

Filton Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109013
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	324880
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Carole Skinner

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	209
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Shears
Headteacher	Kirsten Lemming
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Blenheim Drive Filton Filton BS34 7AX
Telephone number	01454 866559
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most of the pupils in this average-sized school are of White British heritage, with a small but growing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. At the time of this inspection, a very small number of pupils were learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has achieved the Healthy School and Activemark awards. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. The headteacher and deputy head were appointed in 2007.

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. Its happy atmosphere is immediately evident when you walk through the door. Good leadership has helped to create a stable and committed staff team with high aspirations for the pupils' achievement and good capacity for continuing improvement. For a couple of years, as a result of changes of leadership and complex staffing issues, the school's performance faltered and standards dipped. The headteacher took prompt and decisive action to get the school back on track and this is now paying dividends. The enthusiasm and determination of the whole staff have enabled the school to improve rapidly over the past year, particularly the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the teaching of writing and mathematics throughout the school. Standards have risen and are continuing to improve as teachers successfully accelerate pupils' progress. Pupils are achieving well again after a couple of years when some did not make sufficient progress.

Children get off to a fantastic start in Reception and make exceptionally good progress in all aspects of their learning and development. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress and reach broadly average standards. Lively, imaginative teaching and a well-planned creative curriculum involve all pupils effectively in active learning. Pupils clearly enjoy lessons and are well-motivated learners. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils and high expectations of behaviour help to create a calm and purposeful atmosphere in every class. Pupils feel very safe because they are well cared for and know who to talk to if they have a problem. They are very proud of the contribution they make to the school through the 'pupil voice' and feel that the adults listen to them and take note of their suggestions for improving the school.

Good arrangements for assessing and tracking each pupil's progress provide teachers with detailed information which helps them to plan work to meet pupils' widely differing needs. In most lessons, teachers provide suitably challenging work for the more able pupils. They have successfully raised the standards reached by these pupils in reading but able pupils' standards are lower than they should be in writing and mathematics. The most recent initiatives in writing are yet to have their full impact. In mathematics, the school is aware that pupils have too few opportunities to investigate and solve open-ended problems.

Only a small minority of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Of these, the majority were very supportive of the school and appreciative of its many good features. A minority expressed dissatisfaction, particularly with the way the school communicates with them and takes account of their views. Senior leaders acknowledge the need to seek ways to communicate with parents more effectively and to involve them more productively in the life of the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children thoroughly enjoy learning in this exciting, colourful and very well-equipped environment. The teacher plans an excellent range of activities around central themes that incorporate all areas of learning and take very good account of the children's own interests. Children move freely between the classroom and the extensive outdoor area, learning through play and exploration. Their knowledge and imagination are developed exceptionally well. For example, when learning about healthy eating, children grew potatoes, weighed and measured different vegetables and made vegetable soup and fruit milkshakes. Children have many

opportunities to learn about the world around them, whether pretending to be vets, firefighters and airline pilots, visiting a farm or sampling Indian food. On entry, children's skills are much lower than those expected for their age. High quality teaching of early reading, writing and number skills and outstanding personal development lay an excellent foundation for children's future learning. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are close to or just below the national average in every area of learning. Every child's personal learning diary captures the small steps of progress they make from day to day. The teacher and assistants work together extremely well, making carefully planned observations of every child and discussing their learning with them. Excellent provision for children's welfare ensures that they feel safe and well cared for. Outstanding leadership is firmly grounded in an expert knowledge of how children learn and develop.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for the more able pupils to reach high standards, particularly in writing and open-ended investigative work in mathematics.
- Seek further ways to improve communication with the minority of parents who are dissatisfied with aspects of the school, to respond to their concerns and to engage them productively in their children's learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in relation to their low starting points. The school has successfully reversed the downward trend that resulted in well below average standards in Year 6 in 2008. The current Year 6 cohort is back on track to reach average levels. There have been marked improvements in attainment in both English and mathematics, although the proportion of pupils who reach the higher Level 5 remains below average in both subjects. School data show that pupils are now making good progress. Teachers are successfully addressing the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding that arose from weak teaching in the past. Pupils develop a good range of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and achieve high standards in singing, as recognised by the school's recent 'Big Sing Up' Silver Award. Pupils' good quality art work is displayed attractively around the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thrive in the caring, family atmosphere that nurtures their self-esteem and encourages them to be independent and self-reliant. They say that bullying is rare and promptly dealt with. Good behaviour is founded on a firm understanding of right and wrong. Pupils reflect on their feelings well and show concern and respect for others. Their appreciation of cultural diversity within our society is gradually being extended through the curriculum. The youngest children enjoy having older 'buddies' who look out for them and sometimes help them with their learning. Pupils know how to eat healthily. They get plenty of exercise in the delightful school grounds and make good use of the activity area, tyre park and football pitches. Pupils know that adults listen to them and act on their suggestions for making the school better, including how to improve lessons and playground equipment. As they move through the school, pupils grow in confidence and are well equipped to face the challenges of secondary school and beyond. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance rates are pegged back to average levels by a very small number of persistent absentees and families who take holidays in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Improvements in the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have helped to make teaching more consistently good across the school, with examples of outstanding practice. Tasks are generally well matched to the pupils' needs and levels of understanding and are well planned to take account of their different ways of learning. Occasionally, they do not provide enough challenge for more able pupils. Pupils make good progress because lessons are carefully structured, have clear objectives and involve them actively in learning. Teachers extend pupils' understanding through skilful questioning. Teaching assistants are well briefed and provide effective support for pupils who need extra help, particularly those with learning difficulties. Although teachers explain clearly what pupils are expected to learn, they do not always give them opportunities to evaluate how well they have achieved the intended outcome.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned creatively around central themes that incorporate different subjects. It is constantly evolving in response to teachers' evaluations of its effectiveness. A good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes significantly to pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development. High priority is given to improving pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. In mathematics, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to tackle open-ended investigations and problem-solving activities. This limits the achievement of the more able pupils. Pupils benefit from a good range of visits, visitors, clubs and links with other local schools, such as sports tournaments. They thoroughly enjoy the special themed weeks and feel they learn a great deal.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's vision. This is immediately evident in the warm and welcoming atmosphere that greets pupils as they arrive. The 'Yummy Scrummy Breakfast Club' (named by the pupils) provides a healthy and fun start to the day for many. Regular health and safety checks and effective child protection procedures help to ensure pupils are safe and well cared for. Robust systems for monitoring attendance include close links with outside agencies. Well-managed, carefully targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those learning to speak English leads to good progress. All pupils have targets to reach in reading, writing and mathematics. They know their targets but are not always encouraged to check how well they are working towards them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has successfully created a strong and highly effective senior leadership team who share her vision and high aspirations for the school. Subject leaders have readily embraced new initiatives that are designed to improve the pupils' learning. Rigorous self-evaluation by all staff who hold responsibilities identifies the right priorities for improvement and leads to

carefully planned actions. The school has sought and benefited greatly from the advice and support of external specialists. This has led to marked improvements in standards and the quality of learning. Governors are supportive of the staff and are developing appropriate systems for monitoring the school's effectiveness. They do not yet have sufficient influence on determining its strategic direction or challenging senior leaders to account for the standards pupils achieve. The school has taken effective steps to promote community cohesion at a local level, such as hosting 'community days'. It has a clear strategy but is in the early stages of implementing plans to encompass national and global issues.

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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?	2
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

18 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Filton Hill Primary School, Bristol BS34 7AX

Thank you for your very warm and friendly welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed watching you at work and were impressed by your good behaviour and the way you get on so well with each other and the teachers. The 'Yummy Scrummy Breakfast Club' looked like great fun. Well done for thinking of such a good name!

Everything we saw showed us that Filton Hill is a good school. Here are some of the reasons why:

- Everyone at the school takes very good care of you and helps you to become confident and independent.
- You get off to an excellent start in the Reception class because there are so many exciting activities that help you learn.
- All of the teachers make your lessons interesting and fun and this helps you to make good progress in your learning.
- The teachers come up with exciting ways to link subjects together so they make more sense for you.
- You learn how important it is to eat healthy food and take plenty of exercise.
- You play an important part in helping the school to improve through your contributions to the 'pupil voice'.
- The teachers keep a very close eye on your progress and give you extra help if you need it.
- The staff are a really good team who are working very hard to improve your learning and help you to achieve higher standards.

The teachers have introduced some good ideas to help improve your writing and your understanding in mathematics. Where you are capable of reaching even higher standards and we have asked the school to help you do this. The majority of your parents think the school is doing a good job. Some think it does not take enough notice of their opinions or communicate with them well enough. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to find ways to involve your parents more in what the school is doing. Perhaps you can help by making sure you tell them all the good things that you do in school. You certainly had plenty to tell us!

Yours sincerely

Carole Skinner Lead inspector