of the different age and ability groups within each class. Nevertheless, a few pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress, particularly in writing, despite reaching these relatively high standards. This is because progress is assessed in the short term. Pupils' progress is not measured against longer-term individual targets based upon their different starting points. A few parents expressed concerns about their child's progress. The school has rightly identified this as a key area for improvement and has begun to collect the necessary information to ensure that every pupil is helped to make the good progress so evident for the majority.

Parents are largely positive about the school and particularly appreciate the close community atmosphere, the caring attitude of the pupils and the fact that they behave well. Typically, they comment on the 'happy environment where children are treated as individuals'. Some would like to see more homework given, which has already been identified by the headteacher as an area for development.

Pupils enjoy many things about the school and take a very responsible and enthusiastic attitude towards their learning. This enjoyment is reflected in good attendance, good behaviour and a keenness to do well. This is supported by the motivating and fun-filled tasks planned in several lessons, such as one where pupils had to use quite complex mathematical knowledge to guess the secret number chosen by the teacher.

The new headteacher has set a clear path for developing the school, based upon a good evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, there is a strengthening of the systems necessary for increasing the progress pupils make. This has already resulted in improvements in pupils' reading skills and mathematical problem solving, for example. The school achieves its challenging targets and the capacity to continue improving is good. A leadership focus on increasing pupils' participation and involvement in work of the school is very much appreciated by pupils, who now feel part of the decision-making process. School leadership has also fostered outstanding links with agencies to support pupils' well-being, including a close working relationship with the traveller welfare service. In addition, safeguarding procedures are robust.

An effective curriculum supports pupils' good academic and personal progress, especially through the wide range of activities provided. Because of its small size, the school links well with a host of other organisations to enhance provision. For example, a visit to the local primary school for a science performance on 'Light and Dark', a workshop on creating recycled paper and participation in a swimming gala are just a few of the more recent events. The curriculum also provides the opportunity for pupils to develop an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and live health lives. They love 'fruity Friday', as well as physical education, which is of a high quality.

Pupils already make a good contribution to the school and wider community and their skills in this area are developing rapidly. They have, for example, led sports activities, helped build the school gardens, sent letters about their ideas to parents and the local authority and performed in the village hall. With their ability to work well in teams, their positive attitudes and the very high standards of their basic skills pupils are well prepared for a bright future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for Reception-aged children is good overall and they make good progress. They are taught in the mixed age Key Stage 1 class, but receive additional support and an adapted curriculum suited to their needs. They securely meet national expectations in every area of learning by the end of Reception and sometimes exceed them. Most children are writing in sentences by the time they join Year 1. This is due to good teaching, where individual needs are met and planning ensures a balance of activities to encourage their well-rounded development. In one lesson, for example, they were very busy making imaginary healthy food and could name all the vegetables they were using. Good leadership has secured several improvements this year, particularly in reading. The Reception curriculum is currently satisfactory rather than good because there are too few structured opportunities for self-directed and outside learning. The school is developing links to enhance this aspect of the Reception curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop longer-term individual targets for pupils based upon their starting points to ensure that each one is making the best possible progress over time, especially in writing.
- Increase the planned opportunities in Reception for children to experience more focused self-directed and outdoor learning.

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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?	1
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	1
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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

18 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashleworth Primary School, Gloucester, GL19 4HT

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons.

Your school has a lively and happy 'family' atmosphere. It is a good school, with some interesting things going on, just as you described. Good teaching helps you to make at least good progress in your lessons, and in your social and personal skills. You do particularly well in reading, art and sport.

Staff and governors work hard to keep improving the school. For this reason, the standards you reach remain very high. I have, however, asked them to make sure that more of you make good progress, especially in writing. I have asked them to do this by assessing your individual starting points, deciding on longer-term targets for each of you and tracking your progress against these more closely. I am sure you would be interested to follow your own progress in this way as you continue to work hard. I have also asked staff to plan more opportunities for the youngest of you to learn outside and work by yourselves. Maybe you would like to share your ideas about this with your teachers.

Your teachers see to it that you have a good range of activities to help you develop strong confidence, an understanding of the wider world and creative talents. You were keen to tell me that the school also keeps you safe and looks after you very well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating such a healthy diet. Your behaviour is also good, especially in the way you value learning.

I am also impressed with the responsibilities that you take on within the school and how much help you give to others. You clearly enjoy coming to school. All these things, together with your very high quality basic skills and good skills in working together, will help prepare you well for your next school and future lives.

Yours faithfully Patricia Potheary Lead Inspector

Annex B



18 June 2008

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Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Patricia Potheary'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Patricia Potheary
Lead Inspector