

Arbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 110664

Local Authority Cambridgeshire

Inspection number 356792

Inspection dates14–15 February 2011Reporting inspectorMargaret Goodchild

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 389

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair David Maher **Headteacher** Ben Tull

Date of previous school inspection 31 January 2008

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons and saw 14 teachers, as well as sampling a number of small-group sessions led by teaching assistants. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the governing body. Informal discussion took place with a very small number of parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, information about their attainment and progress, evidence of monitoring and self-evaluation, and documents indicating how well the school safeguards its pupils. They analysed 104 responses to the parental questionnaire, together with those from 113 pupils and 31 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The team looked at how far the school has come in improving provision and raising standards in mathematics.
- It looked at how well the school's provision meets the diverse range of pupils' needs.
- It considered whether some aspects of the school's work have improved from good to outstanding, and what this reveals about its capacity to improve.

Information about the school

This is an above average-sized primary school that has increased in size since the last inspection. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds but the proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above average. There are 20 different home languages spoken, revealing the diverse nature of the school's intake, the main ones being Bengali and Polish. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A high proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and almost half the pupils in Years 5 and 6 fall into this category. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is three times that of schools nationally. More pupils join or leave the school during Years 1 to 6 than in most other schools. The school is in the process of renewing its ArtsMark (Gold) award and has achieved Healthy Schools status.

The headteacher is a consultant leader in the local authority's school improvement team and the school has leading teachers in behaviour management and support for bilingual learners. Arbury Primary is an associate training school with the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education in both these areas. At the time of the inspection, four temporary teachers were covering for three permanent teachers on maternity leave and filling a vacancy in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pending the arrival of a newly appointed early years leader.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school that meets the needs of its diverse population exceptionally well. The increase in the number of pupils on roll reflects the school's growing popularity, and parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire express a high level of satisfaction with its work. One captured this by saying, 'We have always felt delighted that our child has the opportunity to attend such a wonderful school. There is a strong sense of cohesion amongst the children, parents and staff, who are all working towards the same goal.'

The school is a vibrant community with a welcoming and positive ethos where all pupils are fully included. It promotes community cohesion exceptionally well and central to its success is the way it celebrates differences in pupils' social and cultural backgrounds. Provision for care, guidance and support is outstanding and the school uses partnerships with other agencies exceptionally well, particularly in supporting those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils develop an increasing belief in themselves as they move through the school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' excellent behaviour, motivation and positive attitudes make an exceptionally good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils say that they feel outstandingly safe and they demonstrate an excellent awareness of how to stay safe in a wide range of situations. All the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire expressed confidence in the knowledge that their children are safeguarded exceptionally well.

Pupils' achievement is good and improving. A relentless and systematic push to raise standards is accelerating progress and leading to a clear upward trend in the school's results. Key to pupils' rising achievement is the way the curriculum has been matched exceptionally well to their needs and to the school's context. Exemplary provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those learning English as an additional language ensures that both of these large groups make outstanding progress. The highly focused work of teaching assistants plays a key part in this. Teaching in English has improved since the last inspection and is now excellent. This enables pupils to make outstanding progress and to reach above average standards in English by the time they leave. For the past year, the school has been focusing on raising achievement in mathematics, where standards are average. New initiatives have begun to take effect and teaching in mathematics is good, but achievement in the subject is not as high as that in English. Average-attaining pupils make good progress in mathematics and lower-attaining pupils do exceptionally well. More-able pupils do less well, however, because work in some lessons and that which is set for homework does not challenge them enough. Furthermore, teachers do not always indicate through marking how pupils could improve

Furthermore, teachers do not always indicate through marking how pupils could improve their work in mathematics or inform older ones clearly enough about the standard at which they are working or how to reach the next level.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The headteacher and senior leaders provide an outstanding drive for improvement: they combine clarity of vision with precise and carefully considered actions. They gather and analyse a wealth of information about pupils' academic progress and personal development to check how well pupils are doing and identify what could be improved. Their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and reflects high expectations. Senior leaders are clear about the need to raise achievement in mathematics and are working concertedly to bring this about. Since the last inspection, a number of aspects of the school's work and pupil outcomes have improved from good to outstanding. The school's capacity to improve further is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In mathematics, improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that work is always challenging enough to extend more-able pupils
 - consistently providing guidance in marking to show pupils how they can improve their work
 - informing older pupils about the levels at which they are working and how to reach the next level
 - matching homework to pupils' prior attainment and ensuring that it provides greater challenge for the more able.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below national expectations, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Attainment in Year 2 has been average in reading, writing and mathematics in recent years, indicating good progress from pupils' starting points. After a number of years when attainment in Year 6 was average in English and mathematics, it rose to above average in English in 2010. This was partly because of an increase in the number of pupils gaining higher levels in reading and writing. Boys, pupils of minority ethnic heritage, those for whom English is an additional language, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities reached high standards compared with similar groups nationally. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals also did comparatively well. Pupils continue to make outstanding progress in English, and attainment towards the end of Key Stage 2 is above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Lesson observations, pupils' work and the school's own data show that pupils are making good progress in other subjects to reach average standards and their progress in mathematics has begun to accelerate.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress in lessons because tasks are matched exactly to their prior attainment and teaching assistants are deployed exceptionally well. They help pupils by demonstrating skills very precisely, teaching subject specialist vocabulary and providing just the right challenge and encouragement. No time is wasted and teaching assistants continuously check how well pupils are doing, provide accurate prompting, and use carefully selected pictures and practical resources. In combination, these methods move pupils' learning on apace. As pupils see the progress that they are making, they rapidly gain in confidence and remain totally focused on their learning. This high quality support has enabled a number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make much faster progress in English

