

# Astley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121015
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	313837
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marianne Harris

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	241
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr S Hems
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr G F Whittle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Fakenham Road Briston Melton Constable Norfolk NR24 2HH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01263 860212
<b>Fax number</b>	01263 862379

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school in a rural area of Norfolk. Most of the pupils come from a white British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is close to that usually found in primary schools, although the proportion who have a statement of need is higher than usual. These needs vary, but are mainly for moderate learning difficulties and speech and language delay. Several pupils have physical disabilities. When children join the school their skills and knowledge are below those normally expected for their age.

## 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. Parents are very supportive of the school and many comment that they feel proud their children attend. One wrote, 'We cannot stress enough how pleased we are that our child attends Astley School'. Many appreciate the time and dedication of the staff who provide many extra activities that enrich the good curriculum and support learning in many areas. The headteacher has been particularly successful in establishing a very good relationship with the parents. Many help in the school and accompany the children on a wide variety of trips for all classes.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and make good progress, achieving well whatever their ability. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average. Whilst they fluctuate at the end of Year 6 because of particular needs within each cohort, they are average and rising because the school accurately tracks the progress that each pupil makes. This means that those who find a particular aspect of learning difficult receive additional help and quickly catch up. Teaching and learning are good with skilful teachers and teaching assistants providing good support for those who find learning difficult. Lessons are interesting because pupils are encouraged to participate fully. They discuss their ideas with a partner before sharing them with the class and are beginning to assess for themselves how much they have understood at the end of the lesson. Planning is thorough and results in work that is well matched to the needs of the various groups within the class. There are occasions, however, when time is not used effectively and progress slows for some pupils. When this happens it is usually because teachers have not made their expectations clear and pupils become fidgety and lose interest.

The senior leadership team is effective and consequently the school is well led and managed. There has been much emphasis on providing a very caring environment for the pupils where they feel safe and secure. Academic guidance is very thorough so that pupils usually know what it is they need to do in order to reach higher standards. As a result pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have a clear understanding about keeping safe and healthy. Many cycle to school and are keen to encourage others to do the same. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education, particularly Year 6 who are embarking on a mini-enterprise to raise money for a trip at the end of term. Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school, although not all visit on a regular basis to see for themselves the good provision. There has been good improvement since the last inspection as standards have risen overall and the senior leadership team has become firmly established. The capacity to improve further is good as the school has a clear understanding of where their strengths lie and what needs to be tackled next.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they achieve well during their time in the Reception class. There are many well-planned activities that cover all areas of learning and adults assess children's progress thoroughly. There is a good balance of activities that are led by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Consequently children make good progress, particularly in their social development. The recent focus on developing early literacy skills has resulted in children enjoying reading and writing. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have reached standards that are expected for their age.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that time is used well so that pupils make good progress in all lessons.
- Encourage all governors to be more active in the school so that they experience first hand the work of the staff and pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

National test results for pupils at the end of 6 are average. This represents good progress from a low starting point. Pupils achieve well, whatever their ability. Those who reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 usually reach the higher levels when they come to the end of Year 6. The higher than usual number of pupils who find learning difficult, or who have a disability, make good progress because there is dedicated time set aside when they receive specialist teaching that tackles their particular difficulty. The schools own data shows that pupils make good progress over their time in school.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to work and relate warmly to adults and each other. Attendance is satisfactory and behaviour overall is good. Pupils respond well to whole school reward systems and know that their concerns are dealt with fairly. They show initiative through the school council and are proud to talk about their part in making the school a better place. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with parents saying that 'Children feel secure, grow educationally and take responsibility'. Pupils' understanding of multi-cultural Britain is not fully developed and the school is working to tackle this. Pupils enjoy learning and their ability to work with and care for others is shown clearly during lessons, along with their willingness to participate in the many after-school clubs. They make a good contribution to the community by raising funds for various charities and taking part in local events and educational visits. Pupils compete in various sporting events and they are encouraged to adopt a healthy attitude to competition along with developing a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils report that learning is fun because teachers involve them in lessons. There are many opportunities for them to discuss their ideas and for them to let their teachers know if they have understood aspects of the lessons. The purpose of each lesson is clear because planning is explicit and ensures that tasks are matched well to the abilities in each class. Whilst lessons usually move at a brisk pace, this is not always the case. There are occasions when teachers do not set time limits for tasks and this leads to pupils losing concentration and not completing their work. Teaching assistants are particularly good at supporting pupils who find learning difficult and helping them make good progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched well with visits, visitors and after school activities. Parents and pupils speak very highly of these and appreciate the time that members of staff commit to running these activities. The school recognises that multi-cultural education is limited and have put in place specialist weeks, such as 'One World Week' to promote the cultures of other countries. Whilst, this is not yet fully established, other themed days provide further good opportunities for pupils to explore, for example, science and a variety of arts based activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

A strength of the headteacher's leadership is the development of the high level of pastoral care offered to all members of the school community, resulting in the very strong caring ethos within the school. A high priority is given to pupils' welfare and safety. There are secure procedures for child protection, behaviour management and dealing with health and safety. Pupil targets for improvement are used consistently throughout the school and as a result most of the pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work. However, some are unsure of how their targets are reviewed and what happens when they have reached expectations. Support staff work hard to ensure that pupils receive the help they need during lessons and children who find learning difficult are well supported.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is leading staff effectively to raise standards and promote the personal development and well being of the pupils. The senior leadership team has established an innovative way to show what teachers are planning to teach each year group through the use of the school web site. The more specific detail is shared through the school computer network system. Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out frequently to help teachers develop and work towards a more consistent teaching standard across the school. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively so that programmes to support pupils who have fallen behind can be implemented. The senior leadership team is not afraid to abandon these programmes if they are found to be ineffective and replace them with more appropriate ones. Targets for raising standards further are challenging yet attainable. Parents value the work of the headteacher and there are good links with outside agencies. Governors are supportive and are taking positive steps to become more involved. They are beginning to become more involved in the day-to-day life of the school, but acknowledge that this is not yet fully established.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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**

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Astley Primary School, Briston, Norfolk, NR24 2HH

Thank you for welcoming us into your school recently. We enjoyed speaking to you and finding out about your work. We were sorry to have missed most of Year 6, but we did have the chance to look at your work and find out about some of the things you have done. I am now writing to let you know what we found out.

You told us that your school is good and we agree. You make good progress in your work because teachers plan tasks that are interesting and enjoyable. We have asked your teachers to make sure that every lesson is interesting by ensuring that they move at a fast pace so that some of you do not get fed up and begin to fidget.

We were impressed by the way you behaved well and with your understanding of how to keep healthy. We hope that the mugs made by Year 6 sell quickly and that you raise lots of money for your trip. There are many opportunities for you to learn outside of lessons and we liked hearing about the clubs and the trips you have. Some of your parents said how much they appreciate the time that teachers give up so that as many of you as possible can join in. We know that the drama group are excited about the end of term production and wish you luck with that.

During our time in your school we talked to a lot of people and asked a lot of questions. We have now asked your headteacher to encourage the governors to become more involved in the everyday life of the school. We think that it is important that they see for themselves just how hard you work and then they can talk to you about some of the lovely displays in the classes and corridors.

Once again thank you for being so friendly and welcoming and we wish you good luck in the future.

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector