

Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123220
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314546
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

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	65
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Dangerfield
Headteacher	Miss Marcia Northeast
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2004
School address	Ashbury Swindon SN6 8LN
Telephone number	01793 710259
Fax number	01793 710534

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils join the school with average or slightly above average attainment. There are two pupils who have statements of special educational need, and a small number who have other learning difficulties and disabilities. The school takes pupils from a wide area of rural villages and most come from families that are more socially and economically favoured than average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Nearly all of the pupils are white British and three pupils have English as an additional language. A separate pre-school operates on the school site. Ashbury has had a very unsettled period since 2004, when it was last inspected, because there have been six changes of either acting headteacher and headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The current headteacher took up post one week before the inspection. The governors and school community have coped well during the period of unsettled leadership. There are some strengths of which the school can be rightly proud. In particular, pupils' personal development is good and there is a strong sense of community. Pupils with significant learning difficulties and disabilities are integrated very well into the school and make good progress. Most parents are very pleased with the school.

Overall attainment of pupils in Year 6 has been variable in recent years, partly because of the small year groups. In 2007, Year 6 pupils achieved well and made good progress, especially in English and Science. Pupils' progress has improved over the last three years because of more targeted teaching. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is above average but there has been a decline in standards in recent years. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but fewer pupils have reached the higher levels especially in writing. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. The use of test and assessment information is not detailed enough to check progress accurately across the school, and consequently the next steps in pupils' learning is not as challenging as they might be.

Lessons are satisfactory. Teachers and pupils have excellent relationships. Teachers know their pupils well and engage them effectively through questioning and linking subjects together to make learning more interesting. The pupils are appreciative of the help that teachers give to them. Sometimes the management of lessons and the match of work to pupils' needs are not well planned and this reduces opportunities for pupils to learn more effectively.

Pupils develop into confident and caring young people who are proud of their school. They speak confidently and are willing to participate in lessons not only by completing their work but also by offering ideas and views when asked to do so. Pupils work well together and this also reflects the caring ethos of the school. The older pupils like reading stories with the younger pupils in the 'buddy reading' scheme. They enjoy school and their lessons. Pupils' personal development and their progress in basic skills contribute effectively to their next steps and economic well being. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and are very keen to take part in the regular physical education (PE) clubs and other sporting activities. The school has a Healthy Schools award and Active Mark.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The new headteacher in an extremely short space of time has developed a good understanding of some of the key areas that the school should improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils are taught in the same classroom. It is a friendly and caring environment and children feel secure. Children enter the school with average and slightly above average abilities. Most reach the goals appropriate for their age when they move into Year 1. Their progress is satisfactory. Children make better progress in mathematics than in language and literacy. There is a satisfactory balance between adult led and child initiated activity. Children enjoy the activities that are available for them and engage with them well. Sometimes the management of the child led activities is not effective and too many children try to take part at one time or the purpose of

the task is not fully understood by children. This reduces the learning potential of the activity. The teacher and teaching assistant keep detailed records to show the progress of children but these are not used systematically over short time periods to plan the next steps of learning. There is good liaison with the pre-school group who use accommodation in the school. While the children are well cared for during indoor activities the supervision of the outdoor activities is not rigorous enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of test and assessment information to measure progress and provide more rigorous on-going targets.
- Ensure that all lessons have tasks and activities that are well organised and matched to all pupils' needs to provide suitable challenge.
- Improve the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 especially in writing by ensuring that planning from Year 1 to Year 2 is coherent and informs more focussed teaching which challenges pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In 2007, Year 6 standards improved significantly in English, mathematics and science. A higher than average proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 5. This followed a period of two or three years of average attainment and a significant dip in 2006.

Progress in Key Stage 2 has improved over the last three years because teaching is more focussed in the older age groups, and linked more closely to clear expectations, which are explained to the pupils. An area of development for the school recently has been writing. The benefits of this are evident in the improved use of creative language and vocabulary in the narrative writing of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. Pupils are rightly pleased with their recent efforts in their writing tasks. However, the quality of writing across all ages is not consistent and presentation skills are lacking in all year groups. Pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills develop well.

Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress, though attainment in English and mathematics has fallen over the last three years where fewer pupils have been achieving the higher levels, especially in writing. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are good. Relationships are excellent and pupils have a good sense of how their attitudes help to create a caring and respectful atmosphere. The school is an orderly community and fully lives its motto 'we care'. Behaviour is good. Pupils have a strong moral sense and are very aware of the rules of the school, which were developed by the school council. Assemblies, lunchtimes and break-times are pleasant community occasions. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils enjoy school. There have been no recent incidents of bullying and pupils are not concerned about it, knowing that there is always someone to talk to if they are worried. Pupils feel safe and their enjoyment of and commitment to the school is outstanding. They are aware of the need to eat healthily and are very enthusiastic about

physical education and the chances to take part in regular clubs and inter-school sports events. The school provides its own good quality meals that meet the national nutritional standards. Pupils of all ages work and play together successfully in lessons and in the playground. For example, the youngest pupils played together in an impromptu puppet theatre with puppeteers and audience.

