

# Ashlands Church of England First School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 123749        |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Somerset      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 327977        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 11 June 2009  |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Ann Henderson |

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.

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>  | First                                 |
| <b>School category</b>   | Voluntary controlled                  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 4–9                                   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed                                 |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |                                       |
| School (total)   | 117                                   |
| 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                                     |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body                    |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Richard Jeffery                       |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Carole Wills                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 4 October 1999                        |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected              |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected              |
| <b>School address</b>  | North Street<br>Crewkerne<br>TA18 7AL |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 01460 73437                           |

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|--------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4–9          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>   | 11 June 2009 |
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**Fax number**

01460 73437

**Age group** 4-9

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average first school with Early Years Foundation Stage provision in one Reception class. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The attainment of children when they enter the school in the Reception class is below typical age-related expectations. A children's centre run by Action for Children is located adjacent to the school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Ashland's First School is a satisfactory and improving school where pupils learn and develop in a safe and supportive environment. With her staff, the headteacher has created a very welcoming and positive school climate which is much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Pupils are friendly and cheerful. Behaviour is good and pupils are considerate of each other. Good relationships contribute to a strong sense of belonging. As one parent said, 'Ashland's has a warm and friendly atmosphere where children thrive; the teachers do a great job!'

From a low starting point children make satisfactory progress in Reception. Standards by the end of Year 2 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is aware of the urgent need to raise achievement in Years 1, 2 and 3. Current standards by the end of Year 4 are below average. This year group has an unusually high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. The school is now concentrating on raising pupils' achievement and this is where school leaders are focusing their attention. Writing and mathematics are areas for particular focus to ensure pupils achieve the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school. Leaders are aware that there is more to do before teaching and pupil achievement are consistently good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their comments and their keen participation in additional activities. Pupils are friendly and polite and relate very well to others. Pupils are particularly good at supporting each other. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and have a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating, keeping safe and taking regular exercise. They readily take on responsibilities and contribute to the local community; nevertheless, pupils' understanding of the wider national and international community is underdeveloped. Pupils enjoy the range of recently developed additional activities that enrich the curriculum. The school works well with a range of external agencies to provide well-targeted support for any pupils who need extra help. Satisfactory teaching and learning and a sound curriculum enable pupils to make satisfactory progress overall. Across the school, teachers have good relationships with their pupils. Pupils make good progress when they are challenged, and tasks are well matched to their abilities. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. Some lessons are too teacher-directed and the pace of learning can decline; in such lessons, pupils are not sufficiently involved in their own learning. Governors are effective in their role of challenging and supporting the school. Good quality improvement planning, together with a sense of clear direction for the future, means that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children in Reception start school with skills below those levels expected for their age. Children's achievement is satisfactory. Some reach the expected levels for their age by the start of Year 1, but this varies from year to year. Generally standards are below typical expectations, particularly in their writing, communication and mathematics. Children in the Reception class settle quickly at the start of the school day. Their personal development and well-being are good. They benefit from the opportunities for independent learning indoors by selecting activities and initiating their own learning, which allows good scope for imaginative play and for learning together. However, the outdoor environment is underdeveloped and does not afford children access to stimulating activities across all the areas of learning. The teacher and

her assistants support children appropriately, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The safety of children is a priority and all safeguarding procedures are in place. Behaviour is managed satisfactorily and children are learning to make independent choices. Learning diaries enable parents to gain a greater understanding of their children's development and learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is soundly led and managed in a way that recognises what needs to be improved.

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

- Ensure that all lessons include sufficient challenge for pupils so that standards and achievement improve, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Improve the outdoor learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it provides more stimulation and access to all areas of learning.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of the national and global communities, including faiths and cultures other than their own, and to provide a positive contribution.

