

Inspection of Ashill Community Primary School

School Road, Ashill, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9ND

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 June 2024

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

The headteacher of this school is Emma Johns. The school is part of the Academies for Character and Excellence (ACE), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Cheryl Weyman, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Roger Willoughby.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Ashill Community Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspections, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy and inclusive school. Pupils enjoy school. They are supported to attend school regularly. Parents and carers describe the school as a welcoming and nurturing place where staff know their children well.

Strong relationships built on trust and respect show pupils how to be kind and thoughtful to each other. Right from the start, the youngest children are taught to recognise their feelings and how to respond appropriately. Pupils learn and play collaboratively. They feel safe because staff pay close attention to their individual needs. Consequently, the way in which pupils conduct themselves is exemplary.

The trust's curriculum and 'character gateways' support pupils to become curious, independent and resilient learners. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. However, pupils have gaps in their science and wider curriculum knowledge. The school is working with pupils to close these gaps quickly to ensure pupils achieve the new curriculum's higher expectations.

Pupils look forward to attending after-school clubs and educational visits. The school nurtures pupils' broad range of talents and interests. For example, pupils take part in the ACE Olympics. They also go on residential visits and create art exhibitions. Many pupils learn musical instruments.

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

The trust has high aspirations for all pupils. The school knows how to accurately identify and meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Appropriate adaptations ensure pupils reach their potential. Some pupils have individual learning plans. These help staff and pupils recognise barriers to learning and how to overcome them. Pupils with SEND complete the same curriculum as their peers.

Sharing high-quality books in school and at home fosters pupils' love of reading and language. Whole-school phonics training ensures staff teach pupils to develop their early reading effectively. Staff provide additional support for pupils who struggle or fall behind with their reading. This helps them to catch up quickly and achieve well. The trust is introducing a new speech and language scheme to ensure pupils' language and vocabulary development keeps pace with their reading.

The new curriculum is ambitious and designed to build pupils' knowledge over time. The curriculum clearly identifies the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should remember. Staff complete training that ensures they successfully deliver the curriculum. Increased expectations of pupils' academic potential and the quality of education are already improving pupil outcomes in reading, writing, mathematics and some wider curriculum subjects.

When the new curriculum was introduced, gaps in pupils' knowledge were quickly discovered. Work to close these gaps has already started. In some subjects, pupils are catching up with national expectations in these subjects. For example, pupils are rapidly improving their fluency in mathematics. The new art and design curriculum is helping pupils to learn about different artists and techniques. Pupils have well-developed sketching skills. Nevertheless, gaps in pupils' curriculum knowledge remain in some subjects. This limits pupils' ability to learn new concepts and make links between important curriculum content.

Pupils know how to maintain healthy bodies and minds. Children learn about healthy eating in the early years through stories such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The computing and the personal, social, health and economic education curriculums detail the online safety content pupils learn.

Pupils learn to respect other cultures and faiths through assemblies and the curriculum. However, their knowledge of fundamental British values and diverse beliefs is still developing. As a result, their understanding of multicultural Britain is limited. The school's plans to organise specific events to enhance pupils' knowledge of modern British life are in their infancy.

The school values the important role of parents in their children's education. When necessary, joint work between the school, parents and external professionals has helped to improve their attendance. The trust has plans to help parents to understand the new curriculum.

Trustees share leaders' ambition for pupils. They have a secure knowledge of the school's strengths and development areas. The trust frequently checks on the teaching and learning of the curriculum to ensure pupils get the quality of education they deserve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils, including in the early years, have gaps in their knowledge of some curriculum subjects. This limits pupils' ability to secure new curriculum knowledge. They cannot make links between important concepts. The trust needs to close gaps in pupils' knowledge and ensure pupils know more and remember more of the curriculum.
- Some pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, and the beliefs of those from different faiths, is at an early stage of development. This means pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be. The trust

should ensure that the curriculum provides coverage of these elements to broaden pupils' understanding and knowledge of diversity.

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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 145199 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10322315 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 46 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Roger Willoughby |
| CEO of the trust | Cheryl Weyman |
| Headteacher | Emma Johns |
| Website | www.ashillprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Ashill community primary school joined the Academies for Character and Excellence (ACE) in January 2024.
- Ashill is a smaller-than-average school. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes and pre-school.
- The headteacher was appointed permanently in June 2024 after a four-month interim period.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, staff, pupils and representatives from across the trust.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with the chair of the teaching and learning committee and met online with a trustee. She also met with the CEO and deputy CEO.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum 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.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The inspectors also discussed the school's curriculum and provision with leaders.
- The inspectors observed pupils during social times and spoke with pupils and leaders about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke with a parent on the telephone. She also took into consideration the responses to the surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adam Matthews

Ofsted Inspector

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