

Appleshaw St Peter's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116349
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312272
Inspection dates	1–2 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Lily Evans

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoffrey Cooper
Headteacher	Mr Paul Haydon
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Ragged Appleshaw Andover SP11 9HR
Telephone number	01264 772210
Fax number	01264 771957

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school in a socially mixed catchment area. A quarter of pupils come from the village and environs and most of the others from Andover and Lugdershall. The number of pupils from ethnic minority groups or with English as an additional language is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with educational difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. These proportions vary widely within small year groups, which, with the exception of Reception, are taught in mixed age classes.

The head teacher is leaving the school in December 2007, following a successful four year leadership period. This started when the school was in serious weaknesses. He led the school out of this category at the last inspection in 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

All parents have a high regard for the work of this popular school. One parent expresses the sentiment of many. 'The children are very happy and confident, are being encouraged to do their best and also become well-rounded individuals'. Pupils thrive within this inclusive and nurturing school, which provides a good quality of education. Parents share the school's aim of identifying strengths in each individual - 'finding my star' (school brochure). Pupils are caring, responsible, polite and very well behaved. Pupils make good progress in Reception and throughout the school. Each small cohort varies in size and in the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). This means that even small changes in national tests results, showing standards and achievement, are exaggerated.

Since the last inspection, there has been rising trend in standards by the end of Year 6 and they are above the national average. A parent of three pupils at the school said, 'Over the last few years I have seen some really positive changes which my children have benefited from and are now making much more rapid progress'. There has been good improvement in standards in mathematics and English. The increased emphasis on teaching younger pupils sounds and letters has helped to raise achievement in literacy. Following a whole school focus on writing standards, they are well above average for the small cohort in Year 6 in 2007. Across year groups, there is evidence of rising standards and good progress. Managers and governors have well defined roles enabling them to prioritise and monitor developments. The quality of teaching and learning is good in most lessons. Teachers use assessment effectively to track pupils' progress, set challenging targets for individuals and to plan lessons.

The curriculum is stimulating and interesting. Time is well used by planning several subjects into topics and occasional themed days. Opportunities for pupils to use their skills from different areas of learning are planned effectively. A good range of visitors and visits, including residential visits, enhance learning experiences. Pupils enjoy taking part in numerous clubs including yoga, hand bells and judo. The school recognises that pupils entering Year 1 would benefit from extending the curriculum provided for Reception children. This would provide more opportunities for the pupils to learn through structured play. A review of curriculum planning will ensure focus in future on learning through play.

The school has good capacity to improve because the procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards and achievement are robust. Those procedures and the use of assessment to plan learning are however relatively recent. They are not yet fully absorbed into the culture of the school. Their importance in sustaining school improvement cannot be over emphasised in the pending temporary absence of a permanent head teacher and changes in staff.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in foundation stage is good. One parent wrote, 'I could not have wished for a better start for my daughter's education'. Parents see their children come into school happy and confident. Teachers make learning fun. When they start in the Reception class children's attainment is below expected levels in personal and social development and communication skills. A well-planned balance of adult-directed and independent activities helps children make good progress. They meet the expected early learning goals by the end of their time in the

Reception class. Although there is an outside play area, children would benefit from improved access to it. This would allow a freer flow between outside and inside activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the monitoring of achievement and teaching and learning has a greater impact on pupils' progress to promote consistently good standards.
- Adapt the curriculum for pupils when they transfer from the Reception class to Year 1 so that it better meets their needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school judges that pupils achieve well and inspectors agree. Children enter Year 1 at expected levels in all areas of learning. This may vary dependent on the numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in each group. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. In 2007 pupils reached average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This reversed a downward trend partly due to staff turbulence and improvements in the quality of teaching. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average overall and achievement is good. Despite variation between small cohorts, pupils build well on their skills from Year 2. Standards in English are well above average in 2007, due to a successful focus on improving writing skills. They are above average in science, consistent with previous years. They are average in mathematics although they have been higher in this subject in the previous two years. The school has identified that more work is required to improve consistency in standards. Through tracking pupils' progress carefully, they are aware of pupils who can achieve more and take action to help them do so.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They behave extremely well in class and around school, where they are considerate and polite. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. Their attendance is consistently good because according to parents 'they enjoy school so much they do not want to miss it'. Pupils have good self-esteem because they feel valued, praised and rewarded for their achievements. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show a keen sense of community in their care and thought for others in the school and in the world community. Older pupils take responsibility for younger ones and actively contribute to improving their environment. Pupils are confident, independent and responsible. They are involved in initiating and supporting many fundraising activities and school improvement projects. For example, the 'glass painting' club decorated and sold glasses and other handicrafts at their own stall at the Christmas Fayre. Through the school council, they are contributing ideas about the development of a woodland area of the grounds. They show care for their environment by offering to clear areas in the woodland when they see a need.

