

Aldington Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 118365 |
| Local Authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 312911 |
| Inspection date | 31 January 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Michael Barron |

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 | 130 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Roger Hughes |
| Headteacher | Sandra MacCourt |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20 October 2003 |
| School address | Roman Road Aldington Ashford TN25 7EE |
| Telephone number | 01233 720247 |
| Fax number | 01233 720445 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 4-11 |
| Inspection date | 31 January 2008 |
| Inspection number | 312911 |

© 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 one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues. • The achievement of pupils throughout the school, especially in mathematics and science. • The effectiveness of the school's provision for more able pupils. • The role of subject leaders and their impact on raising standards and achievement. The inspector gathered evidence from discussions with pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body, observations of teaching and of pupils at work and at play, scrutiny of school documentation and self-evaluation, samples of pupils' work and an analysis of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected 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

This is a smaller than average primary school situated in a rapidly expanding village. About one third of pupils come from outside the surrounding areas. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Children enter school at the age of four with skills that usually meet expectations for their age, although their social skills are sometimes less well developed. The school building, criticised by the previous inspection, has been extensively extended and modernised.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, with outstanding features. It provides a good education for pupils and prepares them well for their future life. Parents value the quality of education provided for their children and are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. This was conveyed through comments in parents' questionnaires, such as, 'a fantastic, responsive school that provides a great learning environment'. The school is led and managed well by a dynamic headteacher, who works effectively with staff and governors to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. Good leadership and management have ensured the school has successfully focused on maintaining improvements since the last inspection and on raising pupils' achievement. This reflects the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Good teaching, linked to an interesting and stimulating curriculum, enables pupils to make good progress from the day they start school. Pupils' work contains evidence that the school's developing cross-curricular approach to learning is encouraging the use of numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to enhance learning in other subjects. Achievement is good in all year groups so that by Year 6, pupils attain standards above the national average overall, although standards in science are not as good as those in English and mathematics. Pupils say that literacy, ICT and art are among their favourite subjects. Evidence from lessons, work on display and pupils' art portfolios confirmed that pupils achieve well in these subjects. However, during discussions with pupils it was evident that science was not one of their favourite subjects and that they found it uninteresting. Pupils' work shows that science lessons contain few opportunities for pupils to develop the skills associated with scientific investigation through experimental work. The school is aware that the teaching of science needs to develop if standards are to rise.

Pupils enjoy lessons and have good attitudes to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are given the support they need in order to make good progress. Pupils work well either independently or in small groups in lessons to complete learning tasks which are well matched to their different abilities. As a result, they get a real feeling of achievement when they complete tasks successfully. This was evident in a mathematics lesson when Year 5 pupils successfully solved problems about the cost of providing meals for a group of people. The smiles on their faces told it all! As one pupil put it, 'Teachers are nice and make learning fun.'

The quality of care guidance and support for pupils is outstanding and this is reflected in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. There is a very strong sense of community within the school and pupils talk excitedly about the school's role in village life. Parents value the high level of care and support the school provides for their children: 'The staff are committed and very caring', is a typical comment in parents' questionnaires. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is outstanding and this is reflected in pupils' exemplary behaviour and outstanding regard for the safety and well-being of others. Pupils are very courteous and always there to help should the need arise. Older pupils confidently engage in conversations and discussions with adults.

Pupils of all ages play well together and say they feel very safe. They describe their school as a happy and friendly place where adults make them feel wanted. They are confident there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem and have an excellent understanding of the importance of making sensible and healthy choices, especially about what they eat. Their

enjoyment of school is outstanding and is reflected in their above average attendance rates. The school council gives pupils a voice in school affairs and its views are often acted on, for example in improvements to pupils' toilet facilities. Pupils are encouraged to go that extra mile when taking on responsibilities, for example, writing and directing shows such as "Murder on the Moor", a musical produced by pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 for an audience of parents and other adults and featuring all the children in the school in various roles. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities, visitors to school and visits to places of interest, including residential trips to France and the Isle of Wight, build up pupils' knowledge of the wider world.

Teaching staff in this small school have multiple subject management responsibilities and are now beginning to develop their leadership roles. Together with the headteacher, they have been thorough in regularly analysing the school's performance and in implementing improvements where needed. Assessment information is used effectively to set very challenging targets for the school and to track and improve the performance of individual pupils, who all have individual learning targets in English, mathematics and science. This has enabled staff to sustain existing good practice and to identify and address inconsistencies, for example, successfully implementing initiatives to improve achievement in mathematics, especially that of more able pupils. The quality of teachers' marking is consistently good and ensures pupils always know what they have to do to improve their work.

Governors are fully involved in the work of the school. They offer a good level of support and challenge and fulfil their statutory duties well. Staff and governors have built up good relationships with parents, who are very supportive and proud of the success of the school and appreciate that their views are regularly sought and acted upon. Links with external agencies are good and support pupils' learning well, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school's Reception class is a hive of activity. Children everywhere are thoroughly engaged in their work, some with adult support, others quite confidently working independently in small groups. The classroom provides a stimulating learning environment. It is full of colour and is an exciting, vibrant place where children say they feel happy and safe. They achieve well because of effective teaching and a well planned curriculum. Good leadership ensures that the needs of all children, including those with emotional or learning difficulties, are met well. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that lessons effectively blend independent learning with adult-directed tasks and this helps children to make good progress overall and very good progress in developing their social skills. The outdoor play area is secure and quite large. Whilst staff use it well to promote learning, there is no undercover area and so its use is governed by the weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in science by providing pupils with regular opportunities to develop their investigative skills.

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.

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

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Adlington Primary School, Kent TN25 7EE

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. Everyone was really friendly and I soon realised why you like your school so much. I enjoyed talking to some of you about your favourite activities, seeing you all working in lessons and eating the lovely food some of you made especially for me.

Here are some of the things I particularly like about your school.

- This is a good school, which prepares you well for the next stage of your education.
- The standards of your work in English and mathematics in Year 6 are higher than those in most schools. They show that you are taught well and that you make good progress.
- Your enjoyment of school is outstanding and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your personal development is outstanding and you have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and safely.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors lead and manage the school well and make sure that the care, guidance and support you receive is outstanding.

I believe your headteacher and teachers can do something to make your school better and I have asked them to:

- help you all to develop your investigation skills in science.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron Lead inspector

31 January 2008

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Adlington Primary School, Kent TN25 7EE

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. Everyone was really friendly and I soon realised why you like your school so much. I enjoyed talking to some of you about your favourite activities, seeing you all working in lessons and eating the lovely food some of you made especially for me.

Here are some of the things I particularly like about your school.

- This is a good school, which prepares you well for the next stage of your education.
- The standards of your work in English and mathematics in Year 6 are higher than those in most schools. They show that you are taught well and that you make good progress.
- Your enjoyment of school is outstanding and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your personal development is outstanding and you have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily and safely.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors lead and manage the school well and make sure that the care, guidance and support you receive is outstanding.

I believe your headteacher and teachers can do something to make your school better and I have asked them to:

- help you all to develop your investigation skills in science.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron
Lead inspector