

Aycliffe Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118449
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339222
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Hutchison
Headteacher	Ian Sheppard
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress and safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires were analysed from 14 parents.

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

- how well teaching challenges learners and whether information on the progress they make is used well enough to provide a good match of work to pupils of all abilities
- how well the school works with pupils and parents to improve attendance
- the impact of the work of middle managers on school improvement and outcomes for pupils
- the impact of the school's strategies to raise attainment and achievement in writing
- how well the school meets the needs of its community.

Information about the school

This is a small school with four classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Almost a third of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is much higher than found nationally. Their needs relate mainly to speech, language and communication or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is accredited with Healthy Schools, Activemark and Basic Skills Quality Mark awards. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Reception class. There is a children's centre on the school site, which is managed by Sure Start.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Aycliffe is a satisfactory school which is recovering well from a period when it experienced much staff change and illness. Staffing is now more stable which is having a positive effect on everyone. Staff work together effectively, they know the pupils well and work hard to meet their individual needs so that pupils can succeed in all they do. The school provides a wide range of interesting activities for pupils that contribute to their enjoyment of school and their development of many different skills and interests that enrich their lives and skills for the future. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.

The very small numbers in the Year 6 cohorts mean that published data needs to be interpreted with caution. Pupils' attainment is average although staffing difficulties in 2008 and the early part of 2009 affected the quality of pupils' learning and progress. The school's data on the 2009 unvalidated national tests showed that out of the 12 pupils that took all of the tests, the majority attained the expected Level 4 in mathematics and English. They made satisfactory progress from their starting points, which were below expectations when they started in the Reception year. Pupils did not do as well in science as they did in mathematics and in English. Their writing was weaker than their reading, where spelling and insufficient opportunities to write for a range of purposes held them back. The notable improvement in mathematics from 2008 was a result of stronger leadership in the subject and the school's focus on investigations and problem-solving activities. The school has correctly identified that these are the aspects of science that are currently underdeveloped and is increasing these opportunities.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but variable in quality within classes and subjects. In the school as a whole, some teaching and learning are good, as is evident in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning are often good in mathematics, but are less consistent in English and science. There are some good examples of marking which give pupils clear pointers for how they can improve their work, but again this is not consistent. This means that on occasion, teachers' expectations are not high enough and work is not sufficiently challenging, particularly for more able pupils.

Leaders at all levels have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and its priorities for development. Middle managers are excited to initiate change. Senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning have identified inconsistencies and have led to clear plans to bring about improvement. The school has successfully improved attendance to satisfactory from its low level at the last inspection. The shared drive for further development based on accurate monitoring and evaluation, and the strategic reorganisation of staffing which has led to steady improvements demonstrate that the

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school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils achieve as well as possible by:
 - improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good
 - ensuring all teachers use assessment information more effectively to plan pupils' learning and match activities to their needs, including challenge for more able pupils
 - giving pupils more precise guidance through marking and feedback on how they can improve their work.
- Ensure pupils make more rapid progress across the school and raise attainment in writing by:
 - improving spelling skills and providing pupils with a greater range of purpose for writing
- and in science by:
 - planning more investigative and problem-solving activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Following satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress in Years 1 and 2 is below expectations but pupils catch up in Years 3 to 6 because of some good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others because their needs are quickly identified and effective support systems are rapidly put in place.

As a result of more real-life problem solving and hands-on practical work, particularly in mathematics, pupils are enjoying their learning and make satisfactory and sometimes better progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils learnt about fractions, decimals and percentages. They applied their knowledge to enable them to make a profit from selling their own pizza slices to be donated to the Children In Need charity. This meant that pupils had a real purpose for their mathematical learning, they were challenged and as a result they made good progress. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to work in this way in science and therefore this approach has not yet had its full impact on raising attainment. Training for all teachers and support staff in teaching letters and sounds (phonics) has ensured consistency in the approach across the school. The ability to engage with texts at higher levels, using inference and deduction, is less well developed, particularly for more able pupils, but in English overall, writing is the weaker area.

The special event week, taking place during the inspection, is indicative of the store the school sets on successfully developing aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being. Visits from a range of services including the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, police and fire brigade made a very positive contribution to developing

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pupils' good awareness of how to stay safe and visitors from banks helped to extend pupils' understanding of economic well-being. Pupils do many things for the community especially to involve local elderly residents and by raising money for different charities. Pupils generally behave well in lessons, though some need reminders to do so, and they enjoy their learning. Teachers' skills in managing behaviour and the school's support systems ensure that the few pupils who have particularly challenging behaviour needs do not disrupt learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and make learning interesting and fun. They plan well so that the different year groups in their classes cover the appropriate curriculum for their ages. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy as demonstrated in the award of a Basic Skills Quality Mark. Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum to motivate and engage learners. Marking and assessment procedures are developing well, although they are not yet being used consistently in all classes.

