

Atwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101817
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	307823
Inspection dates	3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrusell

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

Type of School	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Wragg
Headteacher	Mr Alexander Clark
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2004
School address	Limpsfield Road South Croydon CR2 9EE
Telephone number	020 8657 7374
Fax number	020 8657 3785

Age group	3-11
Inspection Date(s)	3 December 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- achievement and standards
- teaching and learning
- leadership and management
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, governors, other leaders and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

Atwood is a popular, two-form entry primary school. The EYFS provision includes the Nursery. There has recently been a significant turnover of teaching staff. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. These pupils have a variety of needs including speech, language and communication, and social and behavioural difficulties. The school has the Artsmark Gold and Activemark awards, and Healthy School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Atwood Primary is an outstanding school. The headteacher provides highly committed leadership and is very well supported by his deputy headteacher, senior leadership team, staff and governors. Parents recognise this. One comments, 'The headteacher promotes strong and positive leadership for the school, which is evident throughout his teaching staff.' The school ensures pupils' outstanding progress in both their academic and personal development. These are promoted further by an excellent curriculum. This provides pupils with many enrichment opportunities, enabling them to gain considerable success in the fields of music, sport and creative arts. It also provides pupils with exciting and innovative learning opportunities. Those with learning difficulties or social and behavioural needs are very well supported, enabling them to make similar progress to others.

Displays around the school show that pupils have many opportunities to use and develop their different academic and creative skills within different subjects. This makes their learning both interesting and purposeful. New themes are being introduced that develop this approach to learning further. Pupils talked excitedly about a Jungle Book event, which occurred on the day before the inspection. Already, teachers were using this extremely well as a stimulus in lessons. It gained an excited response from Year 1 pupils as they used the names of jungle animals to develop their understanding of rhyming words. A wide range of links with parents, the community, other local schools and agencies contributes to pupils' learning and the extremely high level of care provided by the school, which ensures pupils' health and safety. These links also help to promote pupils good understanding of different communities and cultures.

Pupils greatly enjoy all aspects of school life, shown in their above-average attendance. Comments from them show that they not only enjoy all of the special events and the wide range of activities provided for them, but also their lessons. Classroom learning is organised to provide many opportunities for pupils to work independently, helping them to become confident learners. They have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do their best. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to play their full part in the life of the school and willingly take on responsibilities. However, the school recognises that the role of the school council needs to be developed to create more opportunities for pupils to participate in decision-making. Individual targets help pupils to think for themselves about their learning and how they could do even better. Excellent teaching ensures that lessons have a very clear purpose, which is shared with pupils and promotes their consistently good progress. This helps pupils to understand what they are expected to achieve and to evaluate how well they have done. Pupils know the right things to eat. The very good provision for sport and physical education means they know very well what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. This excellent level of personal development, and pupils' exemplary behaviour, contribute considerably to the progress they make in their learning.

When pupils leave the school in Year 6, standards in reading, mathematics and science are extremely high. In writing, standards are not as high, although they are well above average. The school recognises this relative weakness and it is being successfully addressed. Older pupils are now using a programme that encourages them to evaluate specific aspects of their writing with a view to making improvements. Within Key Stage 1, although most pupils have made good progress, building on their successes in the EYFS, the more able pupils have not always been fully challenged. Consequently, standards at the end of Year 2, although remaining overall significantly above average, have shown a slight decline. The school has now set more challenging end of key stage targets for the more able pupils, which they are now on track to achieve. Given this level of progress, their growing self-confidence and eagerness to take on responsibility, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The school is extremely accurate in its self-evaluation. This helps it to identify areas for development and to plan future action to bring about further improvement. As a result, very carefully planned developments to the curriculum have been put in place. For example, more opportunities for investigation and problem-solving in mathematics and science have been introduced and have resulted in improved learning. However, the school recognises the need to monitor and more deeply evaluate such changes for their impact on achievement and standards, and pupils' personal development. Governors are very supportive of the work of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and where improvements are needed. However, they recognise that their monitoring role needs to be developed further. Teaching continues to be very closely monitored to ensure that a high quality is maintained. Consequently, there is now greater consistency in the way lessons are planned, showing clear learning intentions and how the needs of pupils with different abilities are to be addressed. Greatly improved tracking procedures mean that the school has a very clear picture of the

progress pupils are making towards the challenging targets set for them, and this includes high-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1. As part of their performance management, teachers are accountable for this progress. Any pupils not doing as well as expected are quickly identified, and supported. Some parents have expressed concern about the number of recent staff changes. However, leaders have been careful in their appointments, and provide very good induction and support for new staff. Given the quality of its self-evaluation, improvement since the last inspection, and strong determination to strive for even greater excellence, the school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start in the EYFS, where their achievement is outstanding. They enter the Nursery with a level of skills that is broadly in line with those expected for their age. By the time they leave the Reception class, their standards are well above average in almost all their areas of learning. They make outstanding progress. The reason for this success is the excellent quality of provision for children's learning and development. Leadership of the EYFS is very strong, and promotes consistently very good practice and skilful use of tracking data to accelerate children's learning still further. Staff have identified, for example, that children's progress in writing and creative development was not as good as in other areas last year, and have been working hard to address this. Their tracking shows that their strategies are already having an impact. There is an excellent range of exciting, imaginative and stimulating activities for children which encourage them to develop their independence, think for themselves and decide how to improve their work. The outside areas are particularly well developed.

Children's welfare is of paramount importance to the EYFS staff, and contributes to their excellent personal development and well-being. For example, the EYFS makes very good use of its 'key person' system to provide children and parents with a central point of contact. Links with Nursery and Reception parents are very good. Parents are full of praise for the efforts the EYFS makes to keep them informed, for example via the website and through monthly invitations to come and look at their children's assessment folders. These records are very well kept and provide a very clear picture of how well children are doing and what parents can do to help them improve. The EYFS leader is very focused on improving provision even further, for example in smoothing the transition from Reception to Year 1. The new outdoor area for Year 1 is a good example of what has already been accomplished.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor recent curriculum developments to ensure their positive impact on achievement and standards and pupils' personal development.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are the children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

16 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Atwood Primary School, South Croydon, CR2 9EE

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Atwood Primary is an outstanding school.

We liked these things the most:

- You enjoy school, behave extremely well, work hard and want to do your best.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get an excellent start to their time in school.
- You are doing extremely well in English, mathematics and science and have met with considerable success in music, sport and creative arts.
- The school supports you very well when you have problems or find learning difficult.
- You think carefully about how you can improve your work.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and extremely well looked after.
- You have lots of clubs and many exciting things to do. We could see that you really enjoyed the Jungle Book day.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy.
- You are keen to take on responsibilities for looking after your school.
- Your headteacher and staff are doing an excellent job.

We have asked the school to work particularly on the following area.

- The school has worked really hard at ways to make your learning even more interesting, exciting and enjoyable. When you are working on themes, such as the Jungle Book, the school must check that you continue to make the best progress possible in your learning.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell
Lead Inspector