Pupils contribute to the school community by behaving well, readily undertaking tasks, representing the school at sport, and older pupils willingly working with younger pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory and there are a number of common strengths throughout the school. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils, they treat them with respect and consequently pupils respond well to the work in hand and try hard in all age groups.

Teachers are good at asking questions in order to engage pupils and there are ample opportunities for pupils to put forward their views and ideas. The management of the different groups of pupils in each class and the match of work to the wide range of abilities is not always successful. This means that time is not always used productively, or work may not be challenging enough, which reduces the potential for learning. Teachers are successful in linking different aspects of the curriculum to make coherent units of work. Teachers make sure that pupils are aware of what they are intended to learn in lessons and the older pupils find this helpful.

Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in helping pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Consequently, these pupils make good progress. Older pupils are increasingly able to assess how well they are doing because they are given clear information about what they need to do to improve and this has led to improved progress in recent years. Work is regularly marked but the quality is not always consistent across the school. Pupils say that teachers explain things well and comments in marking are helpful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is suitably broad and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. While pupils enjoy the range of the curriculum, it is not always well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The school has made satisfactory progress in providing for the higher attaining pupils, an issue from the last inspection, though this is not well established in some lessons in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Older pupils like the creative aspects of the curriculum. Pupils particularly like art and spoke with interest about a project that involved sketching the Ridgeway. Pupils successfully learn about healthy living and staying safe in personal and social education, circle time and assemblies.

Pupils have regular opportunities to use information and communication technology which is making a satisfactory contribution to their learning and progress. There is a very good range of enrichment activities, visits and clubs and several pupils use the local peripatetic music services. The 'active Ashbury' club, which promotes physical exercise, is very popular. Good use is made of external expert coaches to teach specific sports skills for example hockey.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers make lessons interesting and therefore pupils enjoy their work. Older pupils are developing a keenness to succeed and achieve well. The school has set suitably challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 2, though the use of assessment information to check progress and set targets throughout the school is underdeveloped and not yet sharp enough to inform planning in English and mathematics for all year groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well by staff and pupils alike to integrate fully, which reflects the caring nature of the school. Good links are maintained with parents and outside agencies in order to review pupils' progress. The individual education plans for pupils receiving additional help do not have enough short term and time constrained targets in order to measure more accurately how well pupils are doing.

Procedures for safeguarding and health and safety are in place and pupils are mostly well supervised around the school. Supervision of the Foundation Stage children while they are involved with outside activities is not adequate. Recent staff changes have meant that some staff need to attend appropriate child protection training, but this is now in hand and courses have been booked.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The Governors and school community have dealt well with the changes in leadership in recent years. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory but lacks sharpness and consistency. The academic targets set for the end of Key Stage 2 are appropriate and show a commitment to improvement though this has not been manifest yet in relation to pupils' progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Subject leaders who have a significant workload in this small school are beginning to scrutinise more thoroughly pupils' achievements in each year group, especially in English and mathematics. However, this is not well embedded enough to provide the detailed and accurate evidence of progress with which to set targets throughout the school. Good, effective links are made with outside agencies and parents are very supportive of the school. While the school has an appropriate range of policies and procedures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its pupils more attention is needed to ensure that documentation is fully up to date and well organised. The school runs very smoothly on a day to day basis. The organisation of resources means that some parts of the school are cluttered and this begins to impinge on teaching and learning. For example, the hall is used for PE, but storage of tables, chairs and other items reduces the available safe space for lessons.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Swindon, SN6 8LN

Thank you very much for your help when I came to inspect your school. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing how you are learning. You have had many headteachers in the last few years but the Governors and all the staff did really well to make sure that this did not affect you too much. The school is satisfactory and it is doing well in some of the ways it is helping you. The school community really lives through its motto 'we care'. You get on very well together and look after each other, both adults and children. The older ones amongst you are developing into mature and confident young people, ready to take your next steps. Well done.

You have very good attitudes to school and many of you told me that you enjoy your lessons. Teachers work hard to make the lessons interesting. It was very pleasing to see that you are very keen on your sport and are aware of how to keep healthy. I liked your healthy school meals.

Most of you are making satisfactory progress with your learning and some of the older ones amongst you are making good progress. The Year 6 did well last year. I believe more of you could do even better. I have asked the head teacher and staff to check more carefully how much progress you are making and to make sure that all your lessons help you even more. I have also asked them, especially, to make sure that the younger children make more progress, especially in writing.

You can help by continuing to work hard and make an extra effort with the neatness and presentation your work, especially your handwriting.

Thank you again for your help. Good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Towl HMI