

Avon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108914
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309836
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Hall
Headteacher	Jane Atkins
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Barracks Lane Shirehampton Bristol BS11 9NG
Telephone number	0117 9030446
Fax number	0117 9030446

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is slightly smaller than average. Most pupils attend from the local area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these have communication and literacy difficulties and a minority have behavioural difficulties. Most pupils are White British. Nearly all pupils attend a local nursery before coming into Reception. Children's attainment is below the expected levels when they join the school. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are below average. A dip in standards over the last two years is being successfully tackled and standards are now rising. Leaders are clearly focused on raising achievement particularly in reading and writing. Improvements in reading are enabling pupils to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. In writing, changes to the curriculum and teaching are beginning to raise standards. However, standards in mathematics are still not high enough because pupils' mathematical vocabulary is underdeveloped and consequently, they find it difficult to apply calculation skills to solve problems. Pupils are making steady progress in basic skills but there is more work to be done to develop their confidence and ability in numeracy in order to prepare them well for the future. Children are currently making satisfactory progress in the Reception year. Relationships are good because the school provides a good standard of care and adults treat the pupils with respect. Pupils say they are listened to and feel safe in school. Most pupils have good attitudes and enjoy school, but there are a few who find it difficult to concentrate and need to be reminded about how to conduct themselves. Teaching often provides interesting and stimulating activities to engage the interest of the pupils. The majority of pupils work well together and on their own. However, there are a minority who find it difficult to concentrate on their work and are not yet sufficiently independent in their learning. Although most pupils' clearly enjoy school, attendance is below average. Pupils have a good understanding about the need to lead healthy lifestyles and this is strongly promoted through the curriculum. The pupils say they like the additional sporting activities on offer. Pupils have some opportunities to voice their opinions through the school council, but the scope of its work is relatively modest. Across the school, a fair number of pupils express their views with confidence. Most parents make positive comments about what the school provides saying the staff are 'friendly and approachable'. Several comment how well their children have settled into the Reception class. Many pupils talk about their school with pride and say 'you feel welcomed in this school and things get dealt with'.

Leaders have recently introduced measures to strengthen pupils' understanding of how well they are doing and to help pupils assess their own work. In writing, pupils have a growing understanding of the targets that they are working towards. However, in other areas this is less well established. Marking is regularly completed and acknowledges what pupils have learned and the effort they have made. However, identification of what the pupils need to do next to improve their work is much less consistent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle quickly because parents and carers are encouraged to join them in a variety of activities at the beginning of the school day. The children readily talk about class routines and play happily together. Current teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory and children are encouraged to speak in sentences. The activities provided cover all the areas of learning. However, children are given insufficient opportunities to choose activities for themselves or to use the outdoor learning environment thereby reducing their enjoyment and independence. Leadership is satisfactory and there are good links with pre-school nurseries.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' mathematical vocabulary to improve how they use calculation skills to solve problems.
- Involve pupils more consistently in evaluating their own work through target setting and ensure marking gives them a clear understanding about how they can improve.
- Improve opportunities for the pupils to develop independent learning skills so that they are more productive when working in groups or on their own.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter Reception with below average skills and abilities, particularly in writing. Currently, the children in Reception are making satisfactory progress in their learning. In the 2007 Year 2 tests, pupils reached broadly average standards, but with weaker standards in mathematics than in reading and writing. Current standards in Year 2 are below average because this group of pupils has an unusually high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Year 6 results in 2007 show that standards were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Current standards in Year 6 are similar. However, both groups of pupils have made satisfactory progress from their starting points in Year 2. There is clear improvement in standards coming through the school such as in Years 1 and 5 where standards are average. Across the school, rates of learning and progress are satisfactory and sometimes better, especially in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress similar to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils behave well and are welcoming. The pupils encourage each other in lessons and adults manage them sensitively. However, there are a minority of pupils who need regular reminders about how to behave, and do not readily respond to questions in class. Most pupils play together well with due regard for the safety of others. They move around the school sensibly. However, a few pupils display immature behaviour in the playground. Pupils say that the school is a safe and friendly place to be and that any inappropriate behaviour is always sorted out.

