

# Ashton Vale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108913
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bristol City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	356449
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mo Roberts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	145
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Jack House
<b>Headteacher</b>	Vivienne Champeney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Avebury Road Ashton, Bristol Bristol BS3 2QG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 903 0383
<b>Fax number</b>	0117 903 0384
<b>Email address</b>	ashtonvalep@bristol.gov.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Six lessons were observed formally; seven teachers were seen. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's pupil tracking data, the governing body minutes and policy documents including those relating to safeguarding and school improvement planning. Pupils' writing books were a focus of attention and inspectors also visited the classes not involved in national tests to review these. Seventy-three parental, 85 pupil and 14 staff questionnaires were also analysed.

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

- The attendance rates of pupils and how the school promotes better attendance.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve pupils' attainment, especially in mathematics.
- The quality of the arrangements for pupils' transition between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

## Information about the school

Ashton Vale is an expanding primary school and is now closer to being an average-sized primary school. Two new classrooms opened in September and the school introduced single-age classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small minority from a variety of other ethnic groups. The school is part of the South West Bristol Co-operative Learning Trust. It has an average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Previously, an average proportion of pupils were known to be eligible for free school meals; this is now rising. A small group of Travellers attend the school when resident on the local site. The inspection took place during the national testing week. There is a breakfast club.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Ashton Vale is a good school that is adapting well to its changing circumstances. The children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the provision is rich and inviting and the level of children's enjoyment in learning is a joy to see. The recently introduced single year-group classes have a positive impact on pupils' confident development and good achievement. In all classes, the majority of pupils make good or better progress from their starting points. Teaching is securely good across the school. Lessons are exciting and teachers risk using different and interesting strategies to engage the pupils fully. Pupils were observed learning in lively ways, including outdoors. The curriculum is adapted well to the needs of the pupils and includes topics that the pupils say they enjoy thoroughly. Gardening, outdoor learning and writing were mentioned by many as favourite activities.

The school is a leader in promoting good pupil health by encouraging pupils' participation in plenty of sport and in making healthy eating choices. Outcomes are outstanding in this regard and school clubs include cooking. Pupils reported they feel exceptionally safe and they have participated with the members of the governing body in auditing the safety of the site. They, rightly, take great pride in their school; they grow in confidence due to the school's focus on building their self-esteem. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this results in good behaviour and thoughtful attitudes towards each other. When minor disputes arise, pupils are confident that all adults in the school can be counted on for help if they cannot settle it themselves. Older pupils care thoughtfully for younger ones.

Attainment has fluctuated over recent years, but pupils, who in the past have often entered with below-average skills levels in language and calculation, are beginning to close the gap with pupils nationally by the time they leave the school. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the proportion of pupils obtaining the higher levels in national tests. Relationships are exceptionally good; this, together with the small classes in upper Key Stage 2, is helping pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make accelerated progress. The strategies to improve mathematics are working in the current classes. The school has demonstrated it has a good capacity to improve because it identifies its key priorities and works hard to address them successfully, despite, for example, the recent building project and the changing circumstances.

Leaders and managers keep the school on a steady course while they try out new initiatives to help pupils achieve more across a broad spectrum of activity. They track pupils' progress diligently, but the analysis of data and the evaluation of initiatives is not sufficiently clear and easy for all to follow. The school is fully aware that its attendance rates are only satisfactory, but the exact link between attendance and the overall

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attainment of pupils has not been teased out fully. Despite the school's efforts, what has been done so far to raise attendance is not having sufficient impact. Registration times are not standardised and punctuality is not good enough. The school has not succeeded in discouraging parents and carers from taking pupils on holidays in term time. Overall, parents and carers have a good partnership with the school, but it is weakest in relation to supporting attendance. Governance is good and the governing body is a very strong supporter of the school. It has ensured the school is well set for the future and has made it a good model for promoting community cohesion. Consequently, pupils know how to cooperate to build a strong community. Pupils' aspirations are rising, but as yet their opportunities are still potentially restricted as pupils do not yet consistently meet national averages for attainment in mathematics and writing. Good arrangements are in place for all pupils to make a smooth transition to their next class at the end of the summer term.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attendance levels to the local authority target level and preferably to the national level by:
  - being consistent in the time the register is taken in all classes
  - promoting better punctuality
  - reducing the amount of absence due to term-time holidays.
- Reach national attainment levels more securely year on year by the time pupils leave aged 11 by:
  - increasing the analysis of trends within the pupils' tracking data and readjusting the provision regularly to meet any additional issues identified
  - ensuring rigorously that every pupil reaches their full academic potential
  - evaluating the impact of any new initiatives thoroughly to ensure they are helping in the drive to raise standards in writing and mathematics.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Over the last three years, the levels attained by pupils by the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been variable. However, there has been a rising trend in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels (Level 3 and Level 5) showing that potentially higher-attaining pupils are now being challenged appropriately. Overall, in 2009/10, the proportion who reached the national average in both English and mathematics was below the school's targets; this was convincingly attributed by the school to the small year group size and other very specific factors. The weakest area was mathematics and it is now being targeted successfully. Those pupils spoken to after the tests this year were confident they had tried their best and clearly felt well prepared. In the current classes, pupils are working hard and regular assessments in mathematics help identify problems promptly so support can be given. This was seen, for example, in an outstanding lesson on place value (the meaning of the position of digits within numbers). Pupils are now more on track to reach the expected national standard. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points. Writing standards are rising due the 'Big Write' programme, which gives pupils thorough feedback

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and helpful targets for improvement. Pupils of all ages were able to discuss their targets and, specifically, how these helped them improve their writing.

Outstanding outcomes in healthy living and keeping safe underpin pupils' growing confidence in themselves. They, clearly, thrive on the high levels of responsibility they are given. The pupils participate widely in community events and have numerous awards and successes to celebrate, such as the Eco Silver and Basic Skills awards. Pupils, thoroughly, enjoy their varied education. They were seen working in their lovely class gardens, which this year involve crop rotation. The gardens are a source of pride and endeavour where pupils of all abilities enjoy success. The pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the chickens they keep and it was clear that it helps them to understand the natural world and to take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils, in all lessons observed, understood how important it is to work hard. They are aware how to make money and use it wisely to support their own school and charities. They have exceptional teamworking skills, as was seen in their preparation for a debate about a school issue. Pupils are comfortable and confident users of information and communication technology (ICT), especially the newly acquired digital cameras. However, their future economic well-being is potentially limited by their final level of attainment. They say they feel well prepared for their transition to secondary school and their resilience is developed through the 'building learning power' strategy.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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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## How effective is the provision?

Strong relationships between adults and pupils encourage pupils to learn well. Teaching and learning are consistently good or better across the school, including in subjects such as physical education and history. The curriculum is well adapted and ICT is used in all subjects more widely than previously. It is also used effectively to stretch higher-attaining pupils' learning. Pupils develop good listening skills and are keen to answer well-devised and graded questions. The lessons observed were fast-paced and highly engaging, such as a lesson involving 'rock detectives' in science. Pupils take pride when they have been elected as an 'expert' on a particular subject and help others who find the subject more difficult. Assessment information is increasingly well used and involves pupils in thinking what they have learned securely and what needs developing further. Assessment in writing is driving improvement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils in their classes due to close monitoring. They were observed to have good support from the skilled teaching assistants. Teachers' planning is of high quality and it is clear how they plan for the different groups in their classes; providing extra support that helps targeted individuals of all abilities.

The school develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world through good meaningful links with other schools, such as in the Dominican Republic. The pupils develop empathy and understand how lucky they are to have all the resources they enjoy, such as the cookery room and the learning resource base. Enrichment opportunities through whole-school visits and the Year 5 residential experience stimulate the pupils' ideas successfully. ♦

Good care and support ensure the welfare and well-being of all pupils. It results in good personal development. Pupils whose contexts might make them vulnerable are well supported and the school follows the progress of its Travelling community so pupils can be welcomed and included when they return. Partnerships with services such as the speech and language specialists result in well-targeted support. Child protection arrangements and safeguarding are good. Health and safety requirements are met, including in the breakfast club.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior team has ensured that the school has consolidated and built on its effectiveness since the last inspection and has demonstrated a good capacity to sustain improvement. They have focused well on providing an environment where pupils are able

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to learn and make progress on a wide variety of dimensions. There is a strong and successful emphasis on promoting equality and inclusion for all pupils, irrespective of their background and ability. As a result, pupils feel valued and grow in confidence. The management team is evolving to cope with the expanded school roll. Leaders support new colleagues effectively; their calm, quiet and reflective approach is appreciated by staff and parents and carers alike. Raising pupils' attendance is an ongoing issue. The analysis of the trends within pupils' progress lacks sophistication, so it is as yet not possible to be absolutely certain that every group reaches their maximum potential, for example, including those with weaker attendance. Overall, the senior leaders and the governing body know the school well and have a clear understanding of what works and what needs to improve. They check on the quality of lessons and pupils' work and work with teachers to develop aspects of their practice. Good leadership in mathematics and literacy is contributing to improved standards in current classes. The governing body holds school leaders to account and members are strong ambassadors for the school in the wider community. It checks that safeguarding procedures are secure. Community cohesion is a strong feature of the school, with good involvement in local and regional competitions and projects, as well as interesting international links with specific schools.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children in the Reception class make good progress because they are well cared for and taught in a dynamic and joyful way and make a smooth transition into Year 1. Children that enter with skills levels below those expected for their age begin to catch-up rapidly. Recently, they have begun to enter Year 1 with basic skills that are more typical of those found nationally. The school, successfully, targets the weakest areas of communication, language and literacy skills, and calculation in mathematics. Parents and carers report good arrangements when children start school. The arrangements are helpful and



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supportive. Parents and carers like the warm way that children and families are welcomed. They say their children like coming to school and it is easy to see why. The atmosphere in the classroom is one of 'buzzy' excitement and children are eager to come in and have a go. The children's independence is promoted well through a good balance of activities directed by adults and others that children select for themselves. They learn to play cooperatively and are encouraged to consider each other's feelings. Children concentrate on activities for reasonable periods. The increasingly wide range of children's needs, including those of some who learn quickly, is well met. Throughout the setting, including in the very imaginative and interesting outdoor provision, children behave well because staff handle conflicts sensitively and calmly. All staff give good help, support and guidance if it is needed. ♦ Just occasionally, transitions between activities could be dealt with more swiftly to avoid any slackening of pace. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and meets the exacting standards the staff team set themselves. The assessment diaries are a wonderful celebration of children's accomplishments.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

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

## Views of parents and carers

There was a good response to the questionnaire showing parents and carers are strong supporters of the school. They are happy with the progress their children make. Children's politeness was commended. Parents and carers say the headteacher's door is always open and that they find teachers are receptive to parents' and carers' needs and reflect the headteacher's helpful approach. Parents and carers report pupils are keen to go to school and say they appreciate the after-school clubs which encourage an interest in sport and healthy lifestyles. Most respondents appreciated the inclusive nature of the school. Following up on issues raised, inspectors found that pupils were confident that staff could sort out bullying, even if it sometimes takes a little while. They were also confident that the school is active in dealing with misbehaviour when it occurs.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashton Vale 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 145 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	64	22	30	1	1	3	4
The school keeps my child safe	53	73	17	23	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	49	31	42	4	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	55	26	36	6	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	64	25	34	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	47	35	48	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	63	27	37	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)	30	41	40	55	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	44	39	53	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	51	28	38	7	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	40	40	55	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	63	25	34	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	68	21	29	0	0	2	3

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



12 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ashton Vale Primary School, Bristol BS3 2QG**

Thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing all your activities. We also liked talking to those of you who came to speak to us. Thank you for filling in the pupils' questionnaire and it was good to find out how much you enjoy school. We agree with you that you go to a good school. These are some of the best things about your school.

- The youngest children get off to a good start in their learning.
- Your school is a happy community and you are exceptionally knowledgeable about how to keep fit and healthy and safe.
- You have good opportunities to do lots of exciting things because the curriculum is broad and balanced with lots of opportunities for extra clubs and things like gardening and cooking.
- Your behaviour is good and you are well-mannered and learn a lot about the community around you and across the world.
- You listen and learn well in your lessons because they are interesting and lively and this means that you are making more progress than before and getting closer to the national standard in mathematics and writing.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are always looking for ways to improve the school and are supported well by the governing body. Staff have good plans to help when you move to your next classes.
- You are also guided and cared for well by all staff, including the teaching assistants and lunchtime staff.

So that your school gets even better, we have asked the teachers to do two things.

First, to improve your attendance by taking the register at the same time in all classes, making it very clear exactly when you will be considered as 'late' and by trying to persuade your parents and carers to avoid taking so many holidays in term time. Second, to keep checking to see you are all learning as much as you can. This is so you all reach the same level as other pupils typically do across the country; especially in your writing and mathematics.

Please help by coming to school on time. Good luck in your football final.

Yours sincerely

Mo Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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