

Attleborough Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120780
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339775
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Nichola Perry

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Cooper
Headteacher	Gill Howard
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Ten teachers were observed in 12 sessions. Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, the inclusion leader, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke to parents, observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books and displays, and at documentation, including the school development plan, the self-evaluation form, assessments, records of pupils' progress, teachers' planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements. Inspectors scrutinised 105 parents' and carers' questionnaires and 13 staff questionnaires.

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

- whether self-evaluation is having sufficient impact on outcomes for all pupils, particularly girls' attainment
- whether the level of challenge in teaching, particularly for more able pupils, is leading to significantly more pupils achieving at higher levels
- the effectiveness of teachers' feedback to pupils and whether the use of assessment information is sufficiently robust so that underachievement is identified and acted on quickly
- the effect of the new creative curriculum and whether it is providing good opportunities for pupils to engage in active learning

Information about the school

This is a larger than average infant school which serves the town of Attleborough and surrounding villages. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A few are from minority ethnic groups, with nine pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils with statements is higher than found nationally. A few families in the area experience social and emotional needs. A significant number of pupils moved out of the area and left the school during the last academic year. Through the local cluster of schools, pupils have access to a range of after school clubs and activities, including some weekend and holiday family activities. There is also an on-site pre-school provision but this was inspected separately. The school shares the site with the local High School.

Since the last inspection, the school has experienced significant disruption to the school leadership. Also, as a result of reducing pupil numbers over recent years, the school has had to face a reduction in staffing which has caused further disruption. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools Status, Activemark for physical education, Silver Travel Plan Award and Financial Management Standard in 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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Attleborough is a good and improving school. It has some outstanding features. The headteacher, very ably supported by senior leaders, provides inspirational leadership so that the school has continued to improve in spite of considerable staffing disruption over the last three years. The headteacher has galvanised the entire school community to become an effective team which strives to improve all aspects of pupils' personal development and their learning. This has resulted in very good improvement since the previous inspection. Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Pupils absolutely love coming to school so that attendance has risen significantly. Relationships are outstanding. Pupils are extremely polite, get on well with each other and are very accepting of and thoughtful towards those who are less fortunate or different from themselves. This leads to very effective inclusion of pupils in all groups. Pupils demonstrate excellent appreciation of how to keep safe and why they need a balanced diet and regular exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because all aspects are given high priority through the school. Excellent spirituality, for example, can be seen in pupils' pride in their school and the pleasure they derive from their own, and others', achievements. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support offered to pupils and their families is a real strength. These aspects both contribute strongly to the delightful atmosphere which pervades the school and ensures that all groups of pupils are highly valued and treated with respect as individuals. An excellent partnership exists between the school and its parents and carers. They are delighted with what the school offers their children. Governors are effectively led. They are knowledgeable, challenging, and very supportive of the aims of the school.

Consistently effective teaching, some of it now outstanding, encourages pupils to be very positive learners. As a result, all pupils make at least good progress and achieve well, sometimes very well, from their low starting points. Attainment is broadly average by the time they leave school. Current work in both Years 1 and 2 shows standards are continuing to improve. Very effective in-class support also contributes positively to pupils' good learning. Assessment is accurate and used well so that activities focus precisely on pupils' individual needs. Ongoing feedback in lessons and marking are very effective in informing pupils how well they are doing and motivating them to try their best. Senior leaders use the good range of assessment data well to monitor attainment and progress and to set challenging targets for all pupils. However, data are not currently maintained in a format which provides a clear and easily accessible overview of pupils' progress over time. Entry assessments for the Reception class children are currently carried out too late in the term to be of maximum use to the school.

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The effects of the new activity-based curriculum are already clear, for example, from the progress pupils are making in their writing. From an early age, pupils see themselves as writers and are proud of their achievements. The curriculum is also stimulating. In particular, boys' enthusiasm for learning is evident in lessons across the school. The wide range of additional activities, provided both within the school and using the wider community, enhance the curriculum and also contribute strongly to pupils' excitement about learning.

