

Ashcott Primary School

Ridgeway, Ashcott, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 9PP

Inspection dates

26–27 March 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders reacted swiftly to address the findings from the previous inspection. They identified what needed to be done and set about rapidly improving the school.
- Senior leaders monitor teaching and pupils' progress carefully. From this, they set clear, focused and relevant improvement plans.
- Determined actions by leaders, including subject leaders, mean that most current pupils are now making good progress across a range of subjects.
- The governing body is ambitious for the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school and use first-hand information to hold leaders to account.
- A strong culture of safeguarding exists throughout the school. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are secure and clear.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and their effective use of questioning ensure that pupils are challenged to think about their learning.
- Leaders take effective action to improve attendance.
- Teaching assistants contribute positively to pupils' progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite, courteous and respectful.
- Pupils have a wide range of exciting and engaging learning and leadership opportunities that stimulate their interest.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and contributes to the good progress that pupils make.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils is effective.
- Robust assessment systems provide accurate information about pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics. Assessment in writing, especially of pupils' grammar and spelling skills, lacks the same level of precision, so pupils do not always write as well as they should.
- In mathematics, teachers do not routinely set work that challenges the most able pupils.
- In early years, children get off to a good start because teachers provide a stimulating and structured learning environment. Some middle-prior-attaining children do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by ensuring that teachers:
 - challenge the most able pupils in mathematics
 - assess spelling and grammar more effectively to improve pupils' writing.
- Strengthen the teaching, learning and assessment in early years to ensure that middle-prior-attaining children are better supported to achieve well.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully tackled the areas for improvement raised during the last inspection. Senior leaders know the school well and are accurate in their judgements of where Ashcott Primary School is on its journey of improvement.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders use this information to identify priorities for improving the school. This has ensured that improvements have been implemented swiftly and with a sense of urgency.
- Leadership of subjects is effective, particularly the leadership of English and mathematics. Leaders of these subjects are passionate about the improvements they have made. They play an important role in checking the effect of actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders' assessment of pupils' progress means that they have a timely overview of the progress pupils are making. This forms the basis of progress reviews so that those pupils who fall behind are identified and appropriate interventions are put in place.
- Staff speak positively about the school and are proud to work there. They respect the leaders of the school and feel supported. Staff value the training opportunities that have enabled them to improve their teaching.
- Most parents and carers hold positive views of the school. Parents spoken to before and after school, those who help in school and a large majority of those who responded to Parent View are very supportive of the school. Parents particularly highlighted the school's caring ethos and welcoming atmosphere.
- Leaders have established a curriculum that is broad and engaging. Conversations with pupils, as well as work in their books, show that pupils are developing their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Whole-school focuses and themed weeks and days, for example the 'Big Think', where mathematics is taught with other subjects, are providing pupils with memorable experiences and opportunities to apply their skills in a range of different contexts. Music is a strong aspect of the school's curriculum and the school choir reflects the school's high expectations.
- Identification of pupils with SEND and their particular needs is carried out in a timely manner. There is effective collaboration between school staff, parents and carers, and external agencies. Teaching assistants play a key role in supporting pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.
- Pupils develop a strong understanding of British values. They understand the importance of treating everyone equally and fairly. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, social and moral development effectively. However, pupils' awareness of the different cultures and faiths that make up modern Britain is not as strong.
- Leaders review how they spend the pupil premium funding to ensure that it is spent effectively. Teachers and leaders monitor pupils' progress and attainment well each

term. This clear focus on the needs of disadvantaged pupils through the support provided enables them to make good progress.

- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding for primary schools is used well. There is a wide range of sports and after-school clubs for pupils to participate in, including at playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils spoken to during the inspection value these opportunities and are proud of their sporting achievements.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Governors responded proactively to the findings and strengthened all areas of their work.
- Governors have a detailed understanding of the school and clearly communicate the strengths and areas that require further improvement.
- Clear lines of accountability and communication ensure that leaders are held to account for the effectiveness of the education provided. Governors support their role by frequent visits to the school and meeting leaders. This enables them to challenge the information provided by the headteacher and ask relevant questions in order to bring about improvements.
- Governors have good systems for monitoring safeguarding in school. They monitor policy and practice effectively.
- Governors monitor the impact that additional funding, such as the PE and sport premium, is having on pupils' outcomes, but recognise that this is limited by a lack of precise information from senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is an exceptionally strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. All staff spoken to have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if they are worried about a child's welfare. The designated leader and deputy leader for safeguarding maintain highly detailed records of any concerns, and check that these are followed up.
- Thorough checks are made on staff, governors and volunteers to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children. The school maintains appropriately detailed records of these checks. The school's recruitment procedures are robust and comprehensive. The designated lead follows up all concerns and ensures that where action is meant to happen, it does.
- There is a detailed programme of training for all staff and regular updates are provided on safeguarding.
- School leaders know the families well and they work well with external agencies to get the support families need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Teachers plan activities that are engaging and based on an accurate understanding of previous learning. Tasks provide a suitable level of challenge and support.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good understanding of how pupils learn. This enables them to provide the support and challenge that pupils require.
- Throughout the school, teachers and teaching assistants use questions effectively to encourage pupils to think, deepen learning and correct misconceptions. As a result, pupils are confident learners who are keen to improve their ability with challenging tasks. They are not afraid to make mistakes.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective and contribute to pupils' learning. They encourage pupils to do their best.
- The teaching of phonics is now a strength of the school. Teaching staff have a secure knowledge of how to teach early reading skills. Pupils read confidently and with accuracy, using their knowledge of the sounds that different letters represent to tackle unknown words. Pupils are provided with books that are well matched to their ability in phonics. This enables pupils to practise at home and to further develop and consolidate their reading skills.
- The teaching of reading is effective and pupils make good progress. Teachers check that pupils have an accurate understanding of what they have read. Teachers introduce pupils to an interesting and challenging range of texts. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 enjoyed reading war poetry. There is a strong culture of reading in the school. Pupils read often and enjoy reading. Older pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books by a variety of authors. They support younger pupils to read more often, through the school's Reading Stars programme, which both sets of pupils enjoy.
- Homework is set in line with school policy to support learning and the majority of pupils are well supported at home, particularly with reading.
- As pupils move through the school, the quality of their writing becomes more assured. Pupils write in a variety of styles and teachers use effective assessments to ensure that pupils use the right level of punctuation in their writing. However, teachers are not as precise with pupils' grammar and spelling, which sometimes hampers pupils' ability to express their ideas effectively. Sometimes, teachers do not highlight pupils' spelling errors and pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- Leaders have changed the way mathematics is taught to improve pupils' mathematical understanding and fluency. Teachers' mathematical subject knowledge is strong and they build upon pupils' prior mathematical knowledge well. Pupils have lots of opportunities to complete problem-solving and reasoning activities. Pupils' current workbooks show that pupils are making good progress in mathematics across the school. However, the most able mathematicians are not always challenged effectively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. During the inspection, pupils were keen to talk about their learning and show what they had been doing.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection say that bullying is rare. They are confident that should they have any concerns, there is a trusted adult they can turn to.
- Pupils feel safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe. They understand how to stay safe on the internet. Pupils also talked about the work they have done to keep themselves safe outside school, such as learning about road safety.
- Pupils benefit from the wide range of clubs that the staff provide. They appreciate the variety of sports clubs and opportunities to represent the school at competitive matches and tournaments. Older pupils are very proud of their press club, which produces a regular newspaper.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to take positions of responsibility in the school. These include becoming Gem leaders, and members of the school council and school parliament. They take their roles extremely seriously and many are elected to carry out their duties with pride and to good effect. Through these roles, pupils are given opportunities to confidently speak in front of other children and adults, and represent the school, for example when visitors arrive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming. They conduct themselves well throughout the day. In lessons, pupils listen well to adults and each other. They work collaboratively, showing respect for each other's opinions.
- The school is calm and centred on learning. Staff have a good understanding of pupils' individual behavioural needs.
- Previously, absence had begun to increase. Evidence provided by leaders, including the school's attendance records, demonstrates that this was often a result of parents taking holidays during term time. Leaders have been proactive in providing challenge and, where required, support to pupils with low attendance. As a result, attendance is now increasing and the school continues to support vulnerable pupils whose attendance remains low.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- For the past two years, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined remained stubbornly below national averages. Since the previous inspection in March 2018, leaders resolutely responded to tackle this.

