

Astley CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116864
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326467
Inspection date	2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	88
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	12
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Jones
Headteacher	Julie Prior
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Astley Stourport-on-Severn DY13 0RH
Telephone number	01299 822002
Fax number	01299 822002

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The vast majority of pupils in this small primary school come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average. These pupils' needs include speech, language and communication difficulties, specific learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in Reception. Since the last inspection, there have been considerable staff changes. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006 and the assistant headteacher in January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Astley C of E Primary is satisfactory. There are good aspects to its work. Effective pastoral care and support and a positive school atmosphere lead to good personal development and well-being for pupils. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their keen participation in activities. Attendance levels are consistently above average. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They adopt healthy lifestyles well and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils thrive on the additional responsibilities given. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community.

Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points in Reception, which are generally at the level expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils do not, however, have sufficient opportunities to apply and develop numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics in order to become more competent in their use. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Across the school, teachers establish good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear. They are using assessment better now than at the last inspection to plan teaching. There are examples of good teaching in Years 5 and 6. When teaching is good, pupils are challenged well, tasks are varied and learning maintains a brisk pace. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. Work is not always sufficiently challenging and well matched to pupils' individual needs. Reception children are not always given sufficient scope to learn independently and through exploration. The marking of pupils' work is positive and constructive. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities, such as residential trips and clubs.

Most parents are pleased with the care and education provided for their children. They like the recent improvements to the accommodation. Open days and regular information about the curriculum make a positive contribution in helping parents to support their children's learning. However, a significant minority of parents have concerns about communication, staff changes and how well the school meets the needs of the more able pupils. Parents do not feel that the school takes sufficient account of their concerns. The teaching force is more settled now and the school is keen to establish a productive partnership with all its parents. Senior staff and governors recognise the need to build a stronger partnership with some of its parents and there are clear plans to address this.

Leadership and management successfully promote good pastoral care. The impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement and on teaching, the curriculum and academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has a sound view of its performance. Clear systems have been introduced to monitor and track each pupil's attainment and progress, and academic guidance is satisfactory. Subject leaders are new and satisfactorily developing their skills in monitoring and evaluation. The headteacher and staff are not complacent and are focused on raising achievement and standards. There is a clear commitment to improving the school among the team of staff.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's attainment on entry to Reception can vary but most year groups enter with knowledge and skills expected for their age. They settle quickly into routines and enjoy their learning. They make good progress in personal and social skills because of good attention to their welfare and the positive relationships between adults and children. Leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory. The school is using external support appropriately to develop the provision. Teaching is satisfactory and an interesting range of activities is planned to cover the areas of learning. However, at times the activities are too tightly directed by the teacher and children do not have sufficient scope to explore and work independently. Furthermore, activities and tasks are not always well tailored to children's needs and so they are not suitably challenged. The outdoor learning areas have been improved with appropriate activities provided. By the end of Reception, standards are broadly in line with those expected.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons are suitably challenging with work matched to individual needs, and that learning maintains a brisk pace.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to apply and develop numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Develop the opportunities for children to explore and learn independently in the Reception Year.
- Take positive steps to build a stronger partnership with some parents and tackle their concerns. A small proportion of the 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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 2 fluctuate because of small numbers in the year groups and variations in the proportion of pupils who need support with their learning. Standards in 2007 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics but these dipped to below average in 2008. During the last three years, standards by the end of Year 6 have been broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The school is taking positive steps to raise achievement and standards in these core subjects. Pupils who need extra help, particularly with literacy and numeracy, receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have positive attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a good understanding of traditional British and non-Western cultures. During 'Africa Week', for example, they gain a good knowledge and understanding of African music, traditions and lifestyle. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and are well aware of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. Those on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have contributed well to the development of the outdoor grounds and new play facilities. Pupils make a strong contribution to the wider community by raising funds for charities. They are adequately prepared

for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave the school, they have well-developed personal and social skills, and possess sound literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory as shown by its satisfactory impact on pupils' progress. Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils. Pupils know what they are expected to learn because the purpose of the lesson is shared with them at the start. They are attentive and respond well to their teachers' clear instructions and explanations. Effective questioning by teachers in some classes challenges the pupils and checks their understanding. Teachers' use of assessment to guide teaching and learning is improving. When assessment information is used effectively, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, in these lessons, pupils are challenged well and they make good gains in their learning. This is not happening in all classes. For example, an over-reliance on worksheets hinders pupils' ability to plan and organise their own work. These worksheet tasks are not always challenging enough, particularly for the more able. As a result, the rate of learning and pace of the lesson decline. Pupils' work is marked well. Praise is given for good work and there are constructive comments to help pupils improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to make satisfactory progress and contributes well to their personal development. The school is developing interesting links between subjects, which add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. Opportunities for pupils to apply and develop writing skills in other subjects are being extended. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply and develop numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum and this is a factor preventing standards from being higher in mathematics. A good range of additional activities is offered. African, French and science days contribute well to pupils' enjoyment, learning and to their cultural development. Successful residential visits to the Malvern Hills and Wales provide an exciting variety of outdoor activities which contribute well to pupils' social and team working skills. Health and safety education is promoted effectively throughout the curriculum. The attractive and spacious grounds and the much improved accommodation are used to provide an interesting range of facilities to enrich pupils' learning. An outdoor theatre, bird hide and climbing and balancing equipment are good examples.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's pastoral care system is strong and the headteacher and staff have successfully created a positive school climate which underpins pupils' good personal development. Procedures to ensure that pupils are protected, safe and secure at school are good. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. There are clear procedures to monitor and promote good attendance. Effective systems to assess and track pupils' attainment have been introduced. Most pupils have clear individual learning targets to guide their progress in literacy and numeracy but the use of these is not consistent in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with strengths in the attention to promoting personal development and well-being. The contribution of leadership and management to pupils' achievement and standards is satisfactory. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school has a sound understanding of what it does well and what is needed to bring about improvements. Improved assessment systems enable all staff to see how well individual pupils are doing. The headteacher and staff are aware that there is work to do before the impact of provision, particularly teaching, on pupils' achievement is consistently good.

The school satisfactorily promotes community cohesion, as demonstrated by the positive atmosphere that pervades the school. There are good links with the church. A successful Harvest Festival was held in the local church during the inspection. Parents summed up the event well: 'fantastic service!', 'it's great, everyone was involved' and 'the children were wonderful; they read and sang beautifully'. However, the school also recognises that more needs to be done to ensure that all parents are happy with the quality of communication and, in particular, for all parents to feel that the school listens to their concerns.

Governors are supportive. The governing body has acquired members with useful expertise such as in information and communication technology (ICT). Governors are beginning to challenge the school about pupils' achievement and are keen to build a stronger partnership with some of the parents.

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
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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?	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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Astley C of E Primary School, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0RH

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a satisfactory school and it has some good features.

These are the main strengths of the school:

- You really enjoy school and attendance is good.
- The school is a friendly and pleasant place to be.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Your understanding of how to keep healthy and safe is good.
- The teachers and other grown-ups take good care of you.
- You make good contributions to the school and wider community.
- A good range of additional activities is provided, such as trips and clubs.

These are the things the school should do to improve:

- Make sure that all lessons provide you with the right amount of challenge and move your learning on at a good pace.
- Give you more opportunities to use and develop your numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Provide more opportunities for children in Reception to explore and develop independence.
- Build a strong partnership with your parents.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well and working hard. Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts Lead inspector