

Avening Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115501
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311952
Inspection date	11 July 2008
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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 on roll	
School	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derrick Ind
Headteacher	Diana Boulton
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2004
School address	High Street Avening Tetbury GL8 8NF
Telephone number	01453 833191
Fax number	01453 833258

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves the village of Avening and its surrounding area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Very few pupils are from a minority ethnic background and all are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, although none has a statement of special educational needs. The school is housed in a relatively old building, with very restricted internal and outside space and no playing field. The school uses the local village hall for assemblies, dining and physical education.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Avening Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support that pupils receive are all of a good quality. Children love coming to school, and are keen to get home, too, so they can tell their parents all about their day, especially when they have been on one of the exciting trips. There is an excellent family atmosphere where everybody looks out for one another and pupils feel very safe and well cared for. The good provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education ensures that personal development is good. Pupils work and play happily together, and are polite to, and respectful of, adults. They behave well, but some are poor at listening to others including, at times, to adults. Teachers do not always insist that pupils pay full attention when others are speaking.

Standards vary from year to year, because numbers are so small and a few more higher or lower attaining pupils can make a big difference to overall standards. Generally, however, children arrive in Reception with skills that are as expected for their age. They make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well to leave with standards that are above average for their age, and well equipped with the skills they will need in later life. Progress in reading, mathematics and science is good because teachers give pupils work that they find difficult, but achievable at their own level of ability. Progress in writing is slower, but is still satisfactory. The tasks in writing are equally demanding, but marking does not always identify errors in basic spelling, punctuation and grammar, so pupils are not reminded of the mistakes they are making. Pupils are taught to write in lots of different genres, such as diaries, stories and reports, but there are relatively few opportunities for them to write at length in other subjects of the curriculum.

The family atmosphere extends to staff, too, who operate as a very effective team under the good leadership of the headteacher. The systems used for checking on the quality of what the school provides paint a clear and accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The fact that the school evaluates its provision as satisfactory, rather than good, reflects the complete lack of complacency rather than any weakness in systems for judging the school's performance. Parents are full of praise for the school, with almost half of the many who responded to the questionnaire describing it in terms such as 'fantastic', 'excellent' or 'very good'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join Reception with the skills and understanding that are expected for their age in most areas of learning. However, few have been to Nursery and this shows in their relatively weaker knowledge of letters and number work. Nevertheless, skills in these areas are not as low as the school estimates, because the systems for assessment are not entirely accurate. A good amount of time is given to developing literacy and numeracy skills, so standards are broadly average in these areas by the time children are ready to start Year 1. Children settle quickly because they are well looked after and because they have many opportunities to visit the school and join in activities prior to starting. Their personal development is particularly good, and standards in this area are well above average by the time they start Year 1. Above all, teachers go to great lengths to ensure that children are happy, so the children want to come to school and learn. Teachers provide a good mix of structured activities and ones that children choose for themselves, but they are limited by the lack of an outdoor area where, for example,

children can play with sand and water. The school makes good use of the facilities that are available to it, and good leadership and management is ensuring that provision continues to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure marking pays closer attention to errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar and provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Insist on pupils paying attention and listening when others are speaking in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Parents rightly feel that their children make good progress. Progress in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is good and standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Progress in English is also good, but much better in reading than in writing, where standards are average. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been falling since 2005, but this is because of an increased proportion of pupils with learning difficulties rather than any decline in achievement. Nevertheless, the good support that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive ensures that they make the same good progress as other pupils. Standards overall this year are back to an above average level, as there are fewer such pupils, although standards in writing remain average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils love being given a challenge, especially when it is linked to helping others. Older pupils are very proud of the games they have made to help younger ones with their sums, for example, while those who are better at ICT than others are used as 'trouble shooters' in lessons to sort out any problems with programs that pupils have written. This good understanding of the roles they can play in communities also extends further afield. They are very aware of the differences between urban and rural life, for example, and the opportunities that each can offer. The school council takes its work seriously, but its opportunities to act independently are relatively few. Pupils put their good understanding of healthy eating into practice when making choices at lunchtime. They also understand the importance of exercise, and they well understand the need to ensure that they and others remain safe. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. As soon as they are given a task, they concentrate well, but some will often fidget, daydream or chat to their friends when the teacher, or another pupil, is speaking. Pupils respond immediately when their inattention is pointed out, but it often goes unnoticed for too long.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils' good progress in lessons is a result of teachers' careful planning. Teachers are well aware of each pupil's ability and devise tasks that are difficult enough to make them think, but not so hard that pupils are unable to achieve success. Teaching assistants are well deployed to help those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ensuring that they make the same good progress as others by helping them to do the work themselves, rather than doing it for them. Lessons are usually split into short chunks, so a good pace is maintained and pupils do not