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and mathematics than that expected of all pupils nationally, for instance moving from Level 1 to Level 4 or 5 during their time in Key Stage 2. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language benefit from a wide range of strategies to support speedy acquisition of the language and they, too, receive excellent support from teaching assistants.

Pupils enjoy school a great deal. They are proud to be part of a happy and purposeful community in which everyone gets on so well, and understand the role they have to play in this. They are polite and thoughtful, and encourage one another to exercise self-control. As one said, 'It's important that we always behave well because we want the school to have a good reputation.' They know that their views are always taken seriously and that the staff will act quickly to resolve any concern they might express. Their excellent tolerance of and support for one another is central to the harmonious relationships within the school. Pupils show sensitivity in reflecting on their own and others' experiences, and have a very good insight into their similarities and differences. In this diverse community, different groups get on exceptionally well, confident in the knowledge that 'bullying doesn't really happen in this school'. Pupils are knowledgeable about healthy living and the importance of eating healthily. They readily take part in a good range of sports, and older pupils lead physical activities for younger ones at lunchtime. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, sponsoring a child in Bangladesh and another in Zimbabwe and making a difference through their involvement in a wide range of local events. Moreover, in their positive attitudes and readiness to work hard, they are very active partners with the staff in continuously improving the school. In lessons, pupils' excellent behaviour means that no time is lost: they concentrate exceptionally well and are enthusiastic learners. They make outstanding progress in developing a wide range of personal and social skills, including the ability to work independently or as part of a team. Together with the good progress they make in developing basic skills and their above average literacy levels, this ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The school has worked hard to achieve broadly average attendance and has seen a significant improvement in attendance over the past year.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning		
Taking into account:		
Pupils' attainment ¹		
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress		
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1	
Pupils' behaviour		
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles		
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community		
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to	2	
their future economic well-being		
Taking into account:	3	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

In English, the teaching of new skills is very precise and staff are rigorous in checking how much pupils understand. Lessons proceed at a fast pace and pupils are kept alert by tasks that fire their enthusiasm and require their active participation. This was evident in a lesson in Year 2 where pupils read with gusto a series of new words, rapidly jumping from one to another as the teacher pointed to them on the interactive whiteboard. In a Year 6 lesson, innovative teaching had pupils intrigued about the meaning behind Shaun Tan's book The Lost Thing and this led them to come up with imaginative ideas about how their own writing could develop. In other subjects, teachers miss no opportunity to extend pupils' writing skills. In mathematics, teachers make consistently good use of well-chosen practical resources to motivate and stimulate learning. They focus strongly on teaching mathematical vocabulary and setting tasks within real-life contexts. Group targets and sets of key facts for each year group help to focus work, but pupils who are about to take tests do not know their anticipated level in mathematics or how to exceed it. The school's thorough analysis of pupils' work has correctly identified inconsistencies in marking in mathematics.

The school matches the curriculum exceptionally well to its context and to pupils' academic and personal needs. Play is incorporated into the Year 1 curriculum to promote speaking and listening, and those who join the school with low prior attainment in communication and language receive speech and language therapy. The outstanding and

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highly structured way in which reading and spelling are taught benefits all pupils and particularly those learning English as an additional language. The curriculum is enriched through a range of clubs, visits and visitors such as writers and storytellers. Excellent provision for art, music and drama contributes significantly to pupils' learning, enjoyment and self-esteem, not least through the staging of a termly performance. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and moved to a higher year group for particular subjects, as well as taking part in a range of organised activities throughout the year. The provision of a bilingual assistant in Bengali is one of a wealth of methods for supporting pupils acquiring English.

Teaching assistants receive monthly training, which ensures that they are able to provide excellent support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school makes very focused use of external agencies to ensure support is tailored precisely to the needs of individual pupils. Indeed, there are many examples of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities whose learning and development have been transformed by the provision of exactly the right specialist help. Staff are exceptionally skilled in managing pupils' behaviour and they make use of a range of different certificates to encourage effort and reward regular attendance. As a result, the school has an orderly atmosphere despite a significant number of pupils having emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The breakfast club ensures those who attend get a positive and nourishing start to the day and offers a valuable service to parents and carers. The school provides exemplary support to those pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. It has excellent procedures to integrate those who join the school other than at the usual time, and to support pupils when they move from one class to the next and go on to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is passionate about making the school as good as possible for the pupils. He is supported in his vision and commitment by the staff and governing body. Those in key leadership roles have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. As well as thoroughly analysing data and setting challenging targets, they regularly observe teaching and learning. Senior leaders' detailed feedback to teachers reveals high expectations in their emphasis on which features of outstanding teaching are already in place and which ones need to be improved. This is leading to an increase in the amount of exceptional teaching. The school has successfully brought about improvements in English since the last inspection and leaders are systematically working through a series of well-considered actions to raise attainment in mathematics. Members of the governing

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body provide good support and challenge to senior leaders, particularly in their contribution to the school's strategic direction.

The school is rigorous in preventing discrimination and does a great deal to ensure all pupils receive equal opportunities. However, the fact that more-able pupils do less well than others in mathematics prevents this aspect of the school's work from being outstanding. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are exceptionally good. The school listens carefully to the views of parents, carers and pupils to ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible. Safeguarding permeates all aspects of school life and is strongly represented in the curriculum. Staff are very well trained, security is tight, and systems for child protection are extremely rigorous. Exemplary work with other agencies is a key factor in the way the school protects and cares for its pupils.

The school has outstanding partnerships which benefit its own pupils and extend its influence to other establishments. Work in collaboration with the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education provides seminars on the school's premises for all primary PGCE students, who come to look at its behaviour management and support for bilingual learners. The school also runs courses annually as part of the local authority's behaviour management support for newly qualified teachers and shares its expertise with professionals in other schools through its leading teacher for behaviour. The school's analysis of its intake and planning for community cohesion are exceptionally thorough: global links are particularly strong and the school is a powerful force for positive change in its local community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement		
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers		
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination		
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures		
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion		
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money		

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Over the last two years, attainment at the end of the Reception Year has been broadly average, and high in personal, social

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

and emotional development. Children make good progress because staff provide them with a variety of resources, and activities are effective in promoting development across the six areas of learning. Focused teaching about letters and sounds, reading and writing is developing children's literacy skills very well. There are good opportunities for children to talk about their experiences and they concentrate well for extended periods of time. They have plenty of opportunity to make choices and decisions for themselves and to exercise their independence.

Behaviour is generally good and children are willing to share, often playing productively in pairs and small groups. Teaching is good, with examples of adults demonstrating new skills well and providing careful supervision to ensure children's welfare. At the time of the inspection, there were some missed opportunities when adult intervention could have further accelerated children's learning. Staff conduct observations of children's learning but these are not as systematic as they might be, although the school has good overall systems for checking children's attainment and progress. Parents are kept well informed about their children's development and encouraged to contribute to learning at home. The outdoor area has been extended and is being developed further as part of a drive to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage			
Taking into account:			
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage			
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage			
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2		

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned the questionnaire express a high level of satisfaction with the school's work. Most agree or strongly agree with all the statements, and inspection findings endorse their positive views. A few parents and carers are uncertain about how well the school prepares their children for the future. Inspectors explored this carefully and found that pupils are well prepared academically and exceptionally well personally for the next stage of their education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Arbury 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 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 389 pupils registered at the school.

Statements		ngly ree	Ag	ree	Disa	gree		ngly gree
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	71	27	26	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	74	71	30	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	53	46	44	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	51	49	47	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	69	66	35	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	46	51	49	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	45	52	50	4	4	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)	53	51	32	31	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	52	47	45	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	57	34	33	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	43	54	52	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	66	63	35	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	70	29	28	1	1	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 all 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)				
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate	
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3	
Primary schools	9	44	39	7	
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11	
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3	
Special schools	35	43	17	5	
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9	
All schools	13	43	37	8	

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and suc	ccess of a pupil in their learning,
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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: 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.

■ 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 pupils' 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.



16 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arbury Primary School, Cambridge, CB4 2DE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent talking to you, visiting your lessons, looking at your work and seeing all the exciting things you do. You told us a lot about the school and this has helped in writing the report.

We found that you go to an excellent school and we could see why you are so proud of it. Arbury Primary is a colourful and interesting place to be. Everyone gets on very well with one another and the school celebrates what is different about people, as well as helping you to share your experiences. You enjoy school and behaviour is nearly always excellent. This helps you to learn because you concentrate very well in lessons and try hard. You are making good progress in most subjects, and fantastic progress in English. Those of you who need extra help with your learning or who are new to speaking English are making really good progress. This is because the school is so good at finding out exactly what help you need and the teaching assistants give you excellent support. The headteacher and other staff do a great job in managing the school, and they are working all the time to make it better for you. They are already doing a number of things to help you to make better progress in mathematics. Your progress in mathematics is good but you could do even better, just as you do in English. We have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that work in mathematics lessons and for homework is always difficult enough for those of you who find learning easy
- tell you more about how to improve your work when they mark your books
- let those of you in the older classes know what level you are working at and what you could do to move up to the next level.

You can help by continuing to do your best and always letting teachers know if work is too easy for you. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Goodchild Lead inspector

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