

Aston and Cote Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123106
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340281
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Little
Headteacher	Marjorie Ottley
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed eight lessons with six teachers being seen. Meetings were held with parents and carers, governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 80 questionnaires from parents and carers, 13 from staff and 85 from pupils.

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

- the effectiveness of teaching at providing the right level of challenge for all pupils, especially in Key Stage 1 and in science across the school
- pupils' responsibility-taking and their cultural awareness
- improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection and how well it builds on pupils' interests
- the role of governors and subject leaders in self-evaluation and driving improvement

Information about the school

This small rural school takes most of its pupils from the local community with about a third travelling from further afield. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most, but not all, of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a single-age Reception class. There is pre-school provision on site but this is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.

The school has several awards including Activemark and Healthy School accreditation.

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

This good school ensures that pupils flourish both socially and academically. Pupils learn extremely important values such as politeness and good manners and grow enormously in confidence. This means that the school gives pupils a strong foundation for the next stage of their education and for later life.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they are taught well. Although the small size of each year group means that there is some variation from year to year in attainment at the end of Year 6, it is always at least above average, representing good progress for pupils from their different starting points. There are several contributory factors to the good progress being made by most pupils. Teaching is often good and pupils are very well cared for by staff. This ensures that pupils feel extremely safe at school.

Leaders know that although the large majority of teaching is good, there is still some satisfactory teaching. In many lessons differing needs are met well, but where teaching is satisfactory it is because work is not matched closely enough to pupils' differing needs. This is most evident in some Key Stage 1 lessons and in science across the school.

Pupils are very happy at school, with comments such as 'We are all friends and we have great fun' typically summing up their views. Pupils take on responsibilities very enthusiastically, helping them to make an outstanding contribution to the community. The school council plays a good part in decision making. Councillors are pleased about the way that they are having an impact on improving the environment through projects such as the new sensory garden. Pupils take part in many community events and invite villagers to school activities such as the super end-of-year performance called 'Alice in Wonderland.com'. The curriculum is much improved since the last inspection because topic work now takes more account of pupils' interests and what they already know. This helps to make learning purposeful, although the teaching of subjects through topics means that there are occasions when science and geography are not taught in sufficient detail.

The school is successful because the headteacher and staff have created an ethos in which pupils feel valued and respected. There is a good understanding of the school's priorities for development based on good systems for checking effectiveness. Subject leaders and governors play a good part in this process so that the drive for improvement is shared by all. The school has successfully demonstrated that it has a good capacity to improve further in the way that leaders have tackled weaknesses as they arise. For example, in the last year, they have successfully improved support for more able pupils

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in Years 1 and 2 and have raised attainment in writing across the school by ensuring that pupils get many opportunities to write in different subjects.

The school has a good partnership with others and engages well with parents and carers. Parents and carers make a good contribution to the work of the school by supporting their children with homework and research projects in Years 5 and 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move remaining satisfactory teaching to good by ensuring that teachers consistently provide the right level of challenge for all pupils. (by December 2011)
- Review curriculum coverage to ensure that science and geography are always studied in enough detail. (by April 2011)

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

Pupils' achievement is good. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils behave well most of the time and have very positive attitudes towards learning. These are key factors in the good progress being made in most lessons. In a good numeracy lesson, pupils showed great interest and supported each other well, making good progress as they looked for patterns in groups of numbers. In a good literacy lesson, pupils keenly explored ideas for themselves, building on their knowledge of a story to design short scenes that showed different emotions. They extended their literacy skills well because work was practical and engaging. Where progress in lessons is satisfactory, pupils sometimes lack concentration. For example, when looking for connectives in stories a few became inattentive and worked too slowly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn quickly in most lessons because work is adapted to their needs so that they can participate fully in activities. Pupils become good young citizens. They are sociable and articulate and are keen to do their best. They show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charity and writing prayers for those who are in need. They develop a good understanding of global issues by studying life in other countries, but pupils' experience of multicultural diversity within this country is not yet as strong. This is already being tackled by the school as they are trying to establish links with a school in a different setting. Pupils keenly adopt healthy lifestyles and take part in a good number of sports. They are pleased about their recent successes in cricket, tennis and hockey. They grow their own food and can explain what is meant by a balanced diet, although this is not always reflected in what they eat at lunchtime.

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	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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Members of staff work successfully to provide high quality pastoral care and to ensure that pupils are happy at school. There are good links with outside agencies to get extra help for pupils when it is needed. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they do as well as others in lessons. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their move to their next school.