Pupils have a good understanding about why they should eat healthily and drink water regularly. The majority of pupils are very active in the playground during break and lunchtimes with football being a particular favourite. However, there is not much equipment regularly available to encourage pupils with different interests. The pupils say they enjoy physical education lessons and are keen to take up the additional sporting activities that are on offer.

Most pupils express their views with some measure of confidence. Currently, there are plenty of opportunities for the older pupils to volunteer for additional tasks but fewer for younger ones, who could do more. The pupils have limited expectations with regard to how influential they could be in bringing about change, for example through the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in most lessons enhances pupils' enjoyment of learning. Teachers use a good range of strategies and resources to ensure that pupils are prepared well for writing tasks. Pupils' relationships with adults and with each other are positive. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to engage the interest of pupils. They have clear expectations of behaviour and manage pupils well.

Questioning mostly enables pupils to explain their understanding but opportunities are occasionally missed to extend learning. There are a few occasions when pupils are not given work that is challenging enough because they have to work through too many easier sums before getting on to the more demanding work. On some other occasions, pupils are kept sitting too long on the carpet and learning is not moved on quickly enough. Therefore, there are times when pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Learning support assistants often provide good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help with literacy or numeracy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision to improve key skills in literacy has been strengthened through a number of curriculum changes. There is a growing emphasis in the school on extending pupils' vocabulary with a strengthening focus on speaking and listening, which is helping pupils to produce more interesting and lively writing. However, pupils' understanding of the language used in mathematics is less well established and some pupils find it difficult to apply their calculation skills to mathematical problems. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology as a tool in their learning are not sufficiently regular and this is limiting pupils' independence in their learning. Visitors coming into the school and visits to support topics such as the Tudors in history make a good contribution to pupils' understanding and interest. The link with the Rock Foundation School in Uganda provides pupils with a very valuable insight into the lives of people from different places. The pupils share experiences such as through swapping games they play and the different type of clothes they wear. There is a suitable range of after school clubs and activities. Good links with the local secondary schools help the pupils prepare for the next stage of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff are strongly committed to ensuring that pupils enjoy learning in a safe environment. They have good knowledge of the needs of individual pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils feel very confident that any concerns they may have will be listened to carefully. Arrangements for keeping the pupils safe meet statutory requirements. The school's recent action to promote better attendance is having a positive effect.

Recent initiatives to strengthen pupils' understanding about how well they are doing and help them assess their own work have been successful. In writing, pupils have targets and assess themselves against 'learning ladders'. However, more regular use of these would help to boost

their learning further. In other areas, such as mathematics, the use of targets by pupils is at an early stage of development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

School improvement planning has correctly identified most improvements that are needed and is an effective tool to help to raise standards further. Although lesson observations are well established, this does not yet lead to a sufficiently clear overall picture of strengths and areas for development. Subject leaders are developing their monitoring and evaluation work securely. Governors have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are becoming better at challenging leaders about what they are doing to raise standards. Changes are bringing about improvement in reading and writing and the school has a satisfactory capacity to develop further.

The school tracks pupils' attainment carefully as they move through the school and identifies the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils. This is enabling teachers to identify any underachievement and provide extra help and support as necessary. Targets set for improvement are generally suitably challenging.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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

1 March 2008

Dear Pupils Inspection of Avon Primary School, Bristol, BS11 9NG

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed with your friendliness. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. We think your school provides you with a satisfactory education and you are making satisfactory progress. Leadership of your school is satisfactory.

What we most liked about your school

- Your standards in reading and writing are getting better because of improvements in teaching and the curriculum.
- Most of you enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The youngest children settle into school quickly because of the good links with parents and carers.
- The school provides good care and ensures you are safe and secure.
- Teaching is often lively and interesting, which is helping you to enjoy learning.
- Adults make sure that the school is a friendly and welcoming place.

We have asked your headteacher and others to do these things

- Help you to develop your mathematics vocabulary so that you can do better in solving problems.
- Involve you more in setting targets and evaluating your own work and improve marking so you have a clearer understanding about how to do better.
- Help you to work better on your own and in groups.

With your hard work and help, we think that your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead inspector

1 March 2008



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Peter Clifton
Lead inspector