The significant improvement since the previous inspection, has been achieved as a result of senior leaders' and governors' highly accurate self-evaluation and effective development planning, which focus on key priorities and have moved the school forward. Together, with the entire school community's relentless determination to become an outstanding school, this demonstrates that the school is well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate at which all pupils in all groups make progress by:
 - ensuring that existing assessment data provides a clearer overview of pupils' progress year on year
 - carrying out Foundation Stage Profile assessments earlier in the autumn term so as to provide a more accurate picture of attainment on entry to the school and progress made in the Reception year
 - increase further the proportion of outstanding teaching

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment by the end of Year 2 is average overall, with evidence of an improving trend over the last three years. Standards in writing were above average in 2009. Although boys achieved better than girls in the 2009 assessments, no difference was noted in lessons between any groups' performance. Effective assessment and focused interventions are having a positive impact on improving attainment for all pupils. For example, setting in mathematics led to a significant rise in attainment in 2008, sustained in 2009. Pupils' work and school assessments show that attainment in the current Year 2 is broadly in line with national standards in all three subjects, in spite of high numbers of pupils having significant barriers to learning. In the current Year 1, consistently good teaching is leading to an improving trend in learning so that pupils are already making better than expected progress. In all lessons, effective provision helps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, to make good progress. Arrangements for pupils who enter the school part way through the academic year, especially where they speak little or no English, are very effective in helping them to settle and learn well.

The good progress pupils make in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and their highly developed personal skills means they

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are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils contribute to the community extremely well. They identify and contribute to both national and international charities annually. Pupils love acting as 'helpers' around the school. They talk enthusiastically about their role and wear their sashes with pride. Enterprise awareness is developed effectively when, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils were given budgets and were required to consider their 'spending options' in a real life application of their numeracy skills. The school council provides an effective forum for pupils to air their views and the school acts on these. Pupils also gain 'adult skills' of taking responsibility to chair the meetings and vote for their preferred options. Pupils speak knowledgeably about religions, faiths and cultures different from their own, both within the United Kingdom and in the wider world.

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	1
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?

Consistently effective teaching and in-class support leads to good achievement across all aspects of pupils' learning and development. Imaginative teaching styles, along with astute questioning, motivate, challenge and support pupils very well. In one outstanding

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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lesson, the teacher demonstrated excellent understanding of how young pupils, and in particular lower ability pupils, learn. Creative use of their dinosaur topic brought learning alive when planning how they could measure a dinosaur. Pupils were enthralled when using hand spans or the length of their feet on their king-size paintings to consider how big their dinosaurs were. A good focus on appropriate descriptive and mathematical language, a strong emphasis on speaking and listening along with excellent activity-based learning helped develop pupils' thinking and investigative skills and raised their self-esteem.

Improvements to the curriculum ensure a strong focus on basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, which helps pupils learn effectively. A particularly good emphasis on speaking and listening, and opportunities for engaging in learning which is relevant to their own experiences, contributes very strongly to pupils' excellent personal development. The themed approach to learning means that opportunities for developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative skills are now well embedded in all planning. Excellent use is made of the local and wider communities to enrich and extend pupils' learning, such as the recent whole school visit to the 'dino park'.

Pupils' pastoral needs are exceptionally well met from the day they start school. Effective induction arrangements ensure pupils' settle quickly and happily and parents are very pleased with this. Work with pupils, whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and their families, is extremely effective and deeply embedded into the work of the school. This enables all pupils to have equal opportunities to learn as well as they can and parents feel very well supported by the school. They are confident that the school will listen and help them access any necessary resources to help them support their children's social, emotional and learning needs. The school makes excellent use of all external professional agencies to support a wide range of pupils' needs, ensuring no group is disadvantaged.

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?

