

West Ashton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126417
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315537
Inspection date	17 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Patricia Davies

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Bridges
Headteacher	Jonathan Barber
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2005
School address	Bratton Road West Ashton Trowbridge BA14 6AZ
Telephone number	01225 754354
Fax number	01225 754354

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	17 July 2008
Inspection number	315537

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

This inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the success of the school's work to promote writing, particularly in Reception and Key Stage 1, and by boys and higher attaining pupils

the achievement of the more able at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and science

the extent to which provision stimulates and challenges pupils, and encourages independent learning

how far leadership responsibilities have been extended and developed among staff and governors in order to check and improve the school's provision and outcomes.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, school documentation and assessment information. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

West Ashton CofE Primary School is a small school. Its three classes contain pupils from more than one age group. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is low. There have been some changes to staff in the last two years, and the present headteacher joined the school in April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

West Ashton CofE Primary School's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school has experienced some disruption in the last couple of years, which has affected some year groups more than others. The new headteacher has taken a strong lead in settling things down, raising expectations and establishing important systems to move the school on. The impact of these improvements so far shows that the school is securely placed to improve further. Parents wrote to say that they could see a real and positive change over the last 15 months. Such praise shows the success of the school's hard work to gain the trust and confidence of its parents. Most are very pleased with the school, especially its openness and accessibility and the chance to participate in planning its future.

Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory. Given the small size of each year group, standards vary to some degree from year to year and across each subject. Initial results of national tests for this year show standards to be broadly average overall in the current Years 2 and 6. However, progress has accelerated in Reception and Year 1, where recent improvements have had their greatest success. This class was affected most by changes to staff and so became a key priority. Children's good personal and social skills have secured a productive learning environment and, while the curriculum and teaching are satisfactory across the school as a whole, in this class they are lively and stimulating. These qualities ensure that the children make good progress. Consequently, having joined the school with attainment broadly as expected, the present Reception group is reaching above average standards.

Progress in other year groups is satisfactory. While individual lessons are often taught well in other classes, there is not the same consistency of excitement and challenge as there is now for the youngest pupils. For example, there is too much reliance on material from textbooks for teaching mathematics, rather than using and developing pupils' mathematical understanding in 'real' situations. Science fares somewhat better because there is practical and investigative work that encourages independent learning. However, tasks are not always adapted in these subjects to meet the needs of pupils in different year groups or with different abilities. In particular, they do not always demand that bit extra of higher attaining pupils. These factors act as constraints on the rate of progress over time. The exception is English. The sensitive and evocative writing of the oldest pupils reflects the high expectations of their work, and is equally true for boys and girls. As a result, national test results at Year 6 for English have been consistently high over the last three years. This success is not matched to the same extent in every year group lower down the school because writing tasks are not routinely as interesting and imaginative as they are further up the school. As a result, few pupils at Year 2 reach the higher Level 3 in writing.

Its robust attention to pupils' safety and well-being demonstrates the strength of the school's pastoral care. Such support ensures pupils' personal development is good and plays a valuable part in their preparation for adult life. Their eagerness to learn makes a significant contribution to lessons. They invariably work hard, and most are keen to share ideas with a partner or the whole class. Their above average attendance illustrates their enjoyment of school life. The many sports clubs come in for particular praise and their popularity illustrates pupils' good awareness of the need to keep fit and healthy. Indeed, extra-curricular activities are strong elements of the school's curriculum, as are the wider opportunities offered by trips and visits. Vibrant and colourful displays all around the building illustrate the many activities of the school's art clubs, while pupils also benefit from learning to speak French with a specialist teacher from the local

secondary school. Pupils' thoughtful reflections about deeper issues, like trust and justice, illustrate their growing maturity and understanding of moral issues. Moments of quiet reverence and of shared fun in assembly reinforce the caring quality of this small school community. A few parents and some pupils express remaining concerns about behaviour. Nevertheless, the new 'red card' system – a strategy selected by pupils – has proved successful in cutting down poor behaviour to just a handful of incidents. As a result, pupils' behaviour as a whole is good. Indeed, on occasions, it is excellent. The school and class councils place a lot of attention on improving safety in the playground. Their consideration of others is reflected in their decision to move the football pitch so that the school's neighbours are not disturbed by the noise!

