

# Inspection of a good school: Ashcombe Primary School

Earlham Grove, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset BS23 3JW

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Inspection dates:

16 and 17 February 2022

## **Outcome**

Ashcombe Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Ashcombe School is a place where pupils feel safe and cared for. One parent, whose view reflected those of others, told inspectors, 'Despite its size, this school is great. There is a strong, caring nature that is promoted to parents and children alike.' Staff know pupils and their families well. This helps pupils to settle, learn and achieve. This starts with the youngest children and continues throughout their time at school.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is positive. A sense of calm and order permeates the school. Staff sort out any incidents of misbehaviour according to the school's policy. Should bullying occur, pupils are confident that adults will take swift and appropriate action. Pupils enjoy playing together in the school's extensive playgrounds. They understand and value the school rules, known as the 3 B's: Be safe, be respectful, be ready.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They have thought carefully about how to help pupils to achieve well. Leaders design projects that make learning engaging. This is motivating and exciting for pupils. As a result, pupils learn the school's curriculum well.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have designed a curriculum with knowledge at its heart. They have chosen the knowledge they want pupils to learn each year, and in each subject, carefully. This starts in the early years. Teachers help pupils to remember this important knowledge. They use quizzes and questioning to focus learning on any gaps or misconceptions. This helps pupils, including disadvantaged pupils or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn well.

Pupils build their skills over time due to the well-planned curriculum. For example, in art and design leaders have organised the curriculum around themes such as printing. This starts from using objects to print patterns in Reception Year leading up to screen printing in Year 6. These themes help pupils to make connections and remember what they have

learned. Staff introduce pupils to important artists and their techniques and styles. Pupils increasingly use these in their own artwork.

In subjects such as history, pupils say that teachers help them to make connections between topics and make learning fun. Teachers use assessment well to check pupils' readiness for a new unit of work. In some subjects, such as mathematics, leaders have a secure understanding of how well pupils have learned the curriculum each term. Leaders use this information to adjust the curriculum and to provide support. But in a few subjects, leaders have not yet developed assessment enough so that they can do this.

Leaders are determined that all pupils will become successful readers. They have prioritised the teaching of reading. Teachers are well trained in teaching reading. They provide good support for any pupils who start to fall behind. Leaders have identified that pupils' phonics skills need further development. The school is in the middle of making changes to the phonics programme. Leaders have purchased new reading books for the new programme. They make sure that the books pupils read are matched to the sounds that they know.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development effectively. Projects give pupils an opportunity to work together and can include performances or visits. For example, pupils recently performed at a local care home. This enriched the lives of the residents and helped pupils to understand their local community.

Teachers and other staff have built strong relationships with pupils. They make learning relevant and interesting. As a result, pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Staff include all pupils in lessons. Staff consider pupils with SEND carefully and give them the support they need to experience success. School staff work closely with parents to make sure that this support meets pupils' needs.

Governors know the school well. They work closely with trust representatives to secure improvements. Together, they have prioritised key areas of development during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are now renewing their focus on challenging leaders about the quality of the curriculum. School leaders introduce change in ways that do not overload staff. Teachers, including those who have recently joined, value the support and guidance they get from leaders. They enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff identify safeguarding concerns effectively. They put appropriate support in place and manage referrals to external agencies well. Leaders' knowledge of how to find support for pupils and families is strong. They are tenacious in following this up. Leaders check and promote pupils' strong attendance vigilantly.

Staff training is comprehensive. Leaders ensure recruitment processes are robust. They only appoint adults suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils know what to do if they have a concern about their safety and they have confidence that staff will help them. Pupils feel safe, know how to keep themselves safe and are safe.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some elements of the phonics programme are not implemented with sufficient precision. This means that a few pupils do not read with the fluency needed. Leaders should speed up the development of the new phonics programme.
- Assessment is not used well enough in a minority of foundation subjects. Consequently, in a few subjects, leaders do not have all the information they need to improve learning effectively. Leaders should develop assessment in these subjects so that they know whether pupils are learning the intended curriculum well.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Ashcombe Primary School, to be good in January 2013.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	144924
<b>Local authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212129
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	611
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Tristan Cogan
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Clark
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ashcombeprimary.co.uk">www.ashcombeprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- Ashcombe Primary School converted to an academy in September 2017. The predecessor school, Ashcombe Primary School, was judged to be good overall at its previous inspection.
- The headteacher was appointed after the predecessor school's previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. They also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other curriculum subjects.

- Inspectors reviewed records associated with safeguarding, including the single central record and appointment procedures. Inspectors spoke to staff about their safeguarding training. They also spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- During the inspection, the lead inspector met with the headteacher and the leadership team. Meetings were also held with other school leaders, including subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), early years leader and the safeguarding lead. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors spoke with parents before school and considered the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors observed playtime, met pupils and staff, and considered the responses to the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Tom Morrison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Helen Springett

Ofsted Inspector

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