

Arreton St George's Church of England Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118180
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	312837
Inspection date	25 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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	5-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sarah Bishop
Headteacher	Ms Jessica Mead
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Arreton Newport PO30 3AD
Telephone number	01983 528429
Fax number	01983 525392

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the quality of teaching and learning, how well boys make progress in writing, and how well subject co-ordinators and other managers, monitor and evaluate the impact of their work. The inspector gathered evidence from an analysis of information and data about pupils' achievement provided by the school, observations of parts of lessons, parents' questionnaires and discussions with the Headteacher, other managers, the chair of governors and pupils. The inspector did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail, but found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These judgements have been included in the report.

Description of the school

Situated in a rural area, the school is smaller than the average primary. All pupils come from a White British background. Well below the expected number of pupils have an entitlement to free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is below the national average, although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average. The school has many national awards; two examples are the Enhanced Healthy School Award and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents and pupils are justifiably proud of the school. One parent echoed the views of others when she wrote, 'The school has been excellent in all respects, and the Christian ethic is exceptional'. The school does provide an outstanding education for its pupils. Pupils make excellent progress from broadly average entry levels in Year 1, and this includes those pupils with LDD and statements of special educational needs. In the last two years, in the national tests, Year 2 pupils have attained well-above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is the consequence of consistently high quality teaching, outstanding leadership and management, and the establishment of a learning environment which is both stimulating for pupils, but also one in which they feel very secure.

The high level of pupil's achievement continues in Years 3 and 4, and pupils leave the school with standards that are well above those expected for their age. All pupils thoroughly enjoy school, and respond extremely well to the various strategies the school has in place to encourage their personal development and well-being. An older pupil commented that she, 'Wouldn't change anything - it's just great as it is'. There are numerous examples of how the school empowers pupils through allowing them to participate fully in the community. They have a wide range of opportunities to fill positions of responsibility. For example, they act as pupil governors, eco-warriors, and take the initiative to support and raise funds for various charities. Some pupils belong to the Prayer Group, writing prayers about issues such as the loss of pets. These prayers help to reassure others who have similar experiences. In lessons, the pupils are given similar opportunities to act as 'timekeepers' and 'quality checkers' for their groups. This was seen in a lesson where pupils were being very well challenged to identify and produce evidence likely to solve the 'Goldilocks Crime Scene'. This is also an example of the recent emphasis on developing the pupils' critical thinking skills. Such experiences and responsibilities, along with the very high level of pupils' basic skills contribute to their outstanding preparation for later life.

The pupils' outstanding personal development is further enhanced by the emphasis on all aspects of the Every Child Matters (ECM) requirements. This is well illustrated in the weekly celebration of achievement assembly. Here, pupils' high level of enjoyment, their achievements, and their excellent knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe, are extremely well recognised, and reinforced. Their awards are, quite uniquely, presented under the five areas associated with ECM. The pupils are prepared to become involved because of the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the staff. Pupils talk of feeling safe, respected, and are aware that the adults know them very well. In addition, the pupils' academic progress is very carefully tracked, and any necessary intervention and support is quickly introduced. The school always ensures the maximum involvement of pupils. They have learning targets and have responsibility for ensuring that their 'learning journey' poster is completed. As one pupil said, 'You put a sticker to show the grade you have got, and can see what next to do'. Another commented that, 'teacher's marking gives helpful comments and give us a target to improve'. Attendance is satisfactory and improving as a consequence of vigorous school actions.

The outstanding achievement levels reflect the high quality of learning and teaching. Relationships are very strong and teachers know and meet the needs of their pupils very well. Lessons have pace and good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to maintain pupils' interest. Pupils are very well motivated by some interesting and varied approaches in lessons. Parents wrote of the pupil's high level of interest and pride in work, such as that on the albatross.

Pupils excitedly pointed out the full-scale replica of the bird, and showed wonder at the size of the wingspan.

The curriculum provides well for the literacy and numeracy needs of the pupils, but the school is reviewing aspects of their provision. They have a rolling programme of introducing topics that are more creative and promote learning through emphasising thinking skills and problem solving approaches. This is not yet complete and explains why the curriculum is good rather than outstanding. There are outstanding aspects such as the clubs, and the range of visits, and visitors into the school. For example, exceptional use was made of the two local Roman villas, leading to some challenging practical work on mosaics.

The headteacher provides an exceptionally clear direction for the school. Teamwork is strong. Staff share responsibility very effectively, for example, the new assistant head is overseeing the introduction of critical thinking skills across the school. They are fully involved in monitoring, and consequently all know well the strengths and areas for development in the school. The school is not complacent, and is constantly evaluating its performance, and open to change. However, any change is carefully monitored for its impact. For instance, school analysis revealed shortcomings in some boys, and high ability pupils' writing skills. This led to more choice and involvement of boys in deciding their reading books, but also a focus on phonics and spellings. Their on-going evaluation shows the positive impact these actions are having. The progress and attainment of boys and high ability pupils in reading and writing are now in line with those of other pupil groups. The school has forged some excellent links with bodies outside the school, which benefit the pupils very well. For example, pupils visit local farms, and their understanding of healthy eating is consequently, extremely well reinforced. Links with parents are very strong. As one parent wrote, 'There are lots of activities like family learning that we can be involved in with our children, which can work alongside topics they are doing in the classroom'. Outstanding leadership and management within the school is supported by the exceptional support given by the governing body. Together, these reflect an outstanding capacity to improve the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On entry to Reception, the children generally have the expected levels of skills and knowledge in areas of learning such as pupil attitudes and social development for their age. They have below the expected levels in reading, writing and calculation. They progress well, because of consistently good teaching, and skilled support from the learning assistants. The children's progress in personal development is very good, and during lessons they are keen, well behaved and eager to be involved and do well. They relate to each other very well. There are particularly good links with the Nursery and Year 1. Currently there is no permanent manager of the Foundation Stage in place, and whilst the acting leader has maintained the high standards, there is a need for a more long-term view of the development of certain issues. For example, the use of the outdoor area is not fully maximised.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring about the changes necessary to improve standards and achievement through securing the long-term leadership and management of the Foundation Stage.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

06 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arreton St George's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Newport, PO30 3AD

Thank you for welcoming me into your school. From the time you left the playground and entered the school, I was aware that you were obviously happy with, and proud of your school. I agree with you that you go to an outstanding school. This means that it does many things very well indeed.

You were certainly eager to tell me about your views. This does not surprise me, because your school is extremely good at providing you with chances to get involved in school life, take responsibility, discuss things, and make decisions. I was very impressed at how well you behave, and the way you get along so well with each other, and with the adults. You make extremely good progress in your work, mainly because you have very good teaching, but also your attitudes are excellent; you want to learn. You said that there are many exciting things for you to do. It was a pleasure to see Year 2 pupils enjoying solving the 'Goldilocks Crime' challenge. You told me how much you enjoy the very varied activities you are given.

You also told me that you feel very safe and well looked after. I very much liked the way you are asked to make decisions about the quality of your work, and have to complete your 'learning journey' when you have achieved a certain level of work.

The adults, particularly the headteacher, manage the school extremely well. They are always looking at ways they can improve things. I have asked that the Reception area be given a permanent manager so that more improvements can take place there. The governors work extremely hard on your behalf, and your parents are extremely pleased with the way the school is run.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector