

Ashcott Primary School

Ridgeway, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 9PP

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well. All groups of pupils make good progress, from below average starting points in their time at the school.
- Teaching is consistently good, because teachers plan lessons which make learning enjoyable. The quality of teaching in some lessons is outstanding.
- Teaching assistants give expert help to pupils and work effectively with teachers to boost the progress of lower ability and vulnerable pupils.
- The links made with other schools, both in the United Kingdom and abroad and the use made of visitors to the school, support strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well around school, supporting each other with kindness and care, but behaviour in lessons sometimes does not match these high levels.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They comment very positively about the way pupils who join the school at other than the usual times are enthusiastically welcomed into the school community.
- The school is well led by a highly respected and caring headteacher. The leadership team sets high expectations for pupils' progress and for the quality of care, support and guidance, about which parents comment very positively.
- Governors play a full part in helping the school to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils can become distracted in lessons when the pace of learning falters.
- Higher ability pupils, especially in literacy, do not achieve as well as they could when the pace of lessons slows.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to show where they have made the improvements asked of them in their teachers' marking.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by six teachers and support staff. Most were joint observations, undertaken with senior leaders. The inspector also listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read and examined the quality of work in the books of pupils across the school.
- The inspector held meetings and had discussions with pupils, senior leaders, members of the school staff and three members of the governing body. He also held telephone conversations with a consultant who supports the school and was previously the school improvement partner and with a representative from the local authority.
- Information from the school's website and the views of 28 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account in planning and conducting the inspection. The inspector also had informal discussions with 14 parents before school. Two letters from parents to the lead inspector and a discussion, at a parent's request, were also taken into account.
- The inspector took into account 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents. In particular he studied the school development plan, the school's systems for improving teaching and learning, health and safety documentation, teachers' curriculum planning, documents relating to the procedures to check the performance of staff and the school's systems for checking pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Paul Garvey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All current pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has received a range of awards including the International Schools award, which it has held for the last 13 years, the Healthy Schools award, the Award for Primary Geography at silver level, and the Activemark.
- In the current term, support has been given to the school by a national leader of education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding and raise achievement so that it is outstanding in all years by:
 - giving higher-ability pupils, especially in English, every opportunity to extend their work and produce the highest quality work they can so that by Year 6 more pupils achieve Level 5 or above
 - increasing the pace of lessons so that all pupils are fully engaged
 - ensuring that pupils show where they have responded to improvement points given by their teacher so pupils take full notice of the improvement points given in marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils who join the school in the Reception class do so with skills below those typical for their age. Some pupils arrive with very low literacy skills. They make good progress and by the end of Year 6 reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics.
- A significant proportion of pupils join the school at other times, either during Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2, often with below average skills and knowledge for their age. Excellent care and support enable these pupils to settle quickly into school and make good progress. However, their attainment by the end of Year 6 is somewhat lower than that of their peers who started in Reception.
- In assessments at the end of 2012 and 2013 pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium did not do as well as their peers. The gap was equivalent to more than one term's progress. However, in 2010 and 2011, the attainment of eligible pupils was much higher than that of their peers. Current tracking information shows the progress of all eligible pupils is more rapid than that of their peers in every year group.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more rapid than would be expected nationally because of the extra support they receive, both in and out of class.
- The progress of higher ability pupils is not always as rapid as it could be. More pupils are capable of reaching Level 5, especially in English, than have done so in the last two years.
- Parents recognise the benefits of the well-organised transition from pre-school into Reception. 'My child can't wait to get here on a morning and cried when he couldn't go in at half-term', was a very typical parental comment. This, combined with excellent support and a wide range of interesting activities which are well tailored to children's abilities, ensures that progress is rapid through the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills approaching those expected for their age in most areas and the good progress they have made in Reception continues through Year 1. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have made better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading across the school and this is supported by a range of reading support. Parent volunteers and Year 6 pupil 'reading stars' give one-to-one support for weaker readers. Older pupils run a well-attended storytelling and story-writing club and a member of staff runs a similarly popular reading group for pupils in Years 3 to 6, in parallel with local schools. As a result, pupils' progress in reading is strong.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good because teachers match work closely to their needs. Many reach close to expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 from some low levels on entry.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding.
- In the best lessons, all pupils are fully engaged and make very rapid progress. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were studying a detective mystery in order to learn how to write for a purpose. The imaginative evidence task and clever 'evidence' the pupils were provided with allowed pupils of all abilities to give free rein to their imagination. The writing produced, especially from the higher ability pupils, was consequently of a very high quality.
- Teachers work effectively with skilled teaching assistants to support all pupils and especially those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, and disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs.
- In a Reception class, several pupils with special educational needs were being expertly supported by a teaching assistant in a small group. One child, on being asked to recognise letter combinations with a new sound, confidently said 'I can do that!' and went on to demonstrate that his confidence in his abilities was well-founded .
- In lessons where the pace drops, some pupils can become distracted and in a few cases, this disturbs other pupils. In such lessons, this slower pace can also lead to higher ability pupils not being fully challenged for long enough, or being left to do the same task for too long.
- Teachers give detailed comments through marking, using both praise and points for improvement. However, there is not enough opportunity for pupils to show in later work where they have made the improvements asked of them. Thus the opportunity is missed for the establishment of a pupil–teacher dialogue through marking and this can lead to some pupils repeating mistakes.
- Teachers provide a very good range of resources in class to support both literacy and numeracy. Literacy 'passports' provide resources for pupils to check their grammar and punctuation themselves. This allows them to get 'unstuck' more easily and frees the teacher to check on the progress of others.
- School leaders monitor pupils' progress through regular meetings with teachers. This detailed monitoring allows staff to accurately target support and intervention at pupils who may be in danger of falling behind.
- The broad curriculum is used well by teachers to boost progress. For example, a combined Year 3 and Year 4 class spent the first day of the inspection visiting a museum. All pupils said how much they had enjoyed the trip and next day a set of well-constructed activities helped many pupils to produce some high quality writing about the Romans in Somerset.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. They are keen to learn and proud of their achievements. Their good behaviour in lessons allows them to make consistently good progress.
- Around school, pupil behaviour is excellent and they display high levels of self-reliance. Pupils say how much they enjoy welcoming newcomers into the school community.
- Pupils support each other extremely well and are keen to take on responsibilities such as house leaders, play leaders, office assistants and 'buddies' to younger pupils. The school council has made important decisions, for example about the purchase of equipment for the 'trim trail' around the school football pitch, which pupils use to help them keep fit.
- In class, pupils say that their learning can occasionally be disturbed by the behaviour of a few pupils, though they also say that this behaviour is always well managed by staff.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying, although a very small minority of parents disagreed with the statement that the school deals well with bullying through the online questionnaire, (Parent View). Pupils have a good knowledge of different types of bullying, including e-safety. They referred to training they have received and they know how to keep themselves safe online.
- The very large majority of pupils and parents agree that this is a safe school where care, support and guidance are excellent. Pupils are confident that adults in the school will help them with any

problem they have. Indeed, pupils describe their teachers and support staff as being 'amazing'.

- The school has managed to improve attendance rates over the last three years to above average. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and how safe they feel in school.
- Pupils say they are very keen on sport. They enjoy competing against other schools and have success against much larger primary schools. The playground adventure equipment was observed being enthusiastically used and most pupils were involved in physical activities at break and lunchtime. Regular physical education lessons, as well as a wide range of extra-curricular sports clubs make a good contribution to pupils' physical and mental well-being.

The leadership and management are good

- The effective headteacher, supported by a strong leadership team, has maintained the school's position as a good school, through a clear focus on school improvement. There is ample capacity in the staff and in the leadership team for further improvement.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is assiduous and it has led to improvements in the amount of outstanding teaching seen. However, improvements are still needed, if the quality of teaching is to become outstanding overall.
- Leaders have high expectations of staff to produce outstanding achievement among their pupils and progress across the school is good. Performance management is rigorous and current targets for pupils' progress are more demanding than those set previously.
- The timetable has been organised to maximise the opportunities for staff to work together. Senior leaders and teachers together check whether pupils are making sufficient progress. This has engendered a strong sense of teamwork. There were no negative comments in the 18 staff questionnaires analysed. On the contrary, comments such as: 'I'm fortunate to work in a happy, caring environment' and 'I love coming to work every day' were the norm.
- The curriculum is well designed to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Strong links have been established with three other schools in Kenya, China and France, which help pupils to learn about other world cultures. A link has also recently been established with a multicultural school in Bristol to help pupils to learn about other cultures within the United Kingdom.
- There are regular curricular enhancement days. For example, visitors have been invited into school to talk to pupils about different types of bullying and careers education. There are also opportunities for pupils to play a range of musical instruments and to sing in the school choir. Extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is provided to enable all pupils to play music together, effectively supporting their spiritual, moral and social education.
- Sport in the school is very strong, with many opportunities for pupil participation. These opportunities have been broadened by a range of measures, financed through the Primary School Sports funding, including entry to local leagues in football, cricket and rounders. Experts have been brought in to train staff, to make the new sports provision sustainable into the future.
- The school has had support from a national leader in education, as the local authority had identified weaknesses in the 2012 results. The school has found this helpful, but it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the support.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors make a strong contribution to school improvement and they have a good range of skills and experience. They know how well pupils, including how those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are progressing. Governors have a good knowledge of the performance management of staff and how this is linked to progress through the pay scales. Their knowledge of how pupil premium pupils are progressing is less strong however, they manage pupil premium funding prudently and this has enabled them to give valuable support to eligible pupils to accelerate their progress. Together with senior leaders, they have already planned how they will use the extra primary school sports funding to improve facilities and to further increase pupils' excellent levels of participation in school sports. Governors gain a good

knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching through regular visits to lessons. Safeguarding procedures are undertaken to a good standard.

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	123678
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	426846

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Evans
Headteacher	Richard Briar
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 November 2010
Telephone number	01458 210464
Fax number	01458 210319
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