



# Ash Church of England VC Primary School

Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 123814  
**Local Authority** Somerset  
**Inspection number** 292800  
**Inspection date** 9 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Laurie Lewin

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Main Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Ash
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Martock TA12 6NS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01935 822674
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	150	<b>Fax number</b>	01935 823395
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	K Fleming
		<b>Headteacher</b>	A Hawkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a small school. Whilst some pupils live in the village of Ash, many come from the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. Most pupils in the school come from White British cultural backgrounds, with a very small number from other ethnic backgrounds.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

This is an outstanding school that understands, as one parent put it, 'the importance of enjoyment and achievement'; a view echoed by many other parents. Pupils attain high standards by the end of Y6 and their achievement is excellent. This high level of performance comes as a result of high quality leadership and management and top quality teaching that ensure that all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are helped to reach their full potential. The school is especially good at analysing the information gained from assessing pupils and pinpointing exactly where extra support is needed to boost performance. As a result of strong provision in the Foundation Stage, children progress well. They reach nationally expected levels by the time they start Year 1, with some doing much better than this. The school provides an outstanding curriculum and pupils really appreciate the way that staff 'go the extra mile' to make lessons as interesting as possible. They especially enjoy the very extensive range of extra activities, trips, visits and visitors to the school and are very proud of their achievements in areas such as sports, music and chess and in winning prizes in national writing competitions. From the wide range of sport, the daily 'Wake and Shake' aerobic sessions and the strong focus on eating sensibly, pupils gain a sophisticated understanding about how to stay fit and healthy. The outstanding care, support and guidance of the staff result in pupils showing exemplary behaviour and becoming responsible, happy, and enthusiastic individuals. Through their active involvement in charity work and extensive work with local organisations, pupils develop a strong sense of the importance of contributing to the community.

The school has an energetic headteacher. He presents the school with much drive and a clear vision for future development so that the school is an exciting and dynamic place to be. The strong staff team are fully signed up to pushing forward with all developments. The school adopts an innovative and imaginative approach towards finding ways of boosting learning further, for example with the exciting new project to link up with the staff and pupils in other European schools. This is a school that does not rest on its laurels. Although standards and achievement have improved significantly over recent years, it has identified that boys' achievement in writing lags behind that of the girls and is firmly focused on addressing this. Governors and staff work very effectively together in evaluating the school's performance rigorously. Plans for future developments are inspired and imaginative and, coupled with the school's track record of outstanding improvement, this means there is excellent scope for further development in the future.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- improve boys' skills in producing extended pieces of writing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Children enter the school with attainment that is at the expected levels. The school's results have shown significant improvement in recent years, with pupils now reaching exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 6. This outstanding achievement by the pupils places the school in the top performing 6% of schools nationally.

Conversations with, and observations of, the youngest and oldest pupils and displays of their work confirm the huge progress made between entry to school and the end of Year 6. Careful analysis of pupils' writing by the school shows that whilst boys often produce good quality short pieces of writing, their ability to reproduce the same quality in more extended pieces lags behind that of the girls.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are keen to work hard and do their best. By the end of Year 6, they show a mature and confident approach and carry out their responsibilities, such as being a buddy to the youngest children, very conscientiously. Pupils also develop an excellent sense of initiative. For example, older pupils reported, 'It's really good that we can have a chance to develop and run our own lunchtime activity sessions'. Pupils feel secure and have no qualms about seeking adult assistance if they have a problem. They clearly see school as providing lots of 'fun opportunities' and, unsurprisingly, attendance is good. Their excellent academic achievement gears pupils up exceedingly well for maintaining success in the future. For example, older pupils gain a top quality insight into life in the real world through the 'Make It Real' project that involves them in applying for a job and learning to run a business.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Across the school, teachers show a very strong subject knowledge that is reflected in the careful preparation of their lessons, clear explanations about work and the precision with which activities are matched to the needs of the pupils. As a result, all groups of pupils show outstanding progress in their learning. Pupils are impressed by the way in which teachers make lessons interesting. This was borne out during one literacy lesson where the teacher showed a clip from the film 'Titanic' on the interactive whiteboard, very successfully stimulating pupils' ideas for writing. Teachers receive outstanding support from the skilled teaching assistants who show a very confident approach with teaching and supporting individuals and groups of pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

Year 6 pupils commented: 'We get stacks of activities .... and do lots of things that other schools don't do'. Their comments are reflected in the school's very extensive activities programme, and parents also give the school many accolades for the work by the staff in this area. During the inspection, top-notch singing in an after-school choir session and the rapidly developing skills of pupils at a lunchtime table tennis club showed the kind of varied benefits pupils are getting from the activities programme. The school has a strongly rooted philosophy of ensuring that from day one in the Foundation Stage, children are helped to gain as broad a range of skills, knowledge and understanding as possible. This approach is pursued as pupils progress through the classes and the school's results and excellent personal development of all individuals lay testament to its success.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school adopts a rigorous approach to implementing all policies to ensure the health and safety of its pupils. Staff know the pupils very well and cater sensitively for their individual needs. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils, coupled with the high expectations set for work and behaviour, result in pupils developing exceptionally confident and motivated approaches to learning. The school is especially good at using information from assessment to support and guide individuals, and Year 6 pupils spoken to by the inspector showed a very precise understanding of targets set for them and what they need to do to achieve these.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

This is a school that gives a clear impression of everyone 'pulling in the same direction' to benefit the quality of education provided. What makes this school stand out is that despite current success in achieving high standards with pupils' academic and personal development, it still feels it can do even better, and staff and governors strive tirelessly to achieve this aim. They make excellent use of the many partner institutions and organisations to which they are linked to help boost pupils' learning

All staff and governors are fully involved in evaluating the school's performance in great detail. The inspection shows the school in an even better light than its own self-evaluation, but this is due to an overly modest and slightly cautious view the school takes about the outcomes of its achievements.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

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



## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making me so welcome and helping me during the school inspection. I was really impressed by everything that I saw. Here are some of the things I noted:

- you work very hard in lessons and show a lot of interest in all of the work
- you reach high standards in English, mathematics and science
- you all enjoy school and your behaviour is really excellent. Everybody is so polite and helpful
- you like the staff that work with you a lot, and some of you told me that they work really hard to make lessons as much fun as possible. I think you are right – they do an excellent job
- you really appreciate all of the extra, interesting and exciting activities that the school provides for you
- the school does an excellent job of taking care of you
- I was very impressed to see how much you know about the need to eat healthy foods and stay fit
- the organisation of the school is excellent and helping you all to become very successful.

Although you reach high standards, your teachers are right when they say that there is still room for the boys to improve the quality of their work in extended pieces of writing.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. I hope you have another really good year at the school!