

Almondbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107727
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336939
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Brenda Clarke

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Edwards
Headteacher	Miss Jane Sargent
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent approximately 60% of their time looking at pupils' learning. Inspectors visited 10 lessons, observed all except one part-time teacher teaching and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including pupils' work, the school's records indicating pupils' progress and attainment over time, a range of school policies and the school improvement plan. Inspectors also analysed 78 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils
- the quality and consistency of teaching to ensure that all pupils make good or better progress
- the recent changes in management with a particular focus on capacity to improve further
- pupils' understanding and appreciation of communities that are different from their own
- whether the good qualities in the school's curriculum, pupils' care, guidance and support, and their personal development have been maintained since the last inspection.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average in size. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above average and has risen significantly since the last inspection. An average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is average but rising annually. Since the last inspection the school has experienced significant staffing difficulties. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in November 2009. A privately owned playgroup is situated on the school's site. The school has achieved the Activemark.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school with a number of significant strengths. Parents and carers particularly appreciate that 'this school really cares for children'. In this supportive, secure environment pupils feel extremely safe and this underpins their excellent behaviour and outstanding understanding of right and wrong. Pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn because the interesting and relevant curriculum ensures good enrichment and variety. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and most take part eagerly in the good range of extra-curricular clubs. Outstanding partnerships with other schools and agencies contribute significantly to the school curriculum and the good care, guidance and support offered to pupils. The quality of care for the most vulnerable pupils is outstanding, enabling them to play a full part in school life.

Most pupils make good progress as they move through the school so that by the end of Year 2 attainment is average overall and above average in writing. Pupils do not achieve quite as well in mathematics. This is because the school has concentrated appropriately on developing pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters and groups of letters make and their ability to use this knowledge when writing and reading. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards opportunities are sometimes missed to enable pupils to develop and reinforce their mathematical skills in creative and exciting ways. This goes some way to explaining why pupils' skills in mathematics lag behind those in other subjects. Good-quality teaching and learning contribute significantly to pupils' good progress. Teachers have very good skills in managing behaviour so that lessons run smoothly. Most use assessments effectively to plan interesting work that closely matches pupils' differing abilities and develops skills in a consistent way. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use teaching assistants fully in introductions to lessons and to ensure that they have a good knowledge and understanding of the skills to be taught to pupils in group work.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides an outstanding steer to the school. Through rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and taking effective action she has ensured that pupils' standards have been maintained and improved during a period of significant staff changes. The recently formed leadership team has appropriate plans in place to address weaknesses and improve provision further. New initiatives are appropriate and bringing about sustained improvement, for example in writing and reading. This places the school in a good position to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in mathematics by:

- ensuring that activities for independent learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage include good opportunities for children to consolidate their early numeracy skills
- ensuring that pupils in Key Stage 1 have stimulating opportunities to solve mathematical problems in interesting and creative ways
- developing opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their children's mathematical learning.
- Develop the roles of teaching assistants by:
 - ensuring that they are always actively involved in pupils' learning
 - ensuring that the skills, knowledge and language to be developed as outlined in teachers' planning are communicated clearly to teaching assistants
 - ensuring effective opportunities for feedback from assistants at the end of lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils really enjoy their learning. In lessons they are enthusiastic, persevere and willingly attempt new activities. They cooperate well with classmates, sharing ideas and resources. Pupils enjoy new challenges and respond eagerly. In most lessons pupils work at a good pace and achieve well. The well-developed letters and sounds initiative is enabling most pupils to develop independence and confidence as writers.

From starting points that are below average on entry to Year 1, pupils make good progress so that standards by the end of Year 2 are average. Standards in writing are above national averages but fewer boys than girls attain the higher levels in assessments. Pupils' progress is not as fast in mathematics. The school has analysed provision and has appropriate plans in place to develop teachers' confidence and support from parents and carers in this subject. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language achieve in line with their classmates due to the carefully targeted interventions to support their learning.

Pupils' personal development is good with outstanding features. Pupils show great respect for each other, adults and their school. They are polite and welcoming and keen to explain how well they are doing. Their outstanding moral, social and spiritual development ensures that almost all pupils know and demonstrate high standards of behaviour. Pupils get on well together and readily help those who are hurt or upset. Pupils are reflective and developing their own values, for example prioritising love, happiness and caring when thinking about Mother's Day. Pupils have a very good awareness of safety and are aware of the significance and value of personal hygiene, for example washing hands prior to eating. Pupils make a good contribution to school life as members of the school council or as classroom helpers. Their good attitudes and confidence as learners prepare them well for the next stage of education. Attendance is good overall for the majority of pupils. However, children from a small number of

families frequently arrive very late.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall but there are some inconsistencies between classes. Teachers plan carefully to provide work that matches pupils' differing abilities. Such plans do not always indicate the teaching assistant's role in whole-class sessions nor give guidance on the skills and language to be developed by them in small-group activities. Most teachers use their assessments effectively to link learning activities to pupils' ability. This ensures good challenge for pupils and results in good progress in most lessons. Questioning techniques are generally good but teachers sometimes accept one-word answers and miss opportunities to extend pupils' speaking skills. All teachers have very good behaviour management skills so lessons run smoothly and pupils listen attentively. Well-resourced, varied activities engage pupils and promote good learning. Targets to help pupils improve their work are often too general and lack a clear focus on the next steps in learning. Attractive displays give good esteem to pupils' work.

