

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Ashcott Primary School

Ridgeway, Ashcott, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 9PP

Inspection date:

3 December 2024

Outcome

Ashcott Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Ashcott Primary School is a community school in every sense. Pupils benefit greatly from the shared ambition and approach to school development and decision-making. This involves the pupils themselves and their active school council, as well as staff, governors, parents and carers and members of the wider village community.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school's welcoming, kind and nurturing culture. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the difference the school makes to their children, both academically and more widely. The school expects pupils to achieve well and they do, particularly in reading. Pupils are ambitious because staff foster this and are dedicated to getting the best from them.

The 'buddy system' is successful, along with plentiful leadership roles, in preparing pupils to manage responsibility well. They learn and understand the importance of conducting themselves well, and most do. This creates a harmonious school environment, where pupils feel safe, attend frequently and get along well with each other.

Pupils agree that 'everyone's differences are welcome'. They talk with an informed awareness of how people can be different and that this is something to be respected and celebrated. This begins from the very start in Reception, where children settle quickly into the school's culture, routines and expectations.

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

The school has a successful and ambitious curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics. The positive impact of the continual focus on reading, as well as the prioritisation of writing and number fluency, is clear. This is evident not only in the

school's published outcomes over time, but in practice across the school. For example, pupils in Year 1 use number skills from Reception to subtract efficiently. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are expected to use ambitious language and vocabulary in their writing. This builds on what they learn in the Reception class, as they interact and develop their curiosity.

The school has put reading at the heart of the curriculum. It enhances pupils' love of reading. Staff maintain the high standards pupils achieve through an effective and well-embedded reading curriculum and phonics programme. Where appropriate, pupils get the help they need to keep up with the pace of the phonics programme. The emphasis on oracy, starting in Reception, provides a strong foundation for writing. Furthermore, the focus on oracy particularly benefits some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), by allowing them to practise and rehearse what they want to write. Pupils with SEND benefit from swift identification of their needs. The school uses this to adapt learning effectively to overcome potential barriers.

The school has a clear, shared vision for the wider curriculum to expand pupils' awareness of the world around them. The whole school curriculum themes, such as 'out of this world', are designed to build knowledge, from pupils' understanding of themselves and their own locality through to the rest of the world and into space. However, these, alongside some of the specific subjects that make up the content, are newer in development. Systems to check how secure prior learning is, so that pupils can secure new learning, are not as established as they are in more successful subjects, such as English and mathematics. There is also less information to support curriculum development.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. However, expectations of pupils' behaviour for learning are not as explicit as they could be. For example, pupils know about strategies that support them when they are stuck or struggling with their emotions such as 'SNOT', the '5 Bs' and zones of regulation. However, these are not used routinely. The expectations that children successfully meet in the Reception class do not build coherently as they move through the school. This leads to some lost learning time for some pupils, and some attitudes to learning are not as positive as they could be.

Pupil voice is a strength. Pupils know that they have a valuable role in the school's development. This is at its best in the school council and the award-winning school newspaper. Pupils value the school's pastoral support for their well-being. They are prepared well for what comes next in their education. The extensive enrichment offer enhances the curriculum and fosters pupils' talents and interests. The vast number of extra-curricular clubs are informed by the school council, as well as school priorities. They are made accessible for those who would benefit from them. For example, the Makaton club increases pupils' awareness of non-verbal communication.

Governors are well informed about the school's strengths and priorities. They use this knowledge to provide effective challenge and support. The school shares its expertise, such as in reading, and works collaboratively with others to strive for further improvement. Along with the staff, leaders' passion and dedication for wanting the very best for the pupils is clear.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subjects in the wider curriculum are not as well embedded as others. Checks to ensure that pupils have secure prior learning, so that they can build on this, are not developed well enough. Information to inform curriculum development is not as extensive. This means that, in these subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should ensure that its vision, to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain, is fully supported by a well-embedded wider curriculum, which increases pupils' knowledge of the world around them and supports the strength of the curriculum offer in English and mathematics.
- There is not a fully shared approach to the expectations of pupils' behaviour for learning. This results in a lack of clarity from pupils about what is expected of them to be successful learners and maintain positive attitudes to their learning. The school should ensure that the systems and approaches it has in place are fully embedded in day-to-day classroom practice so that pupils are clear about, and can meet, the high expectations that staff have of them, with increasing success across the four classes.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2019.

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

Unique reference number	123678
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10344532
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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jon Davis
Headteacher	Richard Briar
Website	www.ashcott.somerset.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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, the deputy headteacher and staff. In addition, an inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair, and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement. The inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum, SEND, safeguarding and behaviour.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' free-text comments. An inspector met with some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspectors spoke with staff to gather their views about the school and evaluated their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Leanne Thirlby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lizzy Meadows

Ofsted Inspector

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