

Alderman Jacobs Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110646
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337539
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	540
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Vardon
Headteacher	Mrs M Sargent
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and analysed a range of documentation, particularly that related to pupils' progress. Questionnaires from 169 parents were examined and collated.

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

the quality of pupils' progress in lessons and over time, particularly at Key Stage 2

- whether the various elements of pupils' personal development remain outstanding, particularly their behaviour
- how well teachers manage lessons, and the extent to which teachers use assessment to match work to pupils' different needs
- how well the school promotes community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a large primary school in a small town. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with the rest coming from a variety of different minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Although the total proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, this figure is rising. In particular, there are significantly more pupils with higher and more complex levels of need than are usually found in mainstream schools. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in three Reception classes. There is pre-school provision on site catering for younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and provision for out-of-school care. These are managed privately and were inspected separately.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The school has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection and now provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Standards have risen, particularly in English, and pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children get off to a flying start in the Reception classes because of the excellent provision there, and make great strides in their social skills and learning. This great start is built upon very well in the rest of the school. A key factor in pupils' outstanding academic progress is their excellent personal development. They are hard working, keen to learn and behave extremely well. Pupils have exceptionally good collaborative skills that strongly support their learning in class. All pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnicity, do very well at this school. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly impressive. They are fully integrated into all aspects of school life and are making the same exceptional personal and academic progress as their classmates.

Progress in class is almost always at least good because teaching is good, with an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching leading to exceptional progress in some lessons. The key strengths in teaching are very consistent and effective classroom management, and a very tight match of activities to pupils' needs. Just occasionally, progress in lessons is only satisfactory, when activities lack pace or do not particularly enthuse or interest the pupils. Rigorous monitoring of teaching by the senior leadership team has correctly identified the elimination of lessons that are 'only satisfactory' as the key to increasing pupils' progress even further. Overall progress is outstanding because of the very careful tracking of how each individual is achieving. This means that the school is able to step in if any pupils are in danger of slipping behind, and provide extra help and guidance to ensure their success. The wide range of support programmes available is particularly valuable in helping those pupils who find academic work difficult to succeed.

The major improvements since the last inspection are due to a successful focus on improving teaching and learning through strong teamwork amongst all staff and clear leadership and management from the headteacher and senior colleagues. The high quality of self-evaluation, particularly the accurate monitoring of teaching, learning and progress, gives the school a very clear picture of how it is doing, so that it is very securely placed to build further on its many strengths.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, and eliminate the small number of satisfactory lessons, especially by ensuring that all lessons have a good pace of

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learning and enthuse and interest the pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Outstanding achievement stems from the good progress pupils make in lessons, and the exceptionally good systems to make sure that any whose progress slips are given the extra help they need. Standards at the end of each key stage have been significantly above average for some years. Attainment in English at the end of Year 6 had been a relative weakness, particularly in writing. However, a focus on raising writing standards has been very successful, and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are now high across the board. Of particular note is the exceptionally good progress made by pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children in the Reception classes also make outstanding progress to reach high standards, from starting points generally in line with those expected for their age

Pupils feel extremely safe in school and report that they are confident in talking to adults if they have concerns. A group of older pupils all agreed with one who said, 'Teachers are nice, friendly and care about you.' Pupils delight in all aspects of school, are keen to do well and are proud of what they accomplish. They have an extensive knowledge of healthy lifestyles and participate very enthusiastically in exercise. This was exemplified during the inspection when pupils from every year group launched themselves happily into the annual sponsored walk. Members of the school council, in particular, take a major part in promoting both healthy food and exercise to their classmates. This is just one of many ways in which pupils contribute to the school community, for example in their roles as prefects, play leaders, and through a wide range of other responsibilities they perform efficiently and cheerfully.

Pupils also take a full part in activities in the town, and invite the town in to share in their own events. Central to the very positive ethos which pervades the school are the excellent relationships which pupils have with each other and with the staff. These underpin pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are polite, sensible and thoughtful, and reflect sensitively when discussing moral issues. They are enthusiastic about a range of opportunities to develop their cultural understanding, particularly in drama, and especially enjoyed participating in dances from around the world during a themed week. Pupils' attendance has been increasing steadily and is above average. Pupils very secure basic skills, their high levels of independence and strong collaborative skills leave them very well placed for the next stages of their lives, in education and beyond.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

The steadily improving quality of teaching is a major factor in the outstanding achievement and personal development of pupils. Teachers plan extremely carefully for lessons and ensure that work is matched to the different needs of individuals. An increasing number of outstanding lessons are taught, where pupils are exceptionally well engaged by exciting activities, a lively and enthusiastic presentation from the teacher, and lots of opportunities for practical work. Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards to clarify explanations and to enliven lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and attitudes, and make these clear. Pupils like and trust their teachers, and are keen to please them by working hard and behaving well. Teachers mark pupils work very well, showing them the strong points in their work and how they can improve. Pupils have clear targets to aim for and say these are very helpful. The increasingly consistent encouragement by teachers for pupils to evaluate their own work against clear criteria improves both learning and motivation.

