

Ashley Down Primary School

Downend Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9PD

Inspection dates

30–31 January 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have not maintained an outstanding standard of education for the school's pupils. However, as a result of current leaders' actions, the school has improved well after a dip in its performance since its last inspection. Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 has improved to be above the national average.
- The current governing body provides strong strategic leadership for the school. Governors hold core responsibilities; they challenge and hold leaders to account rigorously.
- Leadership is distributed. Phase and middle leaders understand their roles and responsibilities well. Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. Action plans are focused on the right aspects for improvement. Leaders are successful in ensuring that pupils make good progress across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Large proportions of pupils leave the school with the skills and knowledge that are expected for their age. However, on occasions, teaching does not challenge some pupils well enough. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.
- Pupils experience a wide range of subjects. Pupils are usually well motivated and focused on their learning.
- Teachers' assessments are usually accurate. Most teaching builds on what pupils already know, can do, and understand. However, on occasions teachers do not adjust their teaching or systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding. Consequently, teachers do not deal with misconceptions when they arise. So, pupils' learning slows.
- Teaching in the early years is good. Children have positive relationships with their peers and adults. Children enjoy their learning and attend well. As a result, children are making good progress from their different starting points.
- The strategic leadership of the provision and teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) does not enable these pupils to make consistently good progress. Leaders' guidance and advice about the impact of teaching for these pupils is not yet effective.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend well. Pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average. Few pupils are persistently absent.
- Safeguarding is effective. Administrative weaknesses identified at the beginning of the inspection were rectified.
- Almost every parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the strategic leadership of provision and teaching for pupils with SEND is strengthened so that teaching of these pupils is closely matched to their needs.
- Ensure that teachers' assessments are finely tuned and adjusted so that middle-attaining pupils and the most able pupils receive the challenge they need to achieve their full potential.
- Ensure that teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding of the concepts taught, so that teachers give clearly directed and timely support to pupils when misconceptions arise.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has grown considerably since its last inspection as a result of an additional key stage being added. Leaders' actions have ensured that pupils' achievement has improved across the last three years. However, leaders have not maintained an outstanding standard of education for the school's pupils.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. Leaders have an acute understanding of the strengths and areas that require further work. The school's actions plans have been strengthened in recent months. This has brought clarity for middle leaders and teachers, who are united with senior leaders in implementing each part of the school-development plan.
- Leaders are taking robust action to overhaul how the pupil premium funding is spent. Governors have commissioned an external review of the pupil premium to assure themselves that everything is being done to support this group of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as other pupils in the past. Leaders have refined the professional discussions they have with teachers about the impact this funding has on raising pupils' academic progress in every class. Increasingly, this group of pupils is making gains in learning. Differences in academic progress between disadvantaged pupils and others are steadily diminishing.
- The additional sports premium funding is used well. It has improved teachers' subject knowledge and skills in teaching sport. There are a range of competitive and team sports on offer.
- Phase leaders apply their strong knowledge of national curriculum subjects to ensure that curriculum requirements are met in full. They are developing their skills in the strategic and operational leadership of each phase increasingly well. However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching in phases where teachers are relatively new to the year group or profession. Nevertheless, phase leaders provide strong support to develop teachers' subject knowledge and this is resulting in continuous improvement. Teachers feel very supported by the training and coaching they receive. This is helping to remedy any relative shortfalls in teaching quickly.
- A range of leaders check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, they do not check the progress that pupils make from their different starting points well enough. As a result, senior leaders, including phase leaders, have not yet been successful in ensuring that pupils with SEND make strong progress over time. Their work to ensure that pupils who have previously average and high attainment receive learning that is closely shaped to their needs is proving mostly effective. However, this work is very recent and so this remains a priority for improvement.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils understand how the curriculum supports them to become young citizens, show tolerance, and celebrate difference. They were exceptionally keen to share information about how motivating they find the wider curriculum offer. Pupils value the opportunity to work practically, and to deepen their understanding of concepts taught.
- Leadership of provision and teaching for pupils with SEND lacks rigour. As a result,

some pupils with SEND do not receive the focused support they need to make good progress.