- Outcomes are good because, in all year groups, pupils currently in the school are making good progress from their starting points. This is because leaders took decisive action to improve the quality of teaching. Pupils' workbooks in English and mathematics show that most pupils are now making good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. The school's own assessment information indicates that this pattern of good progress is matched across the school. Consequently, greater proportions of pupils in Year 6 are on track to meet both the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the majority of year groups, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although numbers of pupils are small, the school is working well to diminish the difference between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.
- Despite small numbers, the school's assessment information and work in books indicate that the progress of current pupils with SEND is in line with that of other pupils.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been below national averages for the past four years. However, since the last inspection, leaders have evaluated the quality of teaching and closely monitor the progress made by pupils in phonics. As a result, most pupils in Year 1 are reading at the expected standard.
- Pupils currently in school are also making strong progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school's engaging curriculum is leading to pupils making good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter early years with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age and stage of development. By the time they leave Reception, the proportion of children who have achieved a good level of development is close to the national average.
- Leaders have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Where areas for improvement have been identified, the early years leader has put in place effective plans to address these.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, and as a result, children make good progress. Teaching assistants ask questions that challenge children to really think. Teachers provide well-planned activities that enthuse the children and are carefully matched to their learning needs.
- Children listen carefully to instructions and all staff use carefully crafted questioning and a wide range of activities to broaden children's knowledge and experiences.
- Children are happy, confident and keen to share their ideas with others. Children work cooperatively together. They listen and respond well to each other. For example, during the inspection, children collaborated well when making a chocolate cake in the mud kitchen. They show resilience and stick at tasks, even when other children are playing close by. Strong relationships are evident and there is an acute sense of nurture and pastoral care.

- Children are busy learners and engage in purposeful learning activities. Teaching is exciting and lessons flow seamlessly, building on previous learning. Children are encouraged to be independent learners. The stimulating outdoor learning environment is used effectively to develop learning in different contexts.
- Across early years, leaders have established a language-rich environment. Adults promote children's language development through structured play and opportunities for children to talk about their learning. Children are provided with plenty of opportunities to write.
- Links with parents are strong, and 'wow' vouchers from home are shared every day. The pre-school packs help ensure that children arrive with the skills they need to thrive.
- Children feel safe and secure. Relevant staff hold paediatric first-aid certificates and they follow safeguarding procedures with the same rigour as the rest of the school.
- A greater number of children are being challenged to exceed a good level of development, especially in mathematics. However, some middle-prior-attaining children are not identified quickly enough for them to meet the expected standard by the end of the year.

School details

Unique reference number	123678
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10054395

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wayne Thompson
Headteacher	Richard Briar
Telephone number	01458 210464
Website	www.ashcott.somerset.sch.uk
Email address	Ashcott@educ.somerset.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 April 2018

Information about this school

- Ashcott Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed in 23 part-lessons, all conducted jointly with the headteacher. The work of pupils in all classes was scrutinised. Many pupils were spoken to about their work during lessons and informally around the school. The inspector listened to pupils read from Years 1, 5 and 6, and gathered views about their experiences in school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders, governors and members of the teaching and support staff. The views of staff were gathered from the staff survey and conversations across the two days.
- The inspector took into account 26 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 26 responses from the children's questionnaire. Discussions were held as parents dropped off or collected their children at school.
- A range of documentation was considered, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's improvement planning, and records of monitoring of teaching and learning. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including information relating to attendance, behaviour and referrals to social services, were examined.

Inspection team

Richard Lucas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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