

Aldeburgh Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124566
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328165
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	55
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	Mrs Jane Hart
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Berry
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Park Road Aldeburgh Suffolk IP15 5EU
Telephone number	01728 452150
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector

Description of the school

The school is significantly smaller than most. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in a class alongside pupils in Year 1. Attainment on entry is close to that expected for children of this age, but often covers a wide range of abilities. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average. However, pupils come from a wide range of economic and social backgrounds. The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are much lower than usually found. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school holds the Activemark award for the provision it makes in promoting exercise and sport.

The school is currently part of the local authority's programme for reorganisation and is scheduled to become a 5-11 primary school by September 2012. An independently managed pre-school playgroup shares the site and was inspected at the same time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Aldeburgh Primary School provides a good quality of education, which supports the school's judgement of its performance. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. One parent reflected the view of many when she summed up the school by saying, 'I find it a brilliant school and both my children are very happy here.' The school consistently celebrates the efforts and good work of every pupil, enabling all to find something at which they can be successful. It does this to the extent that all pupils achieve well, with some doing even better. Standards by the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4 are above average. This is because teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers have high expectations, to which pupils respond exceptionally well and behaviour during lessons and around the school is excellent. Teachers plan work that meets the learning needs of every pupil well. They are also good at ensuring that pupils know how to improve their work. This means that pupils know their targets for improvement and this helps them to become increasingly confident learners. By contrast, reports provided for parents and carers do not give enough detail about how their children are progressing or about what they need to do to make their work even better.

The curriculum is good, with a strong focus on developing 'life skills' and making learning relevant to pupils' needs and interests. It meets the needs of the full range of ages and abilities in each class effectively and is enhanced by an exceptional range of additional activities and educational visits, especially for pupils' creative development and sport. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and apply themselves exceptionally well. This is because they find many of their lessons captivating. Pupils were unanimous in their view that, 'We like our teachers and they make learning enjoyable.' Pupils are extremely well informed about how to stay healthy and how to be safe. Care, guidance and support are good and the school ensures that pupils feel secure and can thrive. It also provides excellent support for those pupils who sometimes find learning difficult, enabling many of these pupils to make exceptional progress.

Leadership and management are good and are typified by the effective way in which the headteacher leads a group of staff who support each other and work as a team. Many governors are relatively new. They are powerful advocates for the school's work and are becoming better informed about its performance. Even so, they do not have structured procedures in place through which they can work in partnership with staff to check on and evaluate the quality of education.

Pupils' contribution within their own community and the school's overall contribution to community cohesion are excellent. Improvement since the last inspection is good and, given the year-on-year pattern of rising standards, its capacity for improvement in the future is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the EYFS do well. By the time they move into Year 1 many exceed the standards expected for their age in all areas of their learning. Attainment on entry covers a wide range of abilities, but is broadly average overall. Relative weaknesses are evident in the language and communication abilities and social skills of some children. However, they make rapid progress in these areas. The focus on developing their communication skills during all activities is exceptionally effective and every opportunity is taken to promote children's understanding of

basic letter and word sounds. A similar pattern is evident in the improvement of their social skills. They rapidly learn to work cooperatively with other children, with many gaining an outstanding degree of independence. This is because, whilst teaching overall is good, these aspects of children's development are planned and taught outstandingly well. Teaching promotes an effective balance between times when children participate in activities led by adults and those when they can work alone or with other children. Children in the EYFS also benefit greatly from opportunities to learn alongside their older peers.

The management of the EYFS is good and helps to ensure children's welfare is promoted in an excellent manner. The curriculum is planned effectively to ensure good progress in all areas of children's learning. The balance of activities across all areas of learning is good. Classroom organisation is also a significant strength, with children responding well to high expectations and moving seamlessly from one activity to the next. This helps to ensure that children become increasingly confident learners. Carefully structured assessment procedures ensure that children's development is accurately monitored. Any shortfall in their progress is identified immediately and prompt action is taken to bring about improvement. This is especially true of children who experience learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They receive outstanding support, resulting in rapid progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the information given to parents to provide them with greater detail about their children's progress and the next steps in learning.
- Develop a manageable and systematic process for governors, working in partnership with staff, to evaluate the quality of education provided.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. In recent years standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were either broadly average or above average. Even so, progress from pupils' starting points is consistently good. Standards overall were above average in 2005 and in 2008. In 2008 validated teacher assessments showed that standards in reading were notably well above average. There has been, however, a tendency for standards in mathematics to lag behind those for reading and writing. Due to the concerted efforts of the headteacher and staff, this is no longer the case. The picture is now one of good progress, above average standards in all subjects and an established pattern of steadily improving standards from 2003 onwards. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4 standards in English, mathematics and science are also above average and pupils have continued to make good progress. During this period the progress made by some pupils, and especially by those who sometimes find learning difficult, is exceptional.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they make an outstanding contribution to their community. For example, the annual production in the town's Jubilee Hall is a highlight of the year. Pupils love coming to school, and in most years attendance is above average. However, in 2008 attendance was only average because many pupils suffered from an unusually severe bout of illness that actually led to the temporary closure of another local school. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. They work and play

