

# Five Acres Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123006
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327827
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Lewis

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	226
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Goodson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Darrell Wood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Blackthorn Road Ambrosden Bicester OX25 2LN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01869 253193
<b>Fax number</b>	01869 245380

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<b>Age group</b>	5–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Five Acres is an average-sized primary school. About half of its pupils come from a local military base. Because of the regular movement of military personnel, mobility is very high with up to one quarter of pupils leaving each year. Other pupils come from local villages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is greater than average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school has gained the BECTA ICT Award and the Healthy School award. After a period of significant disruption among senior staff, a new headteacher was appointed at the start of the autumn term. He took up the substantive post at the start of the current, spring term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Five Acres is a satisfactory school. It has some good aspects to its work. Under sound new leadership the school is working hard to improve further on the satisfactory education it currently offers. The recently appointed headteacher has very quickly established a new and enthusiastic leadership team. In a very short time new systems have been established. They are ensuring improvements to the consistency of teaching and in the use of assessment information which are needed to improve pupils' rate of progress. Challenging targets are set.

Achievement is satisfactory. Levels of attainment on entry are broadly average, although due to the very high rate of pupil turnover cohorts change significantly each year as they move through the school. Progress is satisfactory throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result, by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing and mathematics is lower than that expected nationally. Writing standards are considerably weaker than reading across the school. The school has adopted new initiatives designed to improve standards in writing and mathematics across the school and while there are early signs of success, it knows that there is more work to be done. The school's good partnerships with others, including the local Army garrison, promote pupils' progress and well-being well. The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school, making comments such as, 'We feel fortunate to have been able to send our children to Five Acres and feel it prepares them very well for secondary education.'

Pupils' personal development is good. Most pupils are confident, polite and respectful. They enjoy coming to school, where they learn how to be safe and healthy and take responsibility for themselves and others. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils say, 'It's a really fun place to be in, the environment is safe, the staff are friendly and sanctions are fair.' The current standards ensure pupils develop satisfactory skills that will contribute to their future well-being. The satisfactory curriculum is in the early stages of being revised and enriched in order to provide more exciting and interesting activities for the pupils. However, pupils enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly the sporting activities, which contribute to them adopting healthy lifestyles.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and reflect the level of pupil achievement. Monitoring of the quality of teaching by senior managers has begun, but it is at an early stage of development. There remain inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in the level of challenge and in marking which indicates to pupils what they can do to improve. Teachers' planning and the contribution of teaching assistants ensure pupils with learning needs are supported appropriately.

Care and guidance is good. Pastoral care is exceptionally good with particular attention paid to ensuring that new pupils, and those who enter the school other than in Year 1, are quickly put at ease and are settled. Staff care for the pupils very well and there is a very strong ethos of inclusion. Equal opportunity is promoted very well. Academic guidance is satisfactory but, although it is early days, the new whole-school systems for assessing and tracking individual pupils' progress are beginning to be used by all staff. In time, as comparative data is collected, this will allow more accurate and rapid intervention to support pupils who are falling behind or are not doing as well as they could. Although initiatives designed to improve pupils' progress are still in the early stages, the headteacher has undeniably had a very positive impact on the

school's work in a very short time. There are clear signs of improvement in staff morale, in academic guidance and in the curriculum and given this rate of improvement, the capacity to improve is good.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are good. The very experienced headteacher of the Nursery school is the leader and manager of the Reception classes in the main school. In a very short period of time she has overseen the establishment of the two new Reception classes; appropriate policies and procedures are in place and the Early Years Foundation Stage classes run smoothly. Together with the newly employed teachers, she has quickly and successfully established a friendly, caring and secure learning environment where the personal development of the children is good. The care and welfare of the children is a priority for all staff and, as a result, the children settle well, are happy and are able to develop their social and physical skills in a secure and happy environment. Adults provide a wide range of interesting learning activities, both inside and outside the classrooms. These activities are carefully organised, allowing children to work on things that they choose themselves as well as by taking part in more formal group work activities with adults. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader monitors the quality of teaching effectively and staff receive valuable guidance on how to improve. Hence the quality of teaching is at present satisfactory, but there are examples of good teaching.

The current Reception children enter the school with levels of attainment broadly typical for their age. General strengths are in personal development and language for communication, with weaker areas being writing and in linking letters and sounds. Children make satisfactory progress because teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Consequently, standards by the end of Reception are as expected for their age. Occasionally, however, opportunities are missed to extend children's thinking, particularly high-attainers, by asking appropriately challenging questions.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards of writing and mathematics throughout the school, particularly for the more-able pupils.
- Eradicate the inconsistencies in teaching and improve all teaching to the level of the best.

