

Avishayes Primary School and Early Years Centre

Fairway Rise, Chard, Somerset, TA20 1NS

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average. There has been a small improvement in progress over the last year, and it is now similar to that of other pupils nationally. Pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Too many lessons do not offer the correct degree of challenge to all groups of pupils. The planning and preparation of lessons are sometimes not precise enough to promote good learning. Ineffective planning also leads to a slow pace in some lessons.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage does not give children a good enough start to their education, particularly in developing their reading and writing skills.
- The work of leaders and managers does not have sufficient impact on teaching and progress. Weaknesses noted in checks made on teaching are not followed up rigorously enough, so there are too many inconsistencies in teachers' work.
- The governing body is supportive and has a developing understanding of the school but it has not challenged leaders and managers sufficiently about raising pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths:

- Parents, carers and pupils rightly consider pupils' behaviour to be good. Pupils are well cared for. The school is safe, has a positive atmosphere and there is virtually no bullying.
- Parents and carers are increasingly engaged with their children's education and hold very favourable views of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 10 teachers and undertook three joint observations with senior staff.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, teachers, the headteacher, senior managers and representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors examined numerous school documents including policies, assessment information, planning documents and records of all kinds.
- The views of 57 parents and carers expressed on the online Parent View questionnaire were analysed.

Inspection team

John Carnaghan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Taylor	Additional Inspector
Gary Kirkley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Avishayes is an average-sized primary school. It has a higher than average turnover of pupils.
- The school became an academy in September 2011. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is close to the national average.
- Most pupils are White British but almost a tenth of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups, mainly from Other White backgrounds. A similar proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the level of pupils' achievement and the proportion of good or better teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan lessons in greater depth so that the correct degree of challenge is offered to all groups of pupils
 - keep up a brisk pace throughout all lessons so that the quality of pupils' learning is maintained
 - set high expectations for pupils' progress in lessons.
- Improve the Early Years Foundation Stage to make sure that children get a good start to their education by:
 - developing children's reading and writing through more regular, focused teaching of sounds and letters
 - providing a greater emphasis on teacher-led activities
 - improving all adults' understanding of the best ways to support children's development.
- Strengthen the monitoring of teaching and use the picture of strengths and weaknesses that emerges to share good practice and rigorously follow up areas for concern.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and capabilities at below the levels expected for their age. Teaching does not consistently promote good progress and children enter Year 1 with attainment that is below average. An overemphasis on independent play at the expense of more formal teaching means children do not make enough progress in developing their reading and writing and this has an adverse effect on their progress as they start on the National Curriculum.
- The national phonics reading check in 2012 indicated that in Year 1 pupils' attainment in reading was below average. However, since then these pupils have been well taught how to blend letters together to form words and now read with some fluency. Pupils' reading attainment in Year 2 is at the national average.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has risen from below average levels in 2012; current Year 6 pupils are on target to reach average levels of attainment in English and above average levels in mathematics. This reflects stronger teaching in Key Stage 2. The previous gap in performance where girls did much better than boys has been addressed by developing learning activities that are more attractive to males, such as using computers more often in lessons.
- The progress that pupils make has improved a little in the current year. Given pupils' starting points, their rate of progress is similar to the national average. Their progress is a little better than average in English and a little below average in mathematics. This represents achievement that requires improvement.
- The school provides effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Their needs are identified early and many benefit from well-judged help from teaching assistants and other adults. This ensures they make similar progress to their peers. The same good support helps pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language to make progress that is consistent with that of other pupils.
- Those pupils eligible for the pupil premium benefit from a number of initiatives that are designed to broaden their horizons and improve their educational opportunities, such as being funded to go on trips to places of educational interest and having well-trained support staff to address their individual learning needs. The attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals, reflected in national assessments, is lower than that of their peers in both English and mathematics. However, the gap in progress between this group and other pupils in the school is very small.
- The strength of support given to disadvantaged pupils ensures there is equality of opportunity for all and that no pupils are subject to discrimination.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching quality varies considerably from class to class and too many lessons are inadequate or require improvement.
- Typically, weaker teaching is not thoroughly planned. This lack of structure has numerous implications. In particular, the pace of such lessons is often hesitant and some groups of pupils are not properly challenged. Weak planning also means that teachers' expectations are often too low and pupils are not sure what is expected of them or how to improve their work.
- A Key Stage 2 lesson provided a good example of some of these weaknesses. Pupils had good opportunities to assess their own work and reflect on it. However, there was a lack of urgency, with deadlines being set by the teacher and then forgotten. Limited planning meant that very little time was allowed for an effective closing session to check and consolidate what pupils had learned.
- The planning of lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage often does not always take into account the needs of the children. Adults do not intervene sufficiently in children's activities to promote the best possible learning. Children initiate too many activities; they are frequently

allowed to follow their interests at the expense of learning. This lack of structure means that children's progress is not fast enough and the development of their reading is too slow.

- Some teaching is good or outstanding. These lessons are thoroughly planned with brief, varied activities to keep up the pace and challenging work to engage all pupils, including the most able. In these cases, pupils are well managed and the teacher's courtesy rubs off on the pupils.
- In the best lessons, teachers question pupils closely to check their learning and adjust what they do to accelerate or slow the pace of activities to meet the circumstances. Typically good teaching sets high expectations that pupils strive to meet.
- In general, the marking of pupils' work is thorough and offers helpful advice. The well-organised setting of objectives in many lessons helps teachers and pupils make clear assessments and makes sure that most pupils' books are orderly and well presented.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, parents and carers correctly consider behaviour at the school to be good. Lessons are usually calm and orderly and pupils are responsive to teachers' instructions because they listen carefully. There is little disruption to learning because pupils display positive attitudes in the classroom, although they occasionally become too talkative when teaching is boring and fails to engage them.
- Pupils move around the building and outside areas sensibly and playtimes are harmonious occasions. Relationships are positive and pupils get on notably well with one another and with adults. Pupils appreciate the responsibilities they are given, such as acting as mentors to their younger peers.
- Bullying, racism and other forms of victimisation are almost unknown and pupils are very confident that, should any incidents occur, the school would move quickly and effectively address them.
- Pupils are regularly briefed on how to stay safe in their daily lives. For example, they know about the potential dangers of the internet and are aware of the possibilities of cyber bullying and what to do if they come across it. Pupils correctly regard the school as a safe place in which to grow and learn.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The way the school follows up weaknesses in teaching is not rigorous enough. Staff whose teaching requires improvement or is inadequate are not fully held to account or given enough assistance to improve, so perpetuating the weaknesses. In practice this leads to a wide variability in the quality of lessons.
- There have been too few rigorous checks on the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has not identified and acted on weaknesses in teaching in this area and this has, in turn, held back children's progress.
- Leaders and managers make regular and largely accurate checks on teachers' performance in Key Stages 1 and 2 by visiting lessons and looking at pupils' books. These checks are carefully recorded and have led to some improvements, for example in the marking of pupils' work.
- The subjects taught at the school have been recently revised as a 'creative curriculum' that promotes learning through topics studied, often involving parents and carers and, sometimes, the local community. This approach has fired pupils' interest. For example, the Olympic Games were celebrated as each class researched a different country and reported back on its culture, language and customs. An arts and music festival included a visit from an illustrator and visits to a zoo. The school has also put in place initiatives to promote reading and writing such as 'Bug Club' which allows online reading and can be accessed from home.
- There are good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The active school council involves every pupil and meets regularly to consider pupils' concerns and

interests, such as fund raising for charity. Pupils' social and moral development is well promoted through playground buddies who ensure pupils do not fall out with one another and that break times are calm and enjoyable.

- The headteacher works closely with other leaders and managers who share her commitment to pupils, parents and carers and show a growing knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has improved its understanding of pupils' achievement by using information from tests to pick out patterns and variations in progress. It is starting to use this information to question teachers about pupils' achievement and to prioritise in its planning for the future. Pupils' achievement is starting to rise slowly and the school has the capacity for further improvement.
- The local authority provides adequate support for this academy.
- The school has worked with success to engage parents and carers more fully in their children's education. Initiatives, such as offering a prize of an electronic reader, encourage parents and carers to attend meetings at school. The inspection questionnaire indicated a very high degree of parental satisfaction.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has well-organised systems to check up on the school and governors regularly visit to observe teaching and other aspects of school life. They are fully aware of how teachers' performance is aligned to their pay progression.
 - Regular training opportunities keep governors up to date with educational developments. Effective briefings mean they have a good understanding of pupils' achievement shown in the school's performance data and national assessment information. However, they have not acted rigorously enough to challenge the school to improve pupils' attainment and progress.
 - The governing body has been closely involved in allocating where pupil premium funds are spent and has evaluated the results of this group of pupils to establish that the funding provides good value for money.
 - Governors are rigorous in ensuring that the school is a safe place to be. Thorough, systematic checks ensure that the school meets all safeguarding requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137174
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	413034

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

Type of school	Academy convertor
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Di Goldsmith
Headteacher	Nic Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	None
Telephone number	01460 63050
Fax number	01460 66532
Email address	office@avishayes.somerset.sch.uk

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