A small proportion of the 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**

Attainment is lower than national expectations by the start of Year 1. Pupils' progress varies as they move through the school; nevertheless, pupils reach below average standards by the time they leave in Year 4. Given their below average starting points this represents satisfactory achievement. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, in some years, the proportion is very high and increasing numbers of pupils are starting school with a deficit in language skills. Well-targeted support ensures these pupils make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 1, following a rise in standards in 2006, there was a sharp decline in performance in reading, writing and mathematics in 2007. The school put measures in place to tackle this, and in 2008 in reading and writing the decline was reversed. Nevertheless, in mathematics in 2008 there was a slight further decline; although overall progress was satisfactory, a minority of pupils, particularly the more able, underachieved. Writing and mathematics remain the relatively weaker areas throughout the school, as indicated by the school's own data. Consequently, this is a barrier to more rapid progress across many areas of the curriculum. However, with this awareness, rigorous targets and close monitoring of pupil progress are now in place as the school strives to reverse this decline. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils behave well and show concern and consideration for others. They work well together when given the opportunity and show appreciation of others' efforts. Pupils show good awareness of safe practices and generally have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They also show good understanding of health-related issues which arise through their work in science, personal, social and health education and design and technology. The range of cultural and spiritual experiences is satisfactory, although there is a need to ensure pupils' increased awareness of faiths and cultures other than their own. Attendance is average. Pupils now take

part in a range of physical activities, enjoying extra-curricular sports. The school council plays an important role in decision making and contributing ideas for improving the school. Opportunities to develop a positive contribution to the school and local community are developing, although pupils' understanding of and contribution to the national and global community are underdeveloped and there are too few opportunities to learn about life in multicultural Britain. Pupils are being prepared for later life in terms of their social skills and attitudes, but key academic skills are not developed as well as they should be, with limited opportunities for enterprise activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is improving. Whilst it is satisfactory overall, much good teaching exists; however, at present this is not consistent through the school. Planning is good, resulting in well structured activities at different levels. In some classes teachers use learning objectives effectively to help pupils to know what they are expected to learn. In the best lessons, there is good pace and pupils are challenged to improve their learning. Well-targeted intervention and support from teaching assistants ensure pupils with learning difficulties feel included and supported. Assessment information is beginning to be used to inform pupils of how well they are doing and to set targets for further improvement, but the quality of this is uneven. Expectations are not consistently high. Teachers sometimes fail to challenge pupils to improve their work further, through either questioning or marking, to show how well they are doing in relation to their targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum broadly meets the needs of different groups of pupils, although lack of challenge for the more-able pupils means that they do not always achieve as well as they should. Pupils are given a reasonable range of opportunities to use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across a range of subjects. Literacy and numeracy skills are not yet fully integrated across the wider curriculum to support pupils' achievement of higher standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils are offered a reasonable range of opportunities to extend their learning outside of lessons through extra-curricular activities and the 'forest schools'. Good attention is paid to personal, social and health education, which is a key factor in pupils' sound personal development. There are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances in society both nationally and across the world.

### **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. Pupils feel confident that any concerns they may have will be carefully listened to. Arrangements for keeping the pupils safe meet statutory requirements. The school's action to promote better attendance is having a positive effect. There is good support for pupils when transferring to middle school. Too few pupils are involved in or understand the use of targets

and self-assessment. The use of marking and feedback to pupils and the assessment of pupils' work are improving, as are systems for setting targets and monitoring pupils' progress, but as yet there has been insufficient time to demonstrate the impact on standards.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management of the school have correctly focused the whole-school team on working effectively together. The leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders is good and there is a clear direction and commitment to improving outcomes for learners. The school has taken steps to address the issues raised at the last inspection. Core subject leaders have a clear understanding of data and use this effectively to focus priorities for improvement.

Self-evaluation takes account of the views of stakeholders, and identified areas for improvement are included in the school improvement plan which is well set out with clear responsibilities. The school is aware that new initiatives, for example improved target setting arrangements, have not yet had time to have a full impact on academic performance. The headteacher and her staff are working hard to ensure good partnerships with parents to support pupils' learning. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory; it is beginning to broaden pupils' understanding through developing the curriculum and links such as that with