Governance of the school

- The leadership of the governing body has changed in the last 12 months. The chair and his team provide strong strategic leadership of the school. Their challenge results in school-wide improvement. For example, governors have helped strengthen the leadership structure by introducing the phase leadership model. In turn, this has bolstered leadership capacity to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time.
- Governors take their roles very seriously. They do not shy away from having challenging conversations. Governors with core responsibilities meet with key staff to discuss the impact of leaders' work. Minutes of these meetings show how and why they hold leaders to account, what actions they expect to see, and when they are to be carried out. Governors check that actions have been completed.
- Governors use all the information they have to monitor the trends in pupils' achievement. They take a full role in meeting with local authority representatives, so they can hear first-hand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This ensures that there is no time lag between gaining external validation of the school's performance and next-step actions being planned, implemented and checked for impact.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Current governors check the arrangements for staff vetting checks through detailed auditing of the school's work. Because of the quality assurance from the governors, staff vetting checks have been strengthened and are fully complete and in line with current legislation. However, some minor weaknesses of record-keeping in the single central record were resolved during the inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that staff fully understand what to do if pupils are at risk of harm. Staff apply their safeguarding training well and demonstrate a clear understanding of how to refer on concerns. Leaders responsible for safeguarding work readily with external agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils get the support they need to stay safe and mitigate pupils' risk of harm.
- Recently, leaders have transferred their records relating to safeguarding pupils to a new system. However, they did not ensure that previous records were added. As a result, some weaknesses in the school's record-keeping were rectified during the inspection.
- The school's curriculum to keep pupils safe is effective. Pupils talk with confidence about how to stay safe in and out of school, including e-safety and social media.

- As a result of high-quality staff training, coaching and support, teachers have strong subject knowledge in mathematics. Teachers use specific vocabulary and precise questioning to deepen pupils' understanding. Consequently, the impact of teaching to improve pupils' achievement in mathematics is good.
- The teaching of reading is good overall. By the time pupils reach upper key stage 2, most read fluently and with a strong understanding of what they read. Pupils enjoy reading. The teaching of phonics is effective in helping children to read words accurately. However, teaching does not enable some pupils to apply the phonics skills they have learned in class when reading independently. This hinders their ability to read fluently and with the competence expected for their age.
- Teachers' assessments of what pupils know, can do and understand are accurate. Teaching enables pupils to make good progress over time and achieve well by the time they leave the school. However, there are some relative inconsistencies in teaching in a few classes. In these classes, pupils do not make the consistently good progress in writing that pupils make elsewhere in the school.
- Most teachers use their assessments to plan units of work effectively. However, sometimes teachers do not check pupils' understanding of the concepts taught systematically and effectively. As a result, in a minority of classes, teachers do not give clearly directed and timely support to pupils when misconceptions arise.
- Most teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan learning that sustains pupils' interest. However, on occasion teachers do not adjust teaching to meet the needs of all pupils and the work on offer is not challenging enough. As a result, in these classes, some of the middle-attaining and the most able pupils have to work their way through work that is too easy before they receive work that is demanding.
- The teaching for pupils with SEND is not consistently strong. Individual targets set for these pupils are sometimes too vague. Teaching does not provide planned activities that meet pupils' needs consistently well. Some planned intervention sessions are highly effective in developing pupils' readiness to learn. However, on occasion small group interventions do not provide pupils with the specific teaching they need to catch up. The impact of teaching for pupils with SEND has not been monitored closely enough. As a result, pupils' progress is too variable in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are eager to know how to improve their work. Increasingly, the teaching of spelling and the editing and improving of writing is paying off.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The school's personal, social and health education programme enables pupils to experience a wide range of teaching to help them to develop as effective, young citizens. They understand how to keep safe. Pupils say that bullying is rare.
- Lunchtimes and breaktimes are supervised adequately. However, a small number of pupils would like more structure and variety in the activities on offer.

- Pupils are usually polite and well mannered. At the end of social times, pupils line up respectfully and follow the school rules well. However, when adults do not model high expectations of pupils' conduct consistently well, pupils follow suit, and their manners slip. While lunchtimes are orderly and safe, pupils' conduct is not impeccable. In the dining hall, for example, pupils do not say excuse me or indicate politely they would like someone to move out of the way.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in lessons. They are motivated and interested in deepening their understanding of concepts taught.
- Pupils attend well and most enjoy school. Pupils' attendance has been consistently above that seen nationally. Few pupils are persistently absent; when this does occur, there are robust systems in place to bring about improvements, including working with external agencies. Rates of pupils' exclusions are low.
- Most pupils present their work well because of the high expectations set by class teachers. In these classes, pupils show pride in their work. However, when teaching is not closely matched to pupils' needs, pupils' presentation, or concentration, in a few classes is not as strong as it is elsewhere in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportions of pupils who meet the required standard in the phonics screening check have increased markedly over the last three years. Almost every child met this standard in 2018. This checks pupils' ability to read individual words accurately. However, some children who narrowly met the requirements of the phonics screening check do not yet apply their understanding of Year 1 phonics to read as fluently as is expected for their age. Conversely, the support in place for the weakest readers in the school is highly successful in helping these children to catch up.
- By the end of key stage 1, the proportions of pupils who meet the standards that are expected for their age are above those seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly, the proportions of pupils who exceed the standards that are expected for their age in mathematics and reading are above the national average. However, this is not replicated in writing.
- At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics has been more variable than in reading across the last few years. In 2016, pupils did significantly less well than other pupils nationally. Since this time, pupils' achievement has improved. In 2018, the proportions of pupils leaving the school with knowledge and skills matched to their age were in line with the national average. The progress of current pupils is good. As a result, pupils can solve mathematical problems and reason well.
- Leaders' current actions to remedy the previous weaknesses in pupils' spelling are paying off. Teachers' precise teaching is leading to improved spelling by pupils.
- Overall, current pupils make good progress in writing. However, on occasion pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their writing knowledge and skills