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**

From broadly average entry levels at the start of Year 1 pupils make satisfactory progress, so that levels of attainment on entry to Year 3 and by the time they leave in Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing and mathematics in the latest national tests was low. The school has introduced a number of strategies to improve progress in writing, including the 'Big Write' programme, and is introducing more practical activities in mathematics lessons to make learning more active and interesting. These initiatives are beginning to show signs of success. The mobility of pupils has an increasing impact on the school in Years 3 to 6, making key stage to key stage

comparisons insecure. Half of the current Year 6 class did not join the school until the start of Key Stage 2 or later, for example, and half of the current cohort of Year 6 pupils have learning difficulties. The school's internal data on pupils demonstrates, however, that most pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress in their sometimes short time in the school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are friendly, articulate and well mannered. They show respect for one another and their environment. Although pupils from army families typically have a good understanding of cultural differences due to living and attending schools in other countries, cultural development is less well developed for those pupils without personal experience of life within another culture. The school has achieved the Healthy School award, and as a result pupils understand well about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They say they like the school meals, which they feel are 'good' noting that, 'the menu is healthy, nothing fatty'. They know how to keep safe and say they feel safe in school. They say they enjoy school. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved. This was especially noticeable during a whole-school assembly where pupils behaved and responded exceptionally well. Attendance is satisfactory but is affected adversely by garrison families taking holidays on return from tours of duty, often unavoidably during term time. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the local community through membership of the school council and by being school monitors. They participate in local community events such as church services and sporting tournaments and contributing to a range of national charities. By developing good personal and social skills and achieving broadly average standards, they develop satisfactory workplace skills that will contribute effectively to their future education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

In most lessons routines are made clear and are regularly reinforced. This ensures that pupils know what to expect and can all contribute to lessons and that learning takes place in a well-structured environment. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils who need extra help are given it. Although in most cases classroom organisation is good and pupils are managed well, in a small minority of lessons teachers have to spend too much time admonishing pupils and bringing them back on task. This slows the pace of lessons and time is wasted as a result. Although progress has been made in ensuring all lesson plans include appropriate work for pupils of different abilities, teachers' expectations about what pupils, particularly more-able pupils, might achieve are not always high enough. This is noticeable in the way some teachers miss opportunities to extend pupils' thinking skills when questioning pupils. In the best lessons, however, good teaching successfully extends pupils' language and thinking skills.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is sound. The use of an improved writing scheme and strengthened intervention programmes that support pupils' learning have enabled pupils to make increased progress with their writing skills. Links between subject areas are currently being developed in order to make

work more interesting and stimulating. The school is aware that establishing links between mathematics and other subject areas would make mathematics more relevant and enjoyable for pupils, therefore raising standards. Similarly in science, there are currently insufficient opportunities for practical independent activities. The curriculum is not always fully successful in addressing the needs of more-able pupils by providing suitably challenging work. The curriculum is well supported, however, by a good range of extra-curricular activities and visitors to the school. Pupils stated they thoroughly enjoy their educational visits, especially the residential visits for the older pupils. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and the school has achieved the BECTA ICT award for the quality of its provision.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The attention given to the welfare and care of pupils is a strength of the school. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are secure. Effective induction procedures ensure pupils new to the school are able to adjust and quickly become fully immersed in the life of the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well by all staff and are able to take part fully in every aspect of the school and make progress at a similar pace to other pupils. Pastoral guidance is very good. The use of special programmes ensures pupils' self-esteem is enhanced and emotional problems are handled sensitively. Academic support and guidance is developing well, but recently introduced assessment and tracking procedures have not yet had sufficient time to impact on standards. Pupils are now aware of their personal targets and how to use them to improve their work. The quality of marking varies across the school; in the best cases, teachers' marking is very supportive and usefully instructs pupils about the next steps in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The new headteacher has done much to improve staff morale and team spirit after a difficult period of disruption and uncertainty. Prior to his arrival he worked in cooperation with the acting headteacher, and steps were taken to improve the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. Initiatives to improve the progress pupils make are still at a very early stage of development and most changes have been made so recently that it is, as yet, too early to confirm their success. One significant improvement already achieved, however, is in the role of senior leaders and subject leaders who are now newly 'empowered' and are enthusiastically using assessment information to check on the school's performance. As a result, they have a much improved overview of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects across the school and a strong desire to improve pupils' achievement. Governors are now much better informed about pupils' achievements and are beginning to develop their role in holding the school to account. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion with its strong links with the local community and particularly with the global community through its good links with the Army. It accepts it is in the early stages of developing wider links within the United Kingdom.

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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 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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

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

24 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Five Acres Primary School, Bicester, OX25 2LN

I would like to thank you all, and particularly your school council, for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit.

Five Acres is a satisfactory school. It has some good features: the adults care for you very well and give you good support to enable you to learn, and you told us that you enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe and you do this well. You told us that you really like your school and there are lots of things to do. We agree with you. Your behaviour is good. You work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

Your headteacher and staff are leading the school satisfactorily. I have asked your school to do two things to make it better.

- Help more of you achieve higher standards in writing and mathematics.
- Work hard to ensure all teachers make lessons as interesting as they can be.

We wish you all well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Clive Lewis

Lead Inspector