The provision for the wide range of pupils with complex difficulties is a major strength of the school. Exceptionally good links with a variety of partners helps to promote both well-being and achievement for these pupils. The exceptional link with a local hospital in refining the provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum is just one impressive example of this. Very effective use is made of the extremely skilled support staff, particularly in helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to take a full part in lessons, so they make the same progress as their classmates. This high quality is mirrored in the exceptional care, guidance and support provided for all pupils and underpins their excellent personal development. They are given clear and consistent

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boundaries, which are continually reinforced in lessons, in assemblies and in day-to-day interactions around the school. A strong emphasis on celebrating diversity and on understanding the viewpoints and cultures of others is reflected in pupils' very caring attitudes to each other and their excellent relationships. Pupils summed this up in saying, 'It's good that we have lots of friends in the school,' insisting that, 'No-one gets left out.'

A wide ranging and exciting curriculum generates enthusiasm and involvement from pupils. They particularly enjoy special events, clubs, visits and visitors, but also agreed that, 'Teachers always make lessons fun for us.' Year 6 pupils were able to talk at length about how much they had enjoyed residential visits in the past, and were greatly looking forward to their forthcoming trip to York. An extensive range of clubs, the opportunity for every pupil in Year 4 to learn an instrument, well established provision for learning a foreign language and the work of an artist-in-residence all contribute strongly to learning and enjoyment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a very clear direction to the work of the school, and is extremely well supported by the senior leadership team. Governors give good support and increasingly challenge the school to hold it to account for its performance. Middle managers work extremely well together as an effective team in sharing expertise and providing consistency in practice. The whole school focus on raising standards in writing has been extremely effective. Consistent and rigorous monitoring of teaching has helped staff to improve their practice and raise achievement.

The school works very effectively with a variety of partners to improve things for the pupils. Its work to involve parents is particularly strong. It is very good at engaging them in the life of the school as well as the education of their own children. This was exemplified by the huge numbers who turned out to join the sponsored walk during the inspection.

Safeguarding procedures are extremely thorough and rigorous. Very good systems are in place and are well known to staff and, where appropriate, to pupils. The promotion of community cohesion is excellent. The school itself is a shining example of a cohesive and happy community where everyone is valued and enabled to make excellent progress. There is a high level of involvement with the town's community, much

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appreciated by the pupils. Their involvement extends much further afield, for example through links with a school in Sierra Leone, which is being helped through donations in a variety of ways. The leadership is extremely careful to ensure that all possible opportunities are taken to extend the horizons of pupils through teaching them about communities elsewhere. Good use is made of visitors and trips to extend their understanding of the range of communities in the United Kingdom, and the school plans to extend this further through links with other schools.

The school's high standards and pupils' outstanding personal development show that it provides extremely good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many of the strengths in the main school apply equally to the Reception classes. Children make excellent progress in their learning and development from their starting points. This is because of the high expectations of what children can achieve, and the high consistency in which learning experiences are presented. Learning builds very securely on what children already know because staff regularly share their insightful observations of children's actions and play, and use them to plan the next steps in learning. A rich variety of activities builds very securely on children's interests and engages and motivates them extremely effectively. Role play provides very good opportunities for children to try out their ideas and increase their knowledge and understanding. The high-quality outdoor area is used extremely well to enthuse children and extend their learning. By the end of the Reception Year, standards in most areas of learning are higher than those expected. For their age, children have a very good

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understanding keeping themselves safe, and of healthy lifestyles, reminding each other to eat their vegetables, for example. They thoroughly enjoy their time in school, because of the secure and trusting relationships that they quickly forge with the adults. Children are developing high levels of independence. The consistency in the excellent provision is the result of extremely effective leadership and management. The procedures to induct children into school, and the strong bonds being formed with their parents, are significant strengths.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents are extremely positive about school and what it provides for their children. They particularly value how the school looks after their children and how much their children enjoy school. They rightly have a high opinion of the quality of teaching and the progress their children make, and value the effective leadership and management. One wrote, 'My child's development has gone from strength to strength since joining the school. I couldn't be happier with the education he receives.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alderman Jacobs Primary 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 1 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 540 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	112	66	56	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	68	51	30	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	79	47	85	50	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	95	56	69	41	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	113	67	52	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	88	52	75	44	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	109	64	56	33	3	2	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)	99	59	65	38	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	96	57	70	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	43	83	49	9	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	69	41	91	54	4	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	107	63	58	34	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	50	84	50	0	0	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 pupils' 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.



5 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alderman Jacobs Primary School, Whittlesey PE7 1XJ

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. We really enjoyed watching you at work and talking to you. We found that you go to an outstanding school. This means there are lots of good points about it. These are some of the most important things we found out.

You are all learning a lot because your teachers are good at helping you to learn. You have lots of exciting things to do in class and outside, and really enjoy them. Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on with each other very well. We were very impressed by your hard work, your excellent behaviour, and by how well you work in pairs or in teams. One of the best things we found was how well everyone is included in everything that happens, even if they find learning difficult.

The adults keep an extremely careful eye on how you are all doing, and make sure that if anyone needs any extra help then they get it. The headteacher organises the school extremely well, and the other adults work hard to make sure things all work properly. Even in a school as excellent as yours, things can be improved. Almost all your lessons are interesting and exciting, and help you to learn. Your headteacher told us that she wants to make sure that all your lessons are like this, and we have agreed that this will help make the school even better.

We know you all enjoy life at AJS, and we hope that you carry on doing so.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Additional inspector

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