The headteacher has created an environment where pupils thrive. She is dedicated to helping all pupils develop their full potential in all aspects of their social, emotional and academic development. Staff and the governing body share this vision and play their part in achieving it. Development planning consistently focuses on breaking down

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barriers to learning and pupils' progress is carefully tracked so that all have equal opportunities to learn and achieve. Although recent significant staffing issues may have restricted the speed at which the school has improved, the commitment of the whole staff minimised the impact this had on the school and the upward trend in attainment continued.

Subject leadership has improved significantly. Colleagues work well together as a team and have developed good knowledge of their subjects. Rigorous monitoring of teaching ensures that none is now less than good and some is outstanding. Governance has improved. Governors know the school well and are effectively involved in planning for the future. They ensure all safeguarding, child protection procedures and training requirements are met and that systematic records of staffing checks are maintained.

Leadership ensures excellent and wide-reaching links within the local community. Pupils show good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of the United Kingdom. They learn about diversity through involvement in a wide range of celebrations from other faiths, such as Eid, Diwali, as well as those within their own culture. Older pupils have contact with children now living in Australia. This is a positive start towards helping young pupils develop their awareness of the wider world.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a really good start in the Reception classes. They quickly become confident, independent and happy learners. They enter the school with knowledge and understanding well below expected levels, especially in communication, language and

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literacy and in their personal and social skills. They make good, and sometimes very good, progress entering Year 1 with standards still below those expected. Consistently good teaching places strong emphasis on learning through practical activities which ensures basic skills are developed effectively. Activities, including those outdoors, provide good opportunities for children to make decisions about their own learning and development, as well as developing their thinking and imaginative skills. A good balance exists between adult-led activities and those children choose. An excellent focus on speaking and listening and role play ensures children rapidly develop good social skills. Adults use questions astutely without limiting children's creativity. Behaviour is excellent because staff have very high expectations of children.

Effective leadership ensures assessment is thorough and accurate. Consequently, adults have good knowledge of each child's stages of development and plan activities which focus on individual needs and interests. This contributes to children's rapid progress. Adults support children's welfare consistently well so that personal development is excellent and provides a strong base for their future learning. Currently, appropriate assessments are being carried out too late in the autumn term to provide an accurate picture of overall attainment on entry to the school and progress made across the Reception year.

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

Just under half of the parents returned a questionnaire. Analysis shows high levels of satisfaction with what the school provides for their children. They all agreed that their children are safe. The overwhelming majority of parents are positive about all other aspects of the school and inspection findings support their views. A few parents expressed concern about mixed-age classes. However, the inspection found no evidence to substantiate this concern as pupils in all classes are making equally good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Attleborough Infant 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 261 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	62	37	35	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	60	42	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	38	50	48	10	10	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	39	57	54	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	53	47	45	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	33	62	59	7	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	42	60	57	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)	34	32	61	58	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	31	64	61	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	28	66	63	6	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	32	54	51	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	42	40	58	55	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	50	51	49	1	1	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



30 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Attleborough Infant School, Attleborough, NR17 2AJ

We inspectors all really enjoyed watching you working and playing and talking to many of you during our recent visit to your school. Thank you very much for helping us find out about your school. We think you go to a good school which is a really happy and friendly place to go to every day. We were so pleased to hear how much you all love coming to school. There are lots of good things about it.

You all try hard and make good progress in your work.

You thoroughly enjoy school and behave really well.

Your headteacher and senior teachers have very good ideas about how to improve your school.

All the adults care about you and support you extremely well. They listen to you so that you feel very safe in school.

Your school gets on really well with your parents and other people who can help you learn.

We have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to look at how they can make things even better. The most important things are:

To write down how well you are doing from when you come into the Reception classes to when you leave the school so that they can check your progress.

To check how much the youngest children know about everything when they arrive in the school.

To get even better at teaching you all so you learn even more new things.

You can help by continuing to come to school every day, listening carefully to your teachers and enjoying all the super things that you are learning at Attleborough.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Perry

Lead Inspector

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