Teachers make learning fun in many lessons, and use interesting techniques such as role play in literacy lessons to bring subjects alive. Skilled teaching assistants are deployed well and have a good impact on learning. Where teaching is best, it is because teachers use assessment information to ensure that there is the right level of challenge for all. Such good practice is not yet evident in all lessons. Most pupils are clear about how to improve their work. Pupils especially like the way that targets are set in writing because 'we can look at our 'My Literacy Journey' booklets to see how we have improved'.

The curriculum is engaging and exciting and provides pupils with many memorable experiences. Teachers are becoming increasingly adept at linking subjects together, but there are occasions when science and geography topics are watered down so that opportunities to extend knowledge and skills are missed. A wide range of clubs and sporting activities contribute well to pupils' personal development. Learning is made purposeful as every topic is linked to a visit or visitor. For example, as part of an 'On my doorstep' topic pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 visited an arboretum so that they could compare this with habitats they found in the school grounds.

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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 and governors are passionate about getting the best for the pupils and their ambitions and drive for improvement are firmly embedded across the school. There is a good understanding of priorities and there continues to be a strong focus on ensuring that all teaching is good. This is helping to improve pupils' learning in most classes. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and provide good challenge. They know that not all parents and carers were happy with the recent decision to stop providing school meals and that they need to do more to build bridges with this relatively small group in order to repair the damage this has caused.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination successfully. Pupils from different backgrounds get on together very well. Leaders are doing the right things to iron out remaining minor inconsistencies in progress across the school. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils develop a good understanding of life in other parts of the world through activities such as a recent multicultural week and links with a school in Kenya. Leaders are now rightly working to establish links with a school in an urban setting to widen pupils' knowledge of life in other parts of the United Kingdom. The school has good safeguarding procedures. Pupils' safety is given a high priority and this is reflected in every aspect of school life.

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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they are taught well and there is a rich and vibrant curriculum. Although there is some variation from year to year, most children are working at the levels expected for their age when they start school. From these starting points, children's attainment rises to above average levels by the end of the Reception Year, with no area of learning being stronger or weaker. Children develop good confidence, sensibly self-selecting where they are going to work and what they are going to do. Adults support this well by planning interesting activities both indoors and outdoors which successfully link learning together. For example, as part of topic on 'The Sea', children draw maps, paint fish, pretend to go on a sea journey through role play and count the money they need for their trip. There is a good balance between activities led by the teacher and those chosen by the children and adults work together to ensure that work is closely matched to need. Children have good opportunities to explore their own ideas, although adults occasionally miss opportunities to move learning on when they are working independently.

Provision is very well led and managed. An action plan that accurately identifies where improvement is needed is based on thorough self-evaluation. The use of systems for tracking children's progress so that trends in attainment over time can be evaluated more closely is relatively underdeveloped and has rightly been identified as a priority for the next 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

There was a high return of questionnaires. Most parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school. Positive comments included, 'It is a happy caring environment' and 'My child loves going to school'. Although most parents and carers are happy with communication between home and school, a small minority are not. Inspectors agree with parents and carers that there should have been greater consultation over the

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decision to stop providing school dinners, although this might not have altered the final decision. The other information provided for parents and carers is similar to that found in most schools, but inspectors agree that it would be helpful to hold an additional consultation meeting for parents and carers in the autumn term. A few parents and carers are concerned about how the school tackles unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team saw none and found that there are good systems for tackling it on the rare occasions when it occurs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aston and Cote 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 149 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	63	20	31	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	65	21	32	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	28	37	57	9	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	23	37	57	10	15	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	19	29	37	57	5	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	23	35	54	9	14	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	32	40	62	3	5	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)	21	32	31	48	5	8	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	22	35	54	10	15	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	29	38	58	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	22	35	54	7	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	35	32	49	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	38	33	51	5	8	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

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 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.



14 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aston and Cote Church of England Primary School, Aston OX18 2DU

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. You were very polite and friendly and we enjoyed talking to you. We agree with you that this is a good school that helps you to do well.

Here are some of the good things we found out about your school:

- You do very well in the Reception class. You are happy, make excellent progress and nearly always have smiling faces when you come to school! □
- Mainly good teaching means that you make good progress as you move through the rest of the school.
- You behave well and enjoy school because teachers make learning exciting.
- You make an excellent contribution to the community, feel very safe and have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. We were amazed at how many of you like playing cricket at lunchtime!
- You know who to turn to if you have a worry and rightly feel that you are kept very safe.
- All adults in school are very kind and caring and they give very good help when you have problems with your work.
- The headteacher, teachers and governors are leading the school well and they know what still needs improving

This is what we have asked your school to do now:

- ensure that work is always just right for you so that it is not too hard or too easy
- make sure that when you do topic work, science and geography are covered in enough detail

You can play an important part in improving the school by continuing to work hard and making sure you listen carefully all of the time.

We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead inspector

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