

Acton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 124686 |
| Local Authority | Suffolk |
| Inspection number | 315018 |
| Inspection dates | 3–4 March 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Kathleen Yates |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 121 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Diane Moye |
| Headteacher | Mrs Diana Bonnar |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 October 2001 |
| School address | Lambert Drive Acton Sudbury Suffolk CO10 0US |
| Telephone number | 01787377089 |
| Fax number | 01787313734 |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
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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 which caters for pupils aged from four to nine. There is an average proportion of pupils who find learning difficult and who have disabilities while a higher than average proportion has a statement of educational need. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those who do not have English as their first language are very low. A lower than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free schools meals. Children mostly enter school with levels of achievement that are similar to those typically found for children of this age.

The school has the following awards: Activemark, Healthy Schools, Investors in People, Wider Opportunities and Eco Schools Green Flag.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Acton Primary is a good school, which provides a good standard of education. Inspection findings match the school's own view of itself in most respects. The school works well with other schools, outside agencies and the community to promote the well-being of learners. Parents are happy with the way in which the school cares for their children.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils achieve well and by the time they enter Year 1, most children are working at the levels typically found. Good progress is made through Years 1 and 2, and the most recent assessments at the end of Year 2 show these pupils reached standards that were above average overall.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance is above average. Pupils are generally well behaved. They are happy in school and enjoy their learning. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy and active life and how to keep themselves safe. They participate well in community projects, which include recycling, musical performances and dancing.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. Pupils are keen to talk about the wide range of extra activities they take part in. Care, guidance and support are good and all procedures for safeguarding are in place. While teachers mark pupils' work regularly, the practice of setting pupils targets is inconsistent. Consequently, they do not always have a clear understanding of what it is they need to do to improve. The school is swift to put extra support in place for those at risk of falling behind.

Leadership and management are good. Leaders and managers have been successful in driving up standards in literacy. The same energy is now being focused on developing problem solving skills, especially in mathematics. The school acknowledges the need for subject leaders to establish and make use of tracking systems in order to focus on rigorous monitoring and evaluating of the progress pupils make. Governance is satisfactory. Governors challenge spending decisions effectively but they do not yet play a sufficiently active part in checking up on the standards pupils attain. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and there is a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start school, their levels of ability are similar to those found typically for their age range, except in their speaking and listening skills where they are often a little lower. Staff forge good links with parents and the adjoining pre-school setting so that children settle quickly. Teaching and learning are good and children enjoy a wide range of exciting activities. There is a good balance between children making choices about their learning activities and adults directing what they do. Good use is made of the classroom space and outside, where the recent addition of a sheltered area enables children to pursue learning all the year round, regardless of the weather. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Teaching assistants, governors and parents make a valuable contribution to children's good progress and they are well briefed as to how they can support their learning. While children are mostly well behaved, adults do not always have high enough expectations that children should listen respectfully to others in whole class sessions. Good progress is made in all areas

of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, most children have achieved the expected levels and a few have exceeded them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop systems to track pupils' progress and involve subject leaders in close analysis of the information, so that managers have a sharper focus for their monitoring and evaluation.
- Set targets for all pupils so that they and their parents can be more involved in knowing what it is they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Assessment results for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2007 showed an improvement on the two previous years. Attainment was above average in writing and broadly average in reading and mathematics giving above average standards overall that year. Current standards at Year 2 are also above average. Progress from these pupils' starting points was good. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4. Overall, the standards reached by pupils in the current Year 4 are in line with national expectations which is good progress from the below average starting points of this group. Inspection findings show that the progress of all current pupils including those who find learning difficult and of those who have disabilities is good and that pupils are on course to meet the challenging targets set.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Recent awards have recognised their good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and active lifestyles. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and how to care for others. They take an active role in enterprise challenges. They enjoy school a good deal. Most pupils behave well and know how to work in harmony with one another. On occasions, they are reluctant to wait their turn, especially when answering questions. They make a good contribution to the community and demonstrate good levels of understanding of the need to look after the environment. By the time they leave the school, their levels of skills in literacy and numeracy ensure they are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' planning is linked closely to regular assessments of pupils' needs. Special attention has been given to promoting pupils' skills in literacy, through drama, spelling, dictation and a high emphasis on reading. This has contributed well to the above average standards attained by the end of Year 2. Teachers model handwriting to a high standard and most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. On occasions, the pace of learning slows when teachers do not insist firmly enough that pupils listen attentively. As pupils go through the school, there is an increasing emphasis on homework tasks, which prepares them well for their next school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is organised and adapted well so that it matches the needs of all pupils, including those who find learning difficult. There is a high focus on providing a creative curriculum, themed weeks and practical activities. Visits and visitors help to make lessons come alive. Teachers enhance learning through attractive displays, which celebrate pupils' high quality work in art. The school is beginning to make greater use of extra resources for information, communication and technology, (ICT) to improve computer skills across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra activities, which include dancing, drumming, sports, French and ICT.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a high level of good quality care for pupils which results in their good achievement and enjoyment. Staff know pupils very well and there are good links across all key stages, so that pupils are confident to speak to an adult if they have any concerns. Arrangements for ensuring the safety of pupils, including child protection, are in place. Teachers are encouraging pupils to be more involved in making their own checks on their work in lessons. The practice of providing pupils with targets so that they and their parents have a clear understanding of their next steps in learning is not yet well established across all classes. The school has a good range of support programmes to help pupils improve their numeracy and literacy skills. Teaching assistants are well deployed to this effect.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are successfully focused on raising standards and achievement. There is a real sense of teamwork and everyone is intent on providing a learning environment where 'every child matters'. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and the areas for development. Governors are supportive and ensure the budget is spent wisely. Subject leaders share their expertise well across all year groups. They are at an early stage of being involved in developing systems to track the progress pupils make. Consequently, information is not yet compiled and accessible to provide all staff and the school's leaders with an overview of pupils' progress. Day-to-day organisation is efficient and the secretary has been instrumental in introducing new technology.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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|---|-----|
| 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 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

3 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Acton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary, Sudbury, CO10 0US

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and listening to your views. This letter is to let you know what I found out.

You all enjoy your time in school and do well. You are all very important to the adults in school who look after you well. You behave well and know how to keep yourselves fit, safe and healthy. Occasionally, you don't always wait your turn when answering questions and now and again, you don't listen as well as you could. You could try harder to do these things, as it will help everyone if you do. Your school has received many awards, which recognise your success. You come to school regularly and get on well together. Teachers work hard to make sure that you have many exciting things to do. All through the school, your work is on display and your art work is of a high standard. Those of you in Year 4 have a good range of homework, which helps you to be well prepared for your next school.

The school is going to help you to be even more successful. Teachers are going to give each one of you targets. This is so that you can be more involved in making checks on your work and in knowing how to improve for yourselves. Your parents will also know how they can help you. Teachers who are in charge of subjects will track just how well you are doing and write this down. This information will make it easier for the school's leaders to see how well you are doing. It will also make it clearer for them to do their jobs.

I wish you well for the future,

Kathleen Yates

Lead inspector