



Ashley Down Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108911
LEA Bristol, City of
Inspection number 278078
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 17 May 2006
Reporting inspector Alison Grainger AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant	School address	Olveston Road
School category	Community		Horfield
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Bristol BS7 9PE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 3772179
Number on roll	177	Fax number	0117 3772179
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr W Willcocks
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2000	Headteacher	Ms Helen Heap

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 16 May 2006 - 17 May 2006	Inspection number 278078
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in Horfield, about two miles north of Bristol City Centre. Around three-quarters of pupils are of White British heritage. Others are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a little below the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception Year is broadly at the level expected at this age.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, providing good value for money. Parents and pupils agree that the school is successful and that it has many strong features. The school is largely accurate in its evaluation of its performance, particularly in its judgement of pupils' achievement, standards, and the quality of teaching and learning. However, the school and inspectors agree that before it can be an outstanding school, as it evaluated itself to be, there are still improvements to be made.

Pupils' progress is good. There are some outstanding features in the provision for Reception children, particularly the attention to their personal development and the careful assessment of their individual needs. As a result, children make a good start to their school life.

Teachers' expectations of what children can achieve are high and, as a consequence, they do well by the end of Year 2. Progress is satisfactory in Year 1 because teachers' expectations of pupils are not as high as in other years. However, by the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards significantly above the national average in reading and writing and slightly above average in mathematics. Their skills in handwriting, writing numbers, presenting their work, and in using information and communication technology (ICT) are not as good as they should be. The school has plans to improve its resources for ICT to increase the opportunities for pupils to use computers and a start has been made by installing interactive whiteboards in classrooms.

Teaching and the curriculum are good overall and most effective in the Reception Year and Year 2. There is outstanding enrichment of daily lessons through a wide range of additional activities. Strong attention is given to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils really enjoy school a lot, behave well and form positive relationships.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher, staff and governors are an effective team. Partnerships with others, including parents, to meet pupils' needs are exceptional. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to develop further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining in Year 1 so that pupils make better progress.
- Rectify the weaknesses in pupils' handwriting, writing of numbers and presentation of their work.
- Develop the provision for ICT so that pupils become competent in using computers across the range of their school work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' overall progress is good. Children in the Reception Year make rapid gains in all areas of learning. Almost all are on course to reach the goals expected for their age, and a good number are likely to exceed these standards.

Results in the national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2005 were significantly above the national average in reading and writing, and slightly above it in mathematics. Standards are similar in the current Year 2 where good progress is made in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 1, progress is slower in these key areas than in other years, and is satisfactory.

Competence in writing develops well, particularly in aspects such as putting sentences together to communicate ideas. Pupils do not develop their handwriting as well as they are capable, letter formation is a weaker aspect of writing for pupils of all ages and writing numbers is a difficulty for many. In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills develop satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2.

Pupils with learning difficulties progress at the same rate as others in their classes, as do those learning English as an additional language. The vast majority of pupils reach the challenging targets set for them by the end of Year 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall. Children in the Reception Year make exceptionally good progress in this area. They have exemplary attitudes and behaviour, and co-operate very well when working together.

Almost all pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy school a good deal. The attendance rate has improved and is now average, lowered only by some parents taking their children out of school for holidays. Behaviour is good in Years 1 and 2 although very occasionally pupils in these years do not maintain full involvement in lessons.

Pupils of all ages move safely about the school. They are thoughtful and considerate. For example, one little girl readily picked up aprons that had fallen to the floor in the cookery area without anyone asking her to do so. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community, for example, through the School Council. They respond readily to opportunities to take responsibility.

Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep healthy through diet and exercise. Skills for their future education develop well overall, such as in problem solving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress because of the good quality of teaching they receive. Children have a strong start in the Reception Year because of the effective and, at times outstanding, teaching they experience. All the adults work very effectively together to assess children and match teaching to their differing needs. Adults' expectations of children are high and questioning is used particularly well to deepen knowledge and understanding. Children and activities are very well managed in lessons.

Good teaching supports learning well in Year 2. In one Year 2 class, discussion at the end of lessons is used very successfully to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. This discussion also helps pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

Teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, in Year 1 because expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are not high enough to promote good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets pupils' needs and external requirements well, for example, aspects of the science curriculum have been adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Children in the Reception Year experience an imaginative and exciting range of learning opportunities. Outstanding attention is given to their personal, social and emotional development. This highly effective provision focuses not only on attitudes, behaviour and relationships but also allows children to reflect on their feelings.

The range of learning opportunities in Years 1 and 2 includes a good focus on English and mathematics. In other subjects, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to record their work and apply their English and mathematics skills. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and develop their ICT skills across the curriculum.

Good attention is given to pupils' personal, social and health education with a strong emphasis on sport. Enrichment of daily lessons through activities such as clubs, drama productions, theme weeks, visits out of school and visitors who talk to children is outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, support and guidance makes a good contribution to pupils' progress and personal development. Strong attention is paid to pupils' personal welfare. Health, safety and child protection arrangements are good. Any vulnerable pupils are identified

and given good support. Support is also good for pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Children are helped to settle well in the Reception Year. Moves between year groups and transfer to the junior school are handled well. Pupils report that they feel safe at school and are confident that they have an adult to turn to should the need arise.

The school is currently developing its guidance to pupils on ways in which they can improve their school work. There are some examples of outstanding guidance in the Reception Year and in Year 2, but provision is not consistently good in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management result in the school providing well for its pupils. The headteacher is sharply focused on maintaining the school's many strengths and on ensuring that the school becomes more effective. When, for example, the national assessment results indicate that there are shortcomings in an aspect of provision, action is taken to rectify it. This was evident in 2005 when the school was effective in reversing a downward trend in the reading results. Currently, the school is correctly focusing on challenging the more able pupils in mathematics.

There is a strong team approach among the staff. Senior and middle managers are involved well in decision-making and in helping to move the school forward. Governors work well with the school's professional leaders. An outstanding feature is the partnership of the headteacher, staff and governors with external groups. Particularly impressive is the way in which parents are involved in supporting school improvement through participating in working groups, including how to improve school meals. The school is responsive to parents and, for example, has invested in new books following parent concerns about reading materials. Pupils also have a good voice in the school through the School Council and have, for instance, made suggestions for changes to school rules.

Self-evaluation is accurate in the main. The school has made good progress since its last inspection and has a good track record in making improvements. It is well placed to make further improvements, although some current weaknesses, such as in pupils' handwriting and skills in forming numbers, is not given sufficient attention at present.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and agree with you that Ashley Down Infant School is a good school and fun to be in. We saw that you enjoy school, behave well and get on well with each other well. You are very polite and made us feel very welcome.

The youngest children get off to a good start. The adults in the Reception classes provide you with lots of interesting things to do. In Years 1 and 2 you have many extra things to make learning fun, such as clubs, drama productions and visits out of school.

The adults look after you well. They work closely with your parents and other people to keep making the school better for you.

You are making good progress at school but we found that some of you could do even better. Your work is not as neat and careful as it could be.

We have asked your teachers to help you make your work neater. We have also asked them to help you to improve your handwriting and writing of numbers.

We have heard that you will soon have some new laptop computers. We hope you will enjoy using them and are taught all the things you need to know so that you learn even more at school.

Thank you once again for being so friendly and helpful.