become bored by spending too long on the same activity. Work in mathematics is marked well and pupils always do their corrections. The same is not true of written work in English and other subjects, where mistakes, such as using a capital letter in the middle of a word, are not highlighted and corrections are not always carried out.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school makes good provision for reading and mathematics. The recent investment in computer equipment is paying dividends as pupils now spend much more time using ICT, and make good progress as a result. There are many opportunities for pupils to write in different styles, including short sports reports for which some have won prizes in a local competition. However, there are too few opportunities to write at any length in subjects other than English. Pupils love the exciting trips that they take part in. The trip to Chepstow Castle has been used to bring the study of Normans alive, for example, and provided a focus for work in several different subjects. The school also has a very good link with an inner city school, so pupils can learn about cultures and lifestyles that they are not used to. The main drawback is the very restricted outdoor space, which, despite all the school's efforts, limits the scope for team games in physical education and outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is good pastoral and emotional care and support for pupils. Pupils know that they have someone to turn to if they are unhappy, and have great confidence in the adults to take their concerns seriously. Child protection and health and safety procedures meet all requirements, although some risk assessments of the buildings lack detail. The school goes to great lengths to improve attendance, doing everything it can to celebrate good attendance and instil a keenness to come to school. The results are seen in rapidly improving attendance that has improved from slightly below to well above average since 2005. Pupils' progress is tracked well in Years 1 to 6, but inaccurate assessments of letter and number work in Reception lead to children's progress not being clear. Pupils all know their targets, and these are further refined, by the pupils themselves, into success criteria for most pieces of work in English and mathematics, so pupils know what they are aiming for and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leaders, including governors, set demanding targets for the school's performance. Checks on how well the school is progressing towards such targets provide managers with a clear basis for their priorities. Writing and listening are, quite rightly, top of the list for the forthcoming year. Checks on teaching are of good quality. They provide an accurate analysis of strengths and weaknesses, so each teacher is fully aware of the areas in which they can improve. Subject coordinators used to be involved in these checks, but, because of coordinators' work loads, they are now carried out solely by the headteacher, which means that coordinators do not get to find out for themselves if their plans are being implemented in the classroom. Nevertheless, the school's leaders have demonstrated well that they have all the skills needed to take the school further. Progress since it was last inspection has been good, particularly in improving attendance and provision for ICT.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Avening Primary School, Avening GL8 8NF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We found talking to you very helpful and were impressed by your good manners. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school, because you like all the trips and have lots of friends. You are now coming to school as often as you can, so well done to you all. We were impressed by how well you behave, especially in the playgrounds where you make sure that everyone plays safely. It was also good to see you eating healthy foods at lunchtime, and even growing your own in the garden!

Overall, we found that you are getting a good education. You do well in your reading, maths, science and ICT, so your standards are higher than we often see by the time you leave school. Your writing is not quite as good, because you are not thinking hard enough about your spelling and punctuation. So we have asked your teachers to point out where you make mistakes and make sure you correct them. We have also asked the teachers to let you do more writing of longer pieces, which will help your writing improve more quickly. You work hard in lessons most of the time, but do not always listen when others are talking. So always try to concentrate on the person who is speaking in lessons. We have asked your teachers to remind you to do this whenever they see you are not paying attention. We were very impressed by the way you help one another in lessons, or help younger ones to learn more quickly, such as by making games for them. All the grown ups in the school take good care of you and this helps you to feel safe. You told us that there is always someone in school you can talk to if you are unhappy. The school is getting better and better all the time, because the people who run it are good at finding out what they can improve, and then doing something about it.

With all best wishes for your futures

David Driscoll Lead inspector

Annex B

13 July 2008

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David Driscoll
Lead inspector