together exceptionally well and are consistently helpful and eager to take responsibility. They are very proud of their work on the school's allotment and love being the 'helper of the day'. Pupils attach great value to the school's reward system, which recognises their successes. Postcards home from the headteacher informing parents of good work are highly prized. The school council greatly values the influence it has in the school, including the opportunity to meet in the town council chamber each year. Pupils fully recognise the importance of eating healthily and regularly drink water to ensure that they are fully hydrated. The above average standards they attain and their exceptional social skills mean that pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education and to contribute to society in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are planned effectively to meet the full range of abilities in each class, including providing appropriate challenges for the most able pupils. Teaching promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Even so, there are times when questions are posed in such a way that they do not extend pupils' speaking and thinking skills as much as they might. Marking gives pupils helpful information about how to make their work even better. Many pupils enjoy responding to their teachers' comments and explaining how they are trying hard to meet their targets.

Assessment is frequent and accurate and teachers know their pupils well. This enables teachers to respond effectively to pupils' ongoing learning needs, promoting good progress. Teaching assistants and learning support assistants do an exceptionally good job, showing patience and expertise, especially when supporting those pupils who find learning difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's flexible approach to managing the curriculum means that the needs of pupils in the mixed age classes are met effectively. For example, there are times when more able younger children are taught with their older peers, a process which works well. There is an excellent balance between academic and practical subjects, which enables pupils to build on their skills and all to experience success. For example, during the inspection pupils were inspired when designing and making ceramic tiles under the supervision of a local potter.

The creative strands of the curriculum are developed well and contribute effectively to pupils' learning. For example, art and design have a high profile, with pupils' work displayed to good effect. The quality of pupils' art work is good and has been recognised in local and national competitions. The school choir is highly regarded for the quality of its singing and performs regularly at the nearby, world-renowned Snape Maltings. Sport also has a high profile and pupils recognise the value of taking regular exercise, as typified by the frequent 'Wake and Shake' sessions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All the current requirements for safeguarding pupils are met fully. This underpins the provision of a safe and secure environment, enabling pupils to work to the best of their ability. The

support for pupils who sometimes find aspects of their learning difficult is excellent. Their needs are identified accurately at an early stage and carefully focused support is promptly put in place. Arrangements to track the progress of all pupils and respond to their needs over time are good. Pupils clearly understand what they need to do to improve their work. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and greatly appreciate the work it does on behalf of their children. That said, information about children's progress and the standards they attain is not shared with parents with sufficient clarity in the annual reports.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school plays a very prominent role in the community it serves, making an excellent contribution to community cohesion. Teamwork amongst the staff, underpinned by the supportive leadership of the headteacher, provides a significant feature of the school's work. Suitably challenging targets are set for pupils' attainment. However, these targets are not linked closely enough to the areas for development identified in the school's improvement plan.

Governance is satisfactory. Several governors, including the chair are relatively recent appointments. They are supportive of the school's work. They are also steadily gaining a grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. Whilst procedures for self-evaluation give an accurate view of the school's performance, the work of governors in this respect is restricted by the absence of sufficiently rigorous and structured procedures to involve them fully in evaluating the school's performance. The school's finances are managed skilfully to give best value for money. Administrative staff make an outstanding contribution to the day-to-day running of the school.

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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 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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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?	1
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	1
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	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 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

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	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

14 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aldeburgh Primary School, Suffolk IP15 5EU

You may recall that I visited recently to inspect your school and that Mrs Berry explained to you what school inspections are all about. My conclusion is that yours is a good school, which I know agrees with your views and the opinions of your parents and carers.

I was very pleased to see how well you are doing. I am sure you will be delighted to know that I think you make good progress and that the standards you attain, especially in English and mathematics are better than those found in the majority of schools: well done! The reason you do so well is that you benefit greatly from good teaching and help from teaching assistants, enjoyable lessons and a good range of activities that enable you to learn well and make lessons interesting.

You also play your part in the success of your school, of which you can be justifiably proud. Your behaviour is outstanding and ranks amongst the best. You work hard during lessons and help each other. You also deserve great credit for the ways in which you make an excellent contribution to your community. In this respect, I am thinking of things such as your productions at the Jubilee Hall and your work on the school's allotment, not forgetting your superb art work.

I am sure you know that Mrs Berry, the staff and governors are always looking for ways to make your school even better. With this in mind I asked them to consider:

- finding ways of helping your governors to be more involved in deciding how well your school is doing and identifying how it can be improved
- providing your parents and carers with more precise information about how well you are progressing and how you might make your work even better.

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me during my visit. I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey V Bancroft

Lead inspector