

Ashby-de-la-Zouch Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120190
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339627
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Eydman
Headteacher	Elizabeth Powell
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, two governors, staff and three groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies relating to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour, inclusion and the school improvement plan. Questionnaires from staff, pupils and 69 parents were analysed.

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

- a sample of case studies of a range of pupils with individual needs
- how the school's leadership have improved pupils' standards and progress
- the missing elements that would raise judgements in key aspects to the next level.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. The school population is relatively stable because fewer pupils than usual join or leave partway through their primary school education. The school gained Healthy School status in 2007, the Basic Skills Award was reaffirmed in 2008, and the school is currently applying for the International School Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The headteacher leads the school extremely well and has created strong teamwork across all staff. They are united in their commitment to improving their professional practice and the school's provision. This commitment is reflected in the effectiveness of senior and middle management. Because staff make extensive use of assessment data to pinpoint areas for development, the school has a very accurate picture of its strengths and what it needs to do in order to improve further. Targets are challenging and there is a sustained focus on how well pupils are achieving. As a result, the school has made significant improvements since it was last inspected and has good capacity for sustained further improvement.

Each pupil is recognised as a unique individual and this lies at the heart of the school's work and ethos. The staff strive very effectively to foster each pupil's sense of self-worth and respect for others. The school provides wide-ranging opportunities for individuals to gain a sense of success, be it in a Christmas production or through a pupil being suddenly fired up by the political process stemming from the trip to the House of Commons. Excellent care, guidance and support for pupils stem from staff's concern, nurturing and knowledge of pupils as individuals. Pupils are confident to turn to an adult if they are troubled. 'There's always a shoulder to lean on,' was one pupil's comment. Pupils also said that staff do not dismiss even minor incidents but take them seriously and help 'sort them out'. The curriculum has significant strengths in its clubs, sports and enrichment opportunities. The 'Evacuees' work, including the overnight stay in school, was a particularly memorable experience for Year 6 pupils. The school broadens pupils' cultural experience through international links so that pupils have good opportunities to reflect on different ways of life and beliefs. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well with good emphasis on the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The only relatively weak element is the cross-curricular use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' independent learning.

A key element in strong and effective teaching is the productive relationships that staff have with pupils. Staff manage behaviour in a consistently positive fashion. As a result behaviour is excellent in lessons and across the school. Pupils are keen, motivated and want to do well. However, the school is not yet maximising these attributes by encouraging pupils to take greater initiative and responsibility for their learning, for example by developing a richer dialogue with pupils about how to improve their work.

The impact of strong provision is evident in both pupils' personal development and their academic achievement. The school is friendly with very few incidents of unkindness, and pupils consequently feel safe and secure. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average and show

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recent year-on-year improvement. The current Year 6 is on target to meet challenging targets.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maximise pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that pupils take a greater responsibility for their learning through dialogue and targets set by the teacher
 - extending pupils' knowledge, capacity and opportunity to use modern technology to support their independent learning and work in school subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are responsive, concentrate well and get on with the tasks so that learning proceeds at a brisk pace. Pupils clearly enjoy learning because activities are interesting and varied. They respond to skilled and carefully targeted questioning, which enables them to reflect on what they already know and consolidates new learning. Talk and discussion with a partner is often used to allow pupils to rehearse their ideas. Less apparent is the use of group work. Because they are taught to self-assess their work from an early age, they develop mature attitudes towards learning, so that being 'stuck' is seen as a natural part of the learning process. Staff create an ethos in classrooms where pupils can openly share the fact that they do not understand something. 'Don't worry, that's why you're here,' as one teacher put it. Because staff are very positive in their praise and encouragement, pupils are confident learners; they want to do well. Year 6 pupils clearly enjoyed engaging with the disciplines of mathematics, gaining intrinsic satisfaction from getting it right.

Pupils make good progress across the school, and work seen in their books and in lessons confirms that they are consistently reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. A focus on ensuring that higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged is reflected in the fact that the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 was significantly above average in 2009 in all three subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the carefully targeted support that they receive and attainment for these pupils was higher than seen nationally in 2009. The very few pupils with English as an additional language make particularly good progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to look after themselves and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They make a good contribution to the school community through the school council, their various other roles and responsibilities and their general demeanour around the school. The school improvement plan has identified further development of pupils' 'voice', linked with additional opportunities to take the initiative and promote aspects of school life through acting as ambassadors. Although ICT skills are the weaker element, pupils are well equipped with the basic skills and personal qualities relevant to the next stage in their education and later life. Attendance is above

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average. Pupils are proud of their school.

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	2
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	2
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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and are therefore confident, enthusiastic and skilled practitioners. Classroom management is particularly effective. Mixed-age classes are managed well. All teachers plan in detail and effectively, ensuring that tasks are matched well to pupils' capabilities and needs. This helps ensure that pupils are motivated because they gain a sense of success. Teachers have high expectations of effort, behaviour and progress, ensuring that pupils are engaged well. All staff bring the class together periodically to check on progress and understanding and make good use of technology such as the interactive whiteboards or the data visualiser projectors to hook pupils' interest or to share pupils' work with the class. In the outstanding lessons there was exceptional clarity of focus about what was to be achieved in the lesson and the steps to reach this point were extremely carefully and systematically structured, using a variety of active and visual approaches.

