

Fonthill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131496
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	293765
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Farley
Headteacher	Stephen Dand
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001
School address	Ascot Road Southmead Bristol BS10 5SW
Telephone number	0117 3772550
Fax number	0117 3772551

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an inner city area of Bristol. A handful of pupils have English as an additional language but very few are beginners. Pupils come with a wide range of attainment but overall standards on entry to Nursery are very low, especially in communication and literacy and social development. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average. The headteacher took up post in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. From very low starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress and achieve well. They reach standards by the end of Year 6 that are below average, hence narrowing the gap between their attainment on entry and national averages. This is a result of good teaching in the upper part of the school. Teaching is satisfactory in the rest of the school and satisfactory overall. Teaching does not always provide pupils with work that is matched carefully enough to their needs. Though teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, learning is often too closely directed by teachers, which limits the opportunities for children to use their initiative or to learn through first-hand experiences. The curriculum is satisfactory, with scope for more challenge for able pupils within subjects such as literacy and numeracy. It is weak in the Foundation Stage.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory provision. Most pupils enjoy school and learning, but attendance is below average. The school has put in measures to help improve attendance but these are too recent to have had an impact. Most pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles but do not always practise these, especially when it comes to healthy eating. Through activities such as the school council and raising funds for charity, pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community. Preparation for future life is satisfactory. Satisfactory care, guidance and support enable pupils to feel safe at school and to behave in a safe manner. Behaviour is often good in lessons and satisfactory overall.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has made good progress over the last two terms due to the good leadership provided by the headteacher. This school knows itself well and knows what needs to be done to improve. Many new initiatives, which are focused on the right priorities, are under way. Whilst it is too soon for many of these to have had the desired impact, there has been good improvement in behaviour, and learning support assistants are now used effectively to the benefit of pupils' learning. Hence, the capacity to improve is satisfactory. Staff are working purposefully together to raise standards, and performance management is being used well to develop further the roles of other leaders in the school. Many are providing good leadership in their own right but there remain gaps in the leadership team, particularly in respect of the Foundation Stage. Whilst the governors now receive good quality information, and recently appointed co-chairs have a good understanding of their roles, the governing body is not fulfilling requirements. The headteacher has a clear understanding that the school, though satisfactory, needs to do much more in order to enable higher standards.

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in a few respects is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying these weaknesses. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils in the Foundation Stage with an appropriate curriculum and more opportunities to learn from first-hand experiences.
- Provide pupils with work that effectively matches their needs and ensure that able pupils are sufficiently challenged.
- Increase the level of attendance.

- Develop the role of governors so that they exercise effective oversight of the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Despite efforts made by the school, standards remain well below average by the end of Key Stage 1. Challenging targets are set and met by Year 6. The school does well to narrow the gap between national standards and the standards pupils reach by the end of Year 6. However, standards remain below average and the school is aware that much more needs to be done in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 if this gap is to be narrowed further. Whilst progress is satisfactory overall, it is uneven as pupils move through the school. In some year groups, pupils make good progress, especially Years 5 and 6, and also in reading and mathematics in many classes across the school. Progress in writing is slowest and, for some very low attainers, making even a small amount of progress is proving an uphill task. This is due, at least in part, to the need for these pupils to access a very different curriculum, especially while they are still in the Foundation Stage. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well and are often amongst the higher attainers within the school. The very few who are beginners in English make good progress learning it.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. The majority enjoy their lessons and show adults respect. Despite many initiatives aimed at improving attendance, there has been no significant improvement and attendance levels are below average. Whilst the school monitors attendance thoroughly it has not yet analysed the impact of poor absence on individual pupils' achievement.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils develop a positive view about themselves and what they can achieve. They have confidence in working with adults from outside school and are keen to join in clubs and take part in competitive activities. The school council successfully promotes pupils' views and is working enthusiastically on plans to improve playtimes. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils behave sensibly. Pupils listen to each other in lessons and seek to please their teachers by working hard. There are a few pupils whose behaviour towards others necessitates their exclusion. However, the number of exclusions has fallen significantly since the headteacher introduced a conciliation and arbitration process.

Pupils are developing well their skills in resolving disputes should they fall out with one another. There are few incidents of racist behaviour.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The variability in teaching affects pupils' progress. Support staff are used well throughout the school to focus on the small steps less able pupils need in order to achieve well in English. The starts of lessons are well managed to motivate and engage pupils' interest but teachers do not then plan activities carefully enough to meet the range of different abilities in their classes. As a consequence, some pupils find the work too easy and others too hard. The school has rightly focused on helping pupils learn language for communicating ideas but they are not providing enough opportunities for pupils to rehearse their ideas with each other in lessons. The pace of learning is best in Years 5 and 6 because the teachers have a sharper focus on what pupils need

to achieve next. Teachers sum up lessons well. This ensures that pupils gain a sound grasp of key ideas and learning points.

Teachers now make good use of assessment information to track progress, and pupils are getting to know their targets. However, in the Foundation Stage, assessment is not accurate enough to set clear targets for the children's learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Activities in the Foundation Stage are not linked well enough to children's first-hand experiences. In Years 1 to 6, there is an interesting range of activities that help children develop their good attitude to learning, particularly in science and design and technology. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from small group support although there is not enough support for the number of pupils with language needs. The gifted and talented pupils have several good quality additional opportunities in school and benefit from the good links with local schools and businesses. In general there is an over reliance on teacher-led activity that is not always well matched to the needs of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are good risk assessment, child protection and welfare arrangements. Pupils are well known to staff and the progress of vulnerable pupils is monitored well so that they are appropriately supported in class. There is satisfactory support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Older pupils know their targets and what they have to do to improve. The school has good tracking systems which are used to help set targets. Parents like the way that staff are available at the start and end of day to discuss issues with them. There are some inadequacies over health and safety procedures that have been reported to the governors.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Through his good leadership, the headteacher has set a very clear direction for development and staff are working towards common goals which are well understood. The headteacher is single-minded in his determination to raise standards and to make a real difference in the quality of outcomes for pupils. Staff are well supported to carry out their roles and external support used successfully to help secure improvements in the quality of provision.

The school is involved in a wide range of partnerships to help support improvement and these have a positive impact on the school. The governing body has not been effective but newly appointed co-chairs and the good quality of information provided by the headteacher are enabling them to address weaknesses in their roles. Finances are well managed and are being well directed towards much needed improvement in the physical environment of the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
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

We enjoyed visiting your school very much and we particularly liked visiting your classrooms and talking to you. We would like to thank you very much for making us feel welcome.

The school is providing you with a satisfactory education. We saw a number of things that were good including ways in which you help to make the school a better place:

- You enjoy school and behave well in lessons.
- You are developing a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils in Year 6 do well in national tests.
- You have good relationships with staff and you are developing your skills successfully in resolving disputes or problems with one another.
- Your headteacher and staff team work well together. They know exactly how to make the school better.

There are some things that could be better. These include:

- providing pupils in the Foundation Stage with more practical work and work that they can relate to
- ensuring that you get work in lessons that is neither too easy nor too hard
- improving your attendance
- ensuring that governors are more actively involved in checking the school's work and asking questions about how well it is doing.

You can certainly help to improve the school by continuing to work hard and doing your best to attend regularly.