because tasks set are not demanding enough. As a result, in a few classes some pupils with previously average or above-average ability do not achieve the high standards of work of which they are capable.

- As a result of leaders' actions this academic year, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is now tracked meticulously. Historically, this group of pupils has not made consistently good progress over time. Increasingly they are catching up. However, the consistently good progress that is seen in some classes is not fully replicated across the school.
- Pupils with SEND do not make the progress they should because teaching is not closely matched to their needs. This hinders the progress that pupils with SEND make in writing and mathematics over time.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader provides strong leadership. She has an acute understanding of the strengths in the setting, and the areas for further development. She oversees teaching and the activities planned across the Reception classes. She assures herself that teachers and adults provide timely intervention for those children who arrive with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. There is a precise focus on developing children's speaking skills and personal, social and emotional development. This additional support is paying off and the children are catching up.
- The proportion of children who meet the good level of development, the standards that are expected for their age, has been above that seen nationally for many years. There is no discernible difference between boys' and girls' attainment. Teaching in Reception prepares children for their next stage very well. Teachers' assessments are accurate, and children's knowledge and skills have been sustained into Year 1.
- The curriculum on offer is rich and exciting. It provides demanding experiences that hold children's attention well. Consequently, children show curiosity and interest in the tasks they undertake.
- When children are exploring independently, the quality of interactions between children and adults can vary across classes. Often, teachers' and adults' interactions help to deepen children's understanding exceptionally well. However, on occasion adults' support is not as timely. Nevertheless, any inconsistencies in teaching that do occur are followed up quickly with practical advice and support. Staff receive highly focused professional development and children make good progress over time.
- Parents are very positive about their children's transition into school at the beginning of the school year. Children settle quickly and enjoy school. Most children show confidence when investigating. Children are kind to one another and get on well.

School details

Unique reference number	108911
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10049207

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Bennett
Headteacher	Amy Sood
Telephone number	0117 3772179
Website	www.ashleydownschool.org.uk
Email address	ashley.downp@bristol-schools.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2009

Information about this school

- Ashley Down Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The school has added a key stage since its last inspection. In 2015 Ashley Down Infant School and Ashley Down Junior School amalgamated to become a primary school.
- The school is part of a hard federation with Brunel Fields Primary School. Each of the schools has a separate headteacher. There is one governing body over both schools.
- Phase leaders work across both schools in the federation. Phase leaders are non-class based. Currently, one of these phase leaders is seconded to another infant school.
- Some teachers from both schools form overarching teams. This arrangement applies to science, English, mathematics and the curriculum.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils with SEND or who are supported by an education, health and care plan is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in visits to lessons across the school, and reviewed pupils' work in books across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also listened to the views of pupils during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils from Years 2, 5 and 6 reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, phase leaders, and the science and English team. An inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority. A meeting was also held with two members of the governing body. A further meeting was held with the chair of the governing body. An inspector met with a group of teachers to gather their views about the training and support they receive.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of school documents, including: the school's action plans; the school's view of its own performance; pupils' performance information; minutes of governing body meetings and their visits to the school; records relating to behaviour; checks on teaching and learning; pupils' attendance information; and a range of safeguarding records.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at lunchtimes and breaktimes, and around the school.
- Inspectors considered 74 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and the responses from the free-text service. Inspectors also talked to parents during the inspection to seek their views of the school and the education that their children receive. Inspectors talked to a range of pupils to gather their views.

Inspection team

Julie Carrington, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Spencer Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Paula Marsh	Ofsted Inspector

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