Teachers ensure pupils develop a good awareness of working and playing safely. Pupils know how to be safe when cycling. Because the school has emphasised an appreciation of the importance of good diet and plenty of exercise, pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is good. Pupils thrive on the many opportunities they have to represent the views of other pupils. They were instrumental in suggesting milk for all in the morning break thus benefiting everyone who wishes to partake.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' confident questioning and use of varied resources helps to capture the pupils' interest and to enthuse them with a desire to learn. Teachers are good at identifying what each pupil needs to learn next. This information is used to set clear targets for pupils to achieve. It has contributed to the good progress that pupils make in writing and mathematics. Learning intentions are clear at the beginning of lessons and are reviewed well at the end of lessons where pupils indicate about how well they think they have progressed. When the quality of teaching is outstanding, teachers are inspirational and pupils produce high quality work, for example, in composing character descriptions using similes and metaphors. One pupil wrote that the Minotaur had 'breath like mouldy stilton cheese'. In a few lessons, better use could be made of information on pupils' progress to plan next steps in learning. When the work is not pitched at the right level for pupils, it affects their confidence to work independently. It partly contributes to fluctuations in standards, for example, in mathematics. Support staff work well with individuals and small groups to learn, practise, or revise skills. This enables pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities to make the same progress as others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of mixed age classes. Pupils with particular strengths in mathematics work in higher year groups in order to challenge them further. Foundation subjects such as history, geography and art are linked together well within topics. This gives good opportunities to extend and practise skills such as map work, writing and clay work linked to studies of the Egyptians. There is a good programme of planned visits and visitors linked to topics. Additionally the school plans themed weeks. It is preparing to introduce French from Year 3 in 2008. There is a wide range of well-attended clubs and opportunities on offer for such a small school. This is much praised by parents and offers wider opportunities for pupils to realise their talents. On transition from the Reception year, the school recognises that pupils need more time to make the change from informal learning through play, to lessons that are more formal. Successful action has been taken to involve Year 1 pupils in play sessions, heralding a review of this area of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is outstanding in this school. Staff and governors are keenly aware of health and safety issues in this nurturing school. There are robust procedures for child protection and for dealing with risks. This ensures pupils including those who are more vulnerable, feel safe and secure. The school works very successfully to involve parents and keeps them very well informed by daily personal contact, newsletters, homework information and opportunities for family learning. Academic guidance is good. All pupils' progress is now tracked termly and teachers use this information to set challenging targets for improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers assess progress towards achieving those targets in their marking. Pupils know their targets but could be more fully involved in assessing and recording progress towards them by responding to teachers' comments. There are occasions when learning is not as well matched as it could be to learners needs causing pupils to struggle with their tasks.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The head teacher gives strong leadership to this improving school. He has worked hard with the backing of his staff to bring about many positive changes. The strengths and weaknesses of the school are thoroughly known to him. He has recognised and valued building positive relationships with pupils, parents, staff and governors. There are good links with local schools, the church and participation in community events. Parents' views are listened to and acted upon. All staff make themselves available to parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Issues for improvement have been tackled methodically and successfully so that there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Improvements include raising standards, establishing a leadership team and good governance, devising systems for performance management and routines for monitoring pupils' progress. Governors are now knowledgeable and much more involved in the life of the school. They are able to challenge the work of the school and support changes in many helpful ways. Subject coordinators have clear roles and responsibilities in monitoring the standards of work and pupils' progress. The head teacher and assistant head teacher work effectively to monitor the quality of teaching and performance management, which is linked to the school improvement plan. The use of assessment information to plan lessons is relatively new and there are still occasions when planning does not match well with what pupils know, understand and can do.

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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 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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	1
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

16 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Appleshaw St Peter's CofE Primary School, Andover, SP11 9HR

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed seeing how you worked and talking to you. It was so good to hear how you help each other and how happy you are at school. I agree with you and your parents that you go to a good school and that there is a happy atmosphere. The school takes good care of you and helps all of you to find out your special talents. When I was in classes, I was especially pleased that you know what you have to do to improve your work. At the end of lessons, I enjoyed hearing you say what you found easy or difficult.

Just as when you think about what you do well and need to improve, there are of course things that the school could do better. I have asked your school to plan learning in Year 1 so that you have more opportunities for play and learning at the same time. As you know, teachers track carefully how each of you is doing. If they think you need extra help (or extra difficult challenges), they try to make sure you get them. I have suggested to the school that they use all this information to help them plan your lessons and make sure you make as much progress as you are capable of in all your subjects.

Best wishes

Lily Evans

Lead Inspector