Given the small size of the staff, the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has fallen mostly on the headteacher. These activities have provided a clear understanding of where the school is now and what it needs to do next in order to establish good progress throughout the school. The leadership of the Foundation Stage has been particularly successful in securing this good progress already. Other members of staff are gradually taking on leadership responsibilities so that the headteacher is supported fully in his work, but their roles have further to go.

A key improvement has been that made to assessment, which has drawn staff into a more detailed examination of pupils' achievement. This analysis has focused attention on those pupils who need to move on at a faster pace, allowed for the setting of focused professional targets for individual staff members and demonstrated that accountability for increasing academic performance further lies with them all. Nevertheless, the use of these assessment systems is still at a relatively early stage. Consequently, teachers do not have all the information they need to enable them to provide a sharp enough match of work to pupils' needs and abilities in every lesson. Governance is also improving. Governors are now involved closely in mapping out the school's vision and direction. They are also on the brink of taking responsibility for individual areas of the school's work so that they can hold the school to account more rigorously than they have in the past.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school acted swiftly to improve provision in this class. Issues with behaviour have been resolved and it is a relaxed and friendly place to learn, where Reception children work happily with their classmates in Year 1. Several parents were quick to praise the happy start their children had experienced this year in Reception. Their comments capture the excitement of learning from direct experience – 'from visiting the farm to hatching chicks'. However, their remarks also point to how this element of fun and imagination equally helps their children to enjoy and develop crucial basic skills, such as reading and writing.

Indeed, early language and literacy skills receive good focused attention. Children's knowledge of letter sounds grows in confidence through careful reinforcement. Questions are varied to take account of individual ability, and staff also push the boundaries with an extra question or two to test out the extent of understanding. Many children are happy to talk about what they think, the more articulate offering thoughtful suggestions and ideas. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage the quieter ones to take part so that they have the same chance to develop their speaking skills. The vibrancy and interest inside the classroom is now being taken outside into the new outdoor learning space, which is due for further development in the near future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all lesson activities are exciting and challenging, particularly to increase progress in mathematics and science for the older pupils and to help more pupils attain the higher levels in writing by Year 2.
- Establish the full use of assessment systems and ensure that this information is used to match work precisely to the needs and abilities of pupils, particularly the more able.
- Develop the leadership and monitoring roles of staff and governors so that the headteacher is fully supported in his development and evaluation of the school.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

27 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Ashton CofE Primary School, Trowbridge, BA14 6AZ

I very much enjoyed my day at your school and thank you for making me so welcome. Many thanks, also, to those of you who spoke with me when I visited your lessons and to the small group I talked with before lunch. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out before and during my visit. Your school is doing a satisfactory job. Many of your parents wrote to tell me how much they thought the school had improved and particularly how friendly and approachable everyone is. Some of you, and a few of your parents, are still worried about behaviour but, as a whole, it is good. Your new 'red card' system has worked well so that there are now only a small number of occasions when behaviour is not as good as it should be.

Here are some other important things about your school

- Those of you in Reception and Year 1 make good progress because all your activities are fun and imaginative – I particularly liked your wonderful papier mache cow and the exciting new 'story sacks'!
- Teaching is often good in other year groups too, and you are keen to learn, but your good progress in these individual lessons does not happen often enough, which means that progress overall is satisfactory.
- Your school is a caring and considerate place to be and many of you have thoughtful and sensible ideas about things, including those that are more difficult and make you reflect a bit more deeply.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better

- Make sure all your lessons are always exciting and challenging, particularly so that the older pupils do even better in mathematics and science, and more of you reach the highest level possible in your writing by Year 2.
- Use the information about your progress to make sure your lesson activities match exactly what you need to learn, particularly for those of you who find work that bit easier than others.
- Make sure all the staff and governors play a full part in improving the school and checking how it is getting on.

With best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Patricia Davies Lead inspector