The curriculum is broad and engaging and leads to good outcomes for pupils overall. It

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

is accessible because it is based on themes that are interesting and relevant to young pupils. For example, pupils are currently going out into the village to observe banks and estate agents, adding relevance and credibility to designing and making models of buildings. The curriculum is constantly monitored and revised to meet need; for example, 'Wake up, shake up' gives an exciting start to the day and also encourages good punctuality. Pupils enjoy the good range of visits and visitors who bring differing experiences and expertise. Outstanding partnership initiatives, such as extensive sporting links with the local high school organised by the local Schools' Sports Partnership, extend the school's provision. The curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils in mixed-age classes continue to make good progress.

The school takes good care of its pupils. Pastoral guidance is good because staff know and understand individual pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and their differing needs are met effectively. Excellent provision in the Rainbow Room enables vulnerable pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development and to return successfully to class-based learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is well regarded by parents, carers, staff and pupils alike. The school leadership has been recently restructured and is clearly focused on driving the school's improvement. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning and pupils' progress has enabled leadership to address areas of weakness; for example by beginning to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by developing teachers' expertise and confidence in the subject. Governors evaluate aspects of the school's work and have been instrumental in improving lighting in classrooms and provision of school meals. However, significant staff changes since the last inspection have resulted in the headteacher taking personal responsibility for many important areas of provision. Some governors are closely involved with management and offer sound support and challenge. Governors are starting to recognise the need to lighten the load of the headteacher through a more systematic approach to risk assessments and the production and maintenance of policies.

All pupils are valued and well provided for. Safeguarding procedures are good and all statutory requirements are rigorously met. The school has good community links in the immediate area but makes limited provision to promote community cohesion beyond the

village in which it is situated. This limits pupils' understanding of communities that are different from their own. Links with parents and carers are good and parents and carers particularly appreciate the school's open door policy. Well thought out arrangements for transition to junior school prepare pupils well for their next stage of education.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills at levels well below those expected for their age, especially in early speaking and listening, and personal and social development. All groups make good progress. Attainment on entry to Reception is lower than expected for their age, particularly in writing, reading and calculation. Children make good progress but are still below average in the key areas of writing and calculating on entry to Year 1. Sensitive care, together with vigilant attention to children's welfare, ensures that children are happy and really enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception classes. Teaching is good overall. Relationships between staff are very strong and ensure excellent role models for children. Behaviour management is very good so that children learn to listen carefully and respect and care for others. The curriculum is relevant and child centred, enabling children to understand their learning and achieve well. Assessment is good overall, but there are inconsistencies in the use of targets, which do not always closely match children's differing stages of development. There is a good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. However, in the Reception classes children have limited planned opportunities to reinforce their mathematical learning through planned and self-initiated activities in other areas of the classroom and outdoors. Outstanding arrangements for entry into the Nursery give children a smooth introduction to school

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

life and ensure that vulnerable children's needs are quickly identified and met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are very positive about the way their children are educated. All agree that their children enjoy school, that their needs are met and that they make enough progress. They agree that teaching is good and that children have healthy lifestyles. Inspection findings agree with these responses.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Almondbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 166 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	72	18	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	69	19	24	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	62	26	33	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	67	24	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	65	25	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	59	26	33	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	55	31	40	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	49	33	42	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	58	29	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	55	31	40	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	60	25	32	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	63	25	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	73	18	23	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Almondbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant and Nursery School, Huddersfield, HD5 8XW

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us which made us feel very welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about your work and the ways in which you help around the school. Yours is a good school and I understand fully why you enjoy it so much. We agree with you when you say that adults take good care of you and that this makes you feel very safe. Your behaviour is excellent and you are very polite. You get on well together and help those who are upset or hurt. Well done! You make good progress because your teachers make lessons interesting and fun. Your progress in writing is very good because your teachers teach you all about letter sounds and how to make your writing more interesting.

We have asked your headteacher to do two things to make your school even better for you.

- Make sure that your work in mathematics is always interesting and that you have good opportunities to practise your number skills both indoors and outside.
- Make sure that the targets you are given are just right for you and really help you to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to work hard in lessons and always using your targets to help you improve your work.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and very best wishes from all the inspectors.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Clarke

Lead Inspector

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