Targets, although effective, tend to be generic rather than personalised and although

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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marking is regular, detailed and includes points for improvement, these are not always followed up. The school's use of specialised assessment materials, yet to be embedded, provides clear guidance on the next steps to improve, thus forming the basis for a richer dialogue with the pupils, cementing the view of pupils as active partners in their learning.

A particular strength of the curriculum is that many of the tasks are given the additional zest of being set in a 'real' context. Thus, a mathematics lesson on the use of data to present an argument centred round the increased attendance at The Brewers' matches and whether the club should invest in a new stand. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills for a range of purposes across the curriculum. There are also good links with other agencies to develop the learning opportunities for pupils, such as the sports partnership. The school makes effective use of the immediate locality and the outdoor classroom, for example in science. The school is developing an innovative approach to homework, which is contributing very positively to pupils' learning.

Because staff know the pupils well, they are alert to and respond quickly to early signs of unhappiness or possible distress. Pupils in vulnerable or challenging circumstances are supported extremely well, and this is underpinned by very strong links with specialist agencies.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff exhibit strong mutual support at all levels, but there is also clear accountability to ensure that pupils make at least good progress. Expectations are high because the progress of all pupils is monitored carefully and staff have a very clear idea of where pupils are in their learning in relation to the expectations for their age. The school is alert to any underachievement and committed to tackling individual barriers to learning. The promotion of equal opportunities lies at the heart of the school. Staff are ambitious for their pupils and for the school and improvement is rooted in the school's professional culture.

Governance is good and has improved since the last inspection. There is a wide range of expertise and governors have a united approach and are ambitious for the school. They are keenly aware of their responsibilities regarding safeguarding and adopt a diligent and effective approach through the health and safety committee. The governing body

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has gained the Financial Management Standard in Schools award and money is spent carefully and effectively. Governors are supportive of the school but are prepared to challenge.

The school knows its local community and takes its responsibilities of extending pupils' awareness of cultural diversity within a largely mono-ethnic community very seriously. Because of the work undertaken with the curriculum and the strong international and local links, plus the developing programme of national links, such as the trips to Leicester and the links with a school in Hull, pupils have a heightened awareness of different ways of life and beliefs. The school is a strong community where pupils get on well with each other.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress across all the areas of learning. Particular strengths lie in the development of children's very positive attitudes to learning, fostering of their independence, confidence, behaviour and pride in their achievements. The Christmas Nativity performance clearly fostered children's enjoyment and sense of belonging to a group. There is a strong partnership with parents. Staff know the children well as individuals because they observe and assess them carefully and use this information to build on their learning and accomplishments. Learning is good and sometimes outstanding. Key characteristics are: positive encouragement, detailed planning to meet the range of needs, and carefully planned and structured adult-led sessions, which build in a sequence of small steps. These sessions are supported by a choice of activities that are equally well considered and planned to reinforce and extend the children's learning.

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In addition, adults are skilled at exploiting every informal opportunity to promote learning and, through their questioning, children's language skills. The linking of sounds and letters programme has been introduced relatively recently but is clearly helping children's language skills. There is strong teamwork and therefore fluency in the way groups move through the various activities. Staff are very clear about their roles and ensure that children's learning and welfare needs are supported effectively. The environment is stimulating if somewhat cramped because storage is restricted. Extensive use is made of the outside area but the covered area is quite limited and some learning resources are worn and past their best. Leadership and management are good. Children are carefully assessed on entry so that the learning programme can be tailored to meet their particular needs. The leader has clear ideas about further improvements through the annual audit of the provision. The team currently do not have opportunities to visit other settings in order to reflect on their current good practice.

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

All parents agreed or agreed strongly with the statement that their child enjoys school and were overall happy with their child's experience in the school. A very small minority disagreed with the statement that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged pupils' behaviour as excellent. Staff manage behaviour in a consistent, positive manner. A few parents disagreed with the statement that the school informs me about my child's progress. The school recognises the need to improve this aspect, and it is in the school improvement plan.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashby-de-la-Zouch Church of England 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 294 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	71	20	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	81	13	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	43	34	49	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	61	24	35	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	58	28	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	49	32	47	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	61	26	38	1	1	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)	32	46	31	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	62	25	36	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	51	23	33	6	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	49	27	39	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	55	27	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	67	23	33	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 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.



9 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashby-de-la-Zouch Church of England Primary School, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
LE65 2LL

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our time with you very much. My particular thanks go to those pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. What you had to say was particularly thoughtful and helpful.

This is a good school and you are right to feel proud of it. You make good progress in your learning. Standards in the Year 6 tests last year were above those generally seen. Year 6 is currently on track to meet challenging targets. You have skilled teachers who care about you a very great deal and keep a very close eye on the progress that you are making and your general welfare. Your behaviour is outstanding and you clearly enjoy your work and want to do well. I think the school could build on these qualities more by helping you take more responsibility for your learning by making sure you are clear about your targets and what you need to do in order to improve. I have also asked the school to ensure that you are given the skills and opportunity to use a range of modern technology to support you in your learning and in lessons.

The school has improved a great deal since it was last inspected. This is because the headteacher leads the school well and ensures that all teachers work together to improve the school. I have no doubt that the school will continue to improve. With your help, it will do this all the faster.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

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