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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The curriculum is planned and enriched well to make learning meaningful and relevant to pupils. It also makes a strong contribution to pupils' good understanding of issues connected with their safety and health. This has been recognised by the Activemark and Healthy School awards. Pupils said they appreciate the wide range of extra activities and clubs that broaden their experiences and help them gain new skills such as playing the guitar and knitting.

Parents and pupils agree that the school looks after them well. A strength of the school is raising pupils' self-esteem and often very low aspirations. One child said, 'Sometimes I think I'm no good at things but teachers help me see that I can do more than I think I can.' Vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well provided for which enables them to achieve as well as their peers. Pupils and their families benefit from the work of the family liaison officer and learning mentor. Partnership with other agencies is embedded within the work of the school, makes a positive contribution to pupils' well-being and provides well-targeted support for pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Recent appointments have enabled the headteacher to reorganise roles and place staff strategically so they can share good practice with others and accelerate pupils' progress where it has been identified as being slower. For example, the decision to appoint a teacher as a non-class-based assistant headteacher has had a positive impact on improving the learning environment, teachers' planning and the rigour in tracking pupils' progress. Staff are becoming more accountable for evaluating pupils' progress and promoting equality of opportunity.

The school promotes community cohesion well and evaluates its impact so that it develops an understanding of the needs of the community and can make suitable plans to improve still further. The school actively promotes cohesion through its provision for adult learning programmes, its extended school provision, links with the children's centre and the multicultural aspects of the curriculum. There are good links with the local community and the school embraces its diversity. One parent wrote, 'The school let my daughter celebrate our festival in class and I took part in the multicultural week as well, to talk about my religion and culture.'

Governors are committed to ensuring that pupils are well cared for and provided with a

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very rounded education. They know and support the school well, and it benefits from the skills, expertise and experience of individual members. The governing body action plan shows that it is beginning to develop more rigour in holding the school to account for its performance, particularly in raising standards and in its contribution to school improvement. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are good and the school ensures that pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

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	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are below expectations for their age. They make satisfactory progress to reach expected goals in many aspects of their learning but social and emotional development remain below expectations when they move into Year 1. Adults work well as a team and have good links with a teacher from the children's centre. This ensures that there is a smooth and happy transfer for children from the Nursery in the children's centre to the school so they settle quickly into the Reception class, and good links are established with parents. This is the first year that the school has been able to have a dedicated Reception class and the classroom is well resourced and equipped for this age group and offers a range of interesting activities. Children have access to a safe and secure outdoor area but there is an insufficient range of well-planned activities to ensure that children's learning is sustained whether they choose to be inside or outside. Adults sometimes miss opportunities to extend the children's speaking, enrich their language or develop their independence. The work the school has done on teaching sounds and letters (phonics) has shown marked improvement in this area and helped to improve children's writing. It has not yet

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had the same impact on their reading. Children are supported well and their welfare is given high priority, reflecting the satisfactory leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire with their views about the school. All of these agreed that their children enjoyed school and that they are happy with their children's experience of school. One parent wrote, 'The school is always welcoming to parents and seems to appreciate anything you can do to help. They try to involve parents as much as possible and it is a family orientated school.' This reflects the findings of the inspection as inspectors judged the school's engagement with parents to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Aycliffe Community 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 14 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 108 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	64	5	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	4	29	10	71	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	43	7	50	1	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	5	36	9	64	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	43	8	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	50	7	50	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)	5	36	7	50	1	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	57	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	50	6	43	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	50	7	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	64	5	36	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	57	6	43	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aycliffe Community Primary School, Dover, CT17 9HJ

You may remember that two inspectors came to your school recently. I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. We agree with you and your parents that Aycliffe Community Primary School is a caring and safe place to be. Your school is satisfactory overall. This means that some things are particularly good and some things need to be better. Your school has improved recently because the headteacher and all the teachers and other adults work very hard to make it better for you. You do as well as pupils in other schools in your mathematics and English but you could be doing better in your writing and particularly in your science. You make steady progress but we think some of you could do even better. We were very pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. Well done for trying so hard to become fit and healthy and for coming to school more regularly. Teachers help you learn but we would like to see more good lessons. We have asked everyone in your school to do the following important things:

- make sure that more lessons are good and that you know exactly how you can improve your work so that you can all do as well as possible
- help you to get better in writing by giving you more real reasons to write and helping you to be better spellers
- make sure that the work you do is at the right level for you
- help you learn in science in the same way that you do in mathematics by giving you more problem solving and investigations to do.

The headteacher and staff are determined that you can do even better and you can help them by always working hard and doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector

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