

Avening Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115501
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357761
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Rodney Braithwaite

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	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derrick Ind
Headteacher	Diana Boulton
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2008
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Introduction

admin@avening.gloucs.sch.uk This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed five different teachers. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to the school's self-evaluation, the attainment and assessment of pupils' progress, the governing body minutes, the provision for safeguarding, school policies, and external evaluations of the school. They looked at samples of pupils' work and the school improvement plan. They analysed 83 parent and carer questionnaires and other written responses from pupils and staff.

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

- The attainment and progress of pupils with emphasis on those in Years 3 to 6.
- If the school's judgement of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is accurate, and the effectiveness of provision for these pupils.
- The extent of the opportunities given to pupils to develop their skills in literacy, especially writing, numeracy, and information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- How well school leaders monitor the school's work and how it is used to aid school improvement.

Information about the school

Avening is smaller than most primary schools serving a mixed rural community. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average, the largest group having moderate learning difficulties. The school has recently established an after-school care club in the village hall, which shares the same site and is used by pupils for many activities including lunch. The school has a number of awards including Artsmark Silver and the Intermediate 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

This is a good school. It is a vibrant, happy and caring centre of local village life where there is a strong feeling of community. It is a school always wanting to improve which has common goals and ambition to provide the best for its pupils. An exceptionally high proportion of parents and carers indicate their intense satisfaction with the school, expressed typically by the statement, 'This is a school which works hard all of the time to give children the best opportunities and a supportive, enjoyable educational experience, stretching the boundaries every week.' As a result, pupils are keen to learn, are proud of their achievements and work well together. This very inclusive school has an excellent understanding of the needs of all of its pupils. A most notable strength is the care and support provided for every learner, especially the vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This strength has a significant impact on pupils' outstanding feeling of being safe in school.

Children with a wide range of skills make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, settling quickly and confidently to school life. They continue to make good progress and achieve well through the main school, so that they attain above average levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Staff are especially skilled at managing classes with more than one age group, ensuring that all pupils are challenged according to their needs rather than simply their age. Teaching is consistently good, because teachers realise when there is need for improvement. Pupils' writing, for example, has been disappointing in the last year, although reading attainment is high. School leaders recognise that guidance to pupils on improving writing has not been consistently emphasised, in spite of good assessment data being available. Pupils do not always fully understand what they need to improve and how quickly this should happen. Although improving, basic skills of punctuation, grammar and construction of complex sentences are not secure or consistent enough.

The school is led and managed by a headteacher who is recognised by the whole school community as talented and multi-skilled. 'An excellent and dynamic head' is a typical parental comment. She is assisted by a competent team of middle managers involving all teachers. The governing body is becoming increasingly effective and active in the daily life of the school, and provides good challenge and support to the management of the school. It has been strongly involved in the school's accurate and perceptive self-evaluation which is clearly identifying the way ahead. These strengths significantly help to underpin the school's good capacity for sustaining improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing by

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- ensuring that all pupils are clearly informed and understand how they can improve their writing, especially in punctuation and sentence making
- using recently introduced assessment systems more consistently in order to improve the learning of pupils, so that they achieve their expected potential and targets
- relating and using more closely the high attainment of pupils' reading and speaking skills to improve those of writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils respond positively to their learning opportunities and show high levels of enjoyment of their lessons. This is borne out by the consistently good attendance of the very great majority of pupils. They are enthusiastic learners, and talk proudly of their school being 'amazing', 'fabulous' and, importantly, 'fun'. This was seen to good effect when pupils in Year 5/6 role played Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon about to divorce, and then wrote about Henry's explanations to the Pope of the situation. Pupils behave very well, act responsibly and respect one another. Even when teachers occasionally spend too long on introductions of activities, pupils maintain interest and concentration. Most importantly, both they and their parents and carers are almost unanimous in feeling that they are safe in school. They have healthy lifestyles and on most days nearly 70% of them take school dinners, often choosing the healthiest option. Pupils show good awareness of the need to develop any special talents they have, such as dancing, playing a musical instrument and even 'telling funny jokes'.

By the time they leave the school, most pupils' attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. There are occasional blips, such as a drop in attainment in mathematics in 2009, but the school has taken rapid and successful steps for improvement. In 2010, the school was disappointed at attainment in writing which did not match the exceptional attainment in reading. This has resulted in a detailed review of the teaching of writing skills, and early signs are of positive improvement. The progress and achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the gifted and talented, are good.

Central to pupils' personal development is their extensive involvement in both the school and the local community. The school is an integral part of the village and its activities are a positive influence in drawing the community together through village fetes, school plays and talent shows. Information magazines, for example 'The Warbler', published by the pupils, are widely circulated in the community. Likewise, pupils enjoy their school responsibilities, for example older pupils looking after younger ones and their contributions to the very active school council. They have a good knowledge of other cultures and beliefs, are reflective, and show respect for other people's feelings and values. Good basic skills in numeracy and literacy, personal responsibilities, and an understanding of life skills in producing and presenting basic foods for consumption are good preparation for their future lives.

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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	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	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	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good because teachers manage their pupils well, plan meticulously and effectively, and have a good understanding of the needs of pupils. Learning is underpinned by the excellent relationships between all staff and pupils. Challenging activities, and constant encouragement to pupils to discuss their learning with their 'talking partners', are other good teacher skills. They were seen to good effect in Year 6 when pupils were trying to devise a spreadsheet formula for working out the maximum area of fencing needed for a farmer's field. Extension activities for more-able pupils are regularly planned and worked upon, leading to good progress being made by all groups of pupils. Assessment strategies are being improved consistently. However, although good progress data are used in planning, this is sometimes not used often enough. Consequently, as in writing in most year groups, some pupils do not make the progress predicted because they are not reminded consistently of what they need to improve.

The good quality of the curriculum is enhanced by the wide variety of the extra-curricular activities, visits and clubs provided by the school, described well by a parent who commented, 'The range of experiences offered here are great, a cultural hothouse and stimulating environment.' Displays of work show the many partnerships and links with other children in this country and abroad which stimulate pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum. The school has been successful in encouraging wider use of reading, speaking,

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mathematical, and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. The school recognises that more work is needed to further develop pupils' writing skills in other subjects. The coherence and relevance of the curriculum contributes strongly to good outcomes in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils.

There is a powerful ethos of care and consideration for all pupils, which is greatly helped by the effective and well-planned interventions by teaching assistants. Staff have improved the rigour of their recognition of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils and those from the most vulnerable circumstances receive high-quality support, as do other pupils who may be recognised as causing concern for short periods of time. Links with a range of outside services and agencies are very effective. The after-school care club, 'Kites', is well managed and offers a good extended service to the school community.

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 leadership and management of the school, notably through the exceptional vision and skills of the headteacher, are successful in promoting good ambition and significant improvement. The headteacher is assisted by a competent team of subject coordinators and well-motivated support staff. This creates a high morale in the school and a strong desire to ensure that all pupils succeed and develop into good, well-educated and happy young people. Self-evaluation is thorough and very accurate, and is guided strongly by the headteacher, who takes on many major responsibilities personally. Leaders are developing good monitoring skills and all teachers are involved regularly in peer lesson observations. The governing body is knowledgeable, energetic and ambitious, and plays a significant role in school improvement. New initiatives are constantly introduced and the governing body promotes partnership in the community very effectively, and challenges school leaders regularly. The governing body ensures that safeguarding policies are secure and rigorous. Equal opportunities and inclusion are well developed through a good quantity and quality of activities which enhance cultural diversity and understanding in the curriculum. There is good provision for community cohesion through a wide range of links with schools in this country and abroad. The school has many thriving partnerships, especially with other schools, which is helping its pupils to develop a good knowledge of the world outside their village. Parents' and carers' engagement with the school is exceptional, and they are fully involved in their children's education and in the many community activities enjoyed by the school.

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter school with a wide range of skills, although most are as expected for their age. They make good progress during their first year and reach, and often exceed, their early learning goals. Children are well motivated, and keen to question and discover the answers to problems such as 'Where are the juicy bugs?' when hearing stories like 'A Perfect Day for it'. Good speaking and listening skills are especially well developed. Equally, their behaviour is good and they have very positive attitudes to learning, which helps them to grow in self-confidence and independence. Although the outdoor area is rather small, it is used to good purpose for learning and is well resourced. Children enjoyed building rockets, using polydrons and enthusiastically re-enacting the story of 'Goldilocks' and 'Beware of the Bear' when outside. They enjoy planting and growing tomatoes and green beans in the school garden, and watching the development of their chicks. They benefit from the good role models in the mixed-year class of a small number of pupils from Year 1. Good-quality teaching and good contributions from teaching assistants are driven by good, experienced and sensitive leadership and management. This ensures that the needs of all children, including those identified early with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are continually monitored and evaluated. Children's care and welfare is given very high priority, and staff ensure that all necessary safeguarding is in place. Leaders are now planning to extend the use of learning journeys, especially of younger children, through a wider range of curriculum topics in order to strengthen the assessment of children's learning. There are excellent relationships with parents and carers who are delighted with the start made by their children.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

A very high proportion of parents and carers, 74%, responded to the questionnaires. They feel that their children are safe, that teaching and leadership are good, that the school deals effectively with behaviour and that they have very strong engagement with the school. Of the many glowing comments, a typical view of the school made by a parent is, 'The school is very much part of the community and as a parent I always feel very included in my child's education.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Avening Primary 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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	75	21	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	87	11	13	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	52	37	45	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	49	39	47	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	67	27	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	60	31	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	67	27	33	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)	56	67	24	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	61	26	31	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	59	33	40	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	55	37	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	66	80	17	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	80	15	18	1	1	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Avening Primary School, Tetbury GL8 8NF

Your school gives you a good education. You help to make it a special place in the village, because you are happy, enjoy your learning and are well behaved. It was a pleasure to meet you all, hear about your life in school, and watch you in your learning. We were very impressed with your surroundings, your vegetable garden and your chicken family.

We believe that you are extremely well cared for by the adults in your school, and were impressed with how safe you and your parents and carers think you are in school. You make good progress in learning in all your classes and are always trying to improve, and have done this well in mathematics in the last year. You have good teachers and classroom assistants, and a very good headteacher who leads the school successfully. The staff provides you with many enjoyable and exciting learning activities which you all are keen to be involved in. This is what makes everyone in the area you live in so proud of your popular school. The school council does a good job, and we liked the way older pupils help the younger ones.

We think the school can improve even more and we are suggesting how this can be done. We have asked your teachers to help you improve your writing by making sure that you know and are often reminded of what you need to do to improve. In this way, we hope that you will all reach your learning targets in your writing. We think that you can also be encouraged to think more about what you learn in reading and speaking so that will also help your writing progress. You can help in this by checking with your teachers if you are unsure about what you have to improve.

We are very confident that all of you will try hard to do your best, and that you will continue to enjoy your 'fun' learning at Avening.

Yours sincerely

Rod Braithwaite

Lead inspector

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