

# Ashley Down Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108910
<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Bristol
<b>Inspection number</b>	377848
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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>	327
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Claire Foxwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laurence Pitt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Downend Road Bristol BS7 9PD
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed 11 teachers and visited 17 lessons. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, assessment information, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires returned by 105 parents and carers, 25 members of staff and 111 pupils.

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

- What the school is doing to enhance outcomes in writing across the school, especially for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and more-able boys.
- How the school is progressing in developing leadership and staffing structures across the two sites.
- Whether the school has maintained all the outstanding features seen in its previous inspection.

## Information about the school

This is a community school which, until 2009/10, was a junior school situated in Downend Road. The school has been expanded to become a split-site primary school with a new 210-place school building at Brunel Field. The Downend site has eight junior classes and the new building at Brunel Field currently has two Reception classes and one Year 1 class. Early Years Foundation Stage staff and children did not move into Brunel Fields until January 2011 as the new building was not ready. They were housed in temporary accommodation in a nearby cricket pavilion. The local authority plans to expand the new building to become a 420-place facility in the near future. Ashley Down Primary is also developing work with Ashley Down Infant School over 2011/12 towards a voluntary merger by September 2012.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs is average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with almost a third of pupils from minority ethnic families. A wide range of nationalities is represented and there are no pupils at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average.

**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?**

**1**

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

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Pupils are very happy, work hard and achieve exceptionally well to attain high standards. Staff provide outstanding care and support and work closely with parents and other organisations to support pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils, senior leaders, staff, governors, parents and the local community are justifiably proud of their school and work together as an outstanding team who strive constantly for excellence. Together they have taken very significant strides forward on their journey of improvement since their previous inspection. High quality teaching together with an innovative curriculum have resulted in a sustained trend of high attainment and achievement over the last five years, often through difficult circumstances in terms of accommodation. Leaders and governors carry out highly detailed and reflective evaluations to improve all subjects and aspects successfully. For example, they have correctly identified that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage require more chances to practise their early reading and writing skills to ensure that this provision is as high quality as the rest of the school. Taking into consideration a highly impressive track record over several years of exceptional achievement and attainment at the end of Year 6, the high staff morale and the exceedingly ambitious, challenging and determined leadership, the school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for future improvement.

A key reason for the school's exceptional success is that the headteacher's inspirational leadership encourages staff to have the highest possible aspirations for themselves and their pupils. His highly ambitious vision and total rejection of complacency are manifest in the exciting, stimulating and vibrant learning environment. Stunning displays convey the outstanding achievements of all groups of pupils and the high expectations of staff. Parents speak in glowing terms about the school's considerable achievements. One parent, wrote, 'This is an incredible school which not only produces confident, well-educated children but also instils in them excellent values and a very positive attitude to learning'.

Teachers skilfully use assessment information to plan exciting lessons which meet the needs of pupils. Pupils' excellent behaviour, attendance and attitudes ensure happy, successful and productive learning for all. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and their outstanding academic skills and personal qualities prepare them exceptionally well for later learning and life.

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

- Enhance the Early Years Foundation Stage provision to outstanding by:
  - making more use of the outdoor environment to enable children to experience all the areas of learning.
  - increasing planned opportunities for children in Reception to practise their early reading and writing skills
  - making sure all adults know precisely when to interact with children to accelerate their learning and language development in both child-initiated learning and structured play.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, say that they love school because, 'teachers make our lessons fun'. Inspection findings endorse pupils' views. All groups of pupils make excellent progress. School baseline data show that, on entry, some children are below the age-related expectations in writing. By the time pupils leave Year 6 their attainment is exceptionally high. Observations by inspectors and other evidence presented by the school confirm that pupils' attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Exceptionally well-organised additional intervention programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure they also do very well. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make outstanding progress because they receive high quality support from a Somali teaching assistant.

In the majority of lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were making excellent progress. They show exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and impressive levels of sustained concentration. A strength in many lessons is the way pupils support each other, for example as 'learning partners'. All pupils work extremely well together and are clearly very involved and engaged in their learning. They have an excellent understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve because teachers' marking is exceptionally detailed. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils explained how their regular 'focus work' sessions enable them to concentrate on their individual improvement areas such as spelling, handwriting and guided reading. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they say they feel very safe in school. Older pupils are excellent role models for younger ones and they are very proud of and highly committed to their school community, conscientiously acting as house captains and learning council members. They relish belonging to Eco Club and recently made a successful bid to obtain a £1,000 grant to improve the school environment. They are very clear about internet dangers and have an exceptionally good understanding of why some foods are healthier than others. They enjoy healthy snacks from the fruit tuck shop run by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils and benefit from high-calibre specialist teaching in physical education and games. Pupils' relationships with staff and each other are excellent and pupils show great empathy for others by

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raising considerable amounts for various local, national and global charities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they think deeply about a wide range of issues. For example, they describe recent 'Frontier Days' where they clearly learnt to understand about what it means to be an Ethiopian refugee.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers' excellent subject knowledge and high expectations ensure that lessons are exciting, stimulating and challenging. Hence pupils become engrossed and highly active learners. Planning is outstanding because it is very detailed and shows exactly how pupils' different learning needs are to be met. Lessons move at a very swift pace, for example Year 3 pupils made excellent progress in using powerful nouns, personification and similes when writing poems about what they would put into their dream jars. Phrases such as 'Glistening happiness like shining sugar,' and 'Crystal balls that wink out the future,' illustrate how the teacher skilfully inspired the pupils to select and use exciting vocabulary.

Pupils' interest and engagement are frequently captured by interesting resources and stimuli, such as an interactive whiteboard presentation to assist Year 5 boys in their recounts about their Spanish Armada puppetry and animation workshop. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils say they really enjoy being in separate boys' and girls' groups for literacy. This strategy was introduced last year and, because it successfully and substantially raised more-able boys' writing skills, has been retained this year.

<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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Teachers make excellent use of assessment information to plan lessons to match pupils’ various abilities precisely. Individuals, as well as groups of pupils who require further support or increased challenge, are swiftly identified and highly effective measures are put in place to meet needs. Pupils’ progress is meticulously tracked and evaluated to identify the progress made by different groups. All pupils know what their targets are and they are exceptionally well involved in their own learning demonstrating a maturity beyond their years when they confidently discuss ways to become even better learners. There are clear and shared end-of-year expectations for writing for every year group and pupils have an exceptional understanding of how to reach their goals.

The headteacher and staff have successfully implemented an innovative commercial curriculum which links very closely with the school’s core values of ‘Respect, Commitment, Reflection and Collaboration’. This is manifest in the outstanding way pupils explore curriculum areas, are completely engrossed in their learning and make meaningful links between subjects. Many trips, clubs and enrichment activities bring pupils’ learning to life. There is a strong tradition of high achievement in music and sport. The excellent partnerships with other local schools enable pupils to participate in a range of exciting projects such as literacy, numeracy and storytelling workshops. Pupils receive exemplary care because each child is known, respected and valued. Older pupils have many chances to participate in interesting projects with their local secondary schools and successful transition plans are implemented to ensure potentially vulnerable pupils and their families are supported when they move schools. Highly effective support for all pupils enables them to make the very best of all the opportunities provided. Staff provide excellent support to pupils with additional needs. One parent commented: ‘My child is currently being assessed for a specific learning difficulty. The class teacher and the special educational needs leader have been enormously supportive both to me and my child.’

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and the governing body form an impressive team whose specific areas of expertise combine perfectly to make this school highly successful. There is a tremendous team spirit and all staff are totally committed to providing the very best for all pupils. There are clear policies and procedures underpinning all aspects of the school’s work. Senior leaders provide a relentless and highly effective focus on improving teaching to ensure pupils achieve

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as well as they possibly can. They are fully aware of any difference in progress and attainment of various groups of pupils. Through the use of early identification strategies and highly effective interventions, they have succeeded in rapidly narrowing gaps in the achievement of different groups. The outstanding support for pupils whose circumstances have made them potentially vulnerable show the school’s strong commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, which enables all pupils to achieve well, whatever their difficulties. Detailed planning of exciting and memorable curriculum events that encourage all pupils are paying massive dividends. The welfare of all pupils is secure. Policies are constantly reviewed and updated to ensure pupils’ safety. Staff and governors have an excellent awareness of safeguarding measures. Community cohesion is promoted very well and pupils have high levels of cultural awareness and respect for each other’s different faiths and cultures. The highly effective partnership with parents and carers is evident in parents’ extremely positive comments. Parents’ views are an integral part of school life as they are consulted about future plans and receive regular updates about school development. One parent wrote: ‘Our children are really happy in this great learning community. They are supported and challenged and well on their way to being very successful lifelong learners.’

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage accommodation is very bright and colourful. Highly attractive resources, such as a wooden castle, have been carefully selected and purchased to engage and interest children. Most children start school with skills that are similar to those of other four-year-olds. A small number of children have lower early writing skills. The school’s data show that the majority of Reception children make good progress and attain above the expected levels on entry to Year 1. Inspection observations indicate that provision varies between the two classes,



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particularly in the way children’s structured play activities are planned and organised. A carefully designed doctor’s surgery and waiting room, complete with magazines, in one class enables children to play in a very purposeful, structured way and to develop new vocabulary with words such as ‘appointment’ and ‘patient’. Some adults act as enthusiastic play partners and join in children’s role play skilfully to enrich children’s learning, language and development but this is not yet consistent practice by all staff. When children are left without structured adult interaction their play can sometimes become over boisterous, which restricts their learning.

Staff observe and record children’s learning and development effectively and very attractive ‘learning journals’ chart children’s progress in all the areas of learning. Children experience an interesting curriculum, although they require more opportunities to practise their reading and early mark-making and writing skills to ensure that they always form their letters correctly. Part of the outdoor area has been covered and provides satisfactory outdoor learning opportunities, but staff acknowledge that there is more work to do to make this area more appealing and to ensure that children regularly experience outdoor activities in all the areas of learning. An excellent partnership is quickly formed with parents and carers, who appreciate being able to take their children into the classrooms each morning and enjoy attending special presentations of their children’s work.

*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:	
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**

A third of the families at the school responded to the questionnaire, which is an average proportion. All parents and carers say that they are happy with their child’s experience at the school and they feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and that teaching is good. They appreciate and value their school. They all feel that the school helps them to support their children’s learning and that their children are encouraged to have a healthy lifestyle and are well prepared for future learning. Inspectors agree completely with parents’ and carers’ positive views. Five per cent of the parents and carers who completed the questionnaire did not feel that the school dealt effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors looked closely at this and found that staff manage any unacceptable behaviour exceptionally well. A very small number of parents and carers raised other concerns, which were summarised and raised with the school without identifying any individual.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashley Down 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 327 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	74	26	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	71	29	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	68	65	34	32	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	66	63	34	32	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	78	74	25	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	74	70	28	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	62	37	35	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)	61	58	36	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	64	61	36	34	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	56	36	34	4	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	57	35	33	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	75	71	23	22	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	81	77	21	20	0	0	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.**



5 December 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ashley Down Primary School, Bristol, BS7 9PD**

We really enjoyed visiting your school and I am writing to thank you for two very interesting days. We agree completely with you and your parents that you go to an outstanding school.

These are the things we found out.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard and play very happily together.
- You are taught exceptionally well, your lessons are fun and interesting and you reach very high standards by the end of Year 6.
- Year 6 pupils are excellent role models for younger children as they demonstrate 'Respect, Commitment, Reflection and Collaboration' at all times.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors lead and manage the school extremely well.
- You all enjoy learning very much and are given many exciting things to do in your special curriculum.
- The adults keep you very safe in school and you learn to eat healthily and enjoy playing lots of sport.

To make the school even better, we have asked the adults if they can continue to enhance the provision for children in the Reception classes, so they have an exciting outdoor area, practise their early reading, speaking and writing more and always enjoy carefully planned and structured learning and play activities.

You can help by continuing to work hard and keeping up your excellent standards.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox  
Lead inspector

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