

Alexander Hosea Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109023
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	324884
Inspection date	13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	281
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Jones
Headteacher	Valerie Quest
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Honeybourne Way Wickwar Wotton-under-Edge GL12 8NH
Telephone number	01454 294239
Fax number	01454 294239

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	13 May 2009
Inspection number	324884

© Crown copyright 2009

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 two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- pupils' rates of progress in Years 3 to 6
- the role of subject leaders and their impact on pupils' achievement and standards.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, other staff, pupils and governors, and from the parental questionnaires. Lessons were observed, and school self-evaluation and other documentation and samples of pupils' current and previous work were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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 the report.

Description of the school

The school is slightly larger than an average primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the range of these difficulties or disabilities is very broad. A pre-school and breakfast and after-school clubs are based in the school's accommodation. The headteacher was appointed in January 2009.

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. Pupils make good progress and standards are generally well above average. Aspects of the school's provision are outstanding, most notably the Early Years Foundation Stage and the care, guidance and support given to pupils throughout the school.

Achievement is good overall but fluctuates between year groups. Rates of progress are outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1, 2 and 6 but slow down in Years 3 and 4, where pupils' overall progress in reading and mathematics is only satisfactory. When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills and experiences are broadly in line with those expected for their age, although in recent years, language and personal and social development have been below expectations. The children make exceptional progress and most exceed the expected goals for learning by the end of Reception. This rapid progress continues in Years 1 and 2, resulting in pupils reaching very high standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards by the end of Year 6 are usually well above average but much of this is due to the improvement in progress that starts in Years 5 and then accelerates in Year 6. Writing, which has been one of the school's main priorities in recent years, has become one of the real strengths of pupils' work throughout the school. Many pupils say it is one of their favourite activities and this love of writing starts in Reception, where the children are given many opportunities to develop their skills. All teachers have become highly skilled at teaching writing, providing stimulating activities for pupils across the curriculum and guiding them very effectively on how they can improve.

Wherever pupils' progress is good or better, it is due to very effective teaching and a good quality of learning. A significant number of questionnaires returned by parents commented on the high quality of teaching. Teachers use a range of strategies to extend pupils' learning, such as a series of targets for pupils to work towards in writing and mathematics. Pupils know their targets well and they are encouraged to assess their own progress towards achieving these. From an early age, pupils are skilled at assessing the strengths and weaknesses in their own work and that of their classmates. They are encouraged to consider how well their work shows the specific objectives that teachers have set for a lesson. They write constructive comments in one another's books and are thoughtful when they talk to partners about each other's work.

Teachers generally plan work in English and mathematics that is carefully matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities but this is not consistent in all classes. When it happens, pupils thrive on the challenge. Where it is missing, pupils find work too easy. This is especially the case for more able pupils in Years 3 and 4 in mathematics and, to a lesser degree, in science. Pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective additional support and the intervention programmes introduced to meet specific needs are highly successful. This helps them to make as much progress as their peers. Using a pupil's standards at the end of Year 2, a challenging target is set for each pupil to reach in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Teachers use formal assessment six times a year to check progress towards those targets, reacting promptly by providing additional support if a pupil should be falling behind. There is less consistency in the day-to-day checking of progress in Years 3 and 4, resulting in some more able pupils not working fast enough or at a high enough level. This is most evident in mathematics and it shows there is scope for these pupils being set even more challenging long-term targets.

The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched by an exciting programme of events during the year, such as theme days, educational visits and input from visiting specialists. Pupils' work in the creative arts is particularly enriched by these experiences and many prominent displays around the school celebrate the impressively high standard of artwork of pupils of all ages. In some classes, the curriculum has been developed by combining subjects into topics. The school council speaks for many other pupils when saying that this topic approach is making learning more interesting. At the same time, a strong emphasis remains on ensuring that all pupils acquire basic skills. The often high levels of these skills, alongside pupils' social maturity and experience of enterprise-related activities, mean that pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education and for their future lives. The good, broad range of activities provided outside the school day are greatly enjoyed and high numbers of pupils participate in them.

Pupils' tremendous enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent behaviour, their good attendance and their enthusiasm for learning. Their personal development and well-being are good overall. They have developed an excellent appreciation of healthy lifestyles. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe in school and at home. With the exception of the school council, the allocation of responsibilities to pupils is restricted to those in Year 6. Consequently, there are too few opportunities for younger pupils to contribute to the day-to-day running of the school. Beyond the school, pupils appreciate that they are seen as an important part of the local community, working in partnership with local organisations, raising funds for local and national charities and taking part in local events such as music and dance festivals. There are good links with other schools that widen pupils' horizons. This reflects the school's good commitment to developing community cohesion, although it rightly recognises that its past work to establish links with international communities has lost momentum and needs attention. The school maintains the highest standards of pastoral care, and all procedures to safeguard pupils are securely in place. Pupils are given excellent guidance on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has quickly acquired a perceptive awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development, placing priority on curriculum development. Her clear vision and purposeful leadership are strengthening still further the collective responsibility for school improvement amongst all staff that was established by her predecessor. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation judgements are accurate. All subject leaders are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, identifying areas for development and taking action to improve pupils' achievement. The senior management team also benefits from the significant expertise and experience present in the governing body, which ensures that the school sets itself challenging targets. The school has good capacity for further improvement, having shown how successfully it has moved forward since its last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children settle quickly into school life as a result of the good liaison with pre-school providers and parents and carers. Staff are committed to ensuring that the children's welfare is their uppermost concern. Children's learning is of the highest quality, due to outstanding teaching and the creation of a well-organised, richly stimulating environment both indoors and outdoors. Their progress is checked constantly in all areas of learning and all staff are fully involved in the regular recording and evaluation of the children's achievements. There is a strong focus on children's language development, and opportunities for speaking, reading and writing are

exploited in many aspects of the children's learning activities. Every activity has a clearly defined purpose and children speak confidently not only about what they are doing but also what is helping them to learn. They love solving problems and developing their own ideas and there is a constant buzz of busy children working and playing harmoniously. This results in excellent achievement by all children, with most of them exceeding the expected goals for learning by the end of the year. Their standards are well above average when they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- make better use of ongoing assessment of pupils' learning in Years 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics, to ensure that the more able pupils have suitably challenging work
- increase the opportunities for pupils of all ages to have specific responsibilities and contribute to the school community.

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.

Annex A

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alexander Hosea Primary School, Wickwar GL12 8NH

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for talking to us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing you at work. You told us how much you enjoy going to school. This is not surprising because you have a good school that is successful in helping you to learn. These are some things it does particularly well:

- You are making good progress in your work and often reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in Reception and Years 1, 2 and 6.
- You behave excellently and are always willing to help one another at work and play and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone feels safe and happy.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular physical exercise.
- Teaching is good and your teachers work hard to plan interesting things for you to do in your lessons. This is helping you to learn well.
- All the adults look after you very carefully and make sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The headteacher leads the school well and all the adults, including the governors, work very well together to improve it.
- We have made two main recommendations to help your school get even better.
- Make sure that those of you who find work easy, particularly in Years 3 and 4 in mathematics, are given work that challenges you more.
- Give responsibilities to some of you before you get to Year 6 so that you can contribute more to the day-to-day life of the school.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Alexander Hosea to be an even better school.

Yours faithfully

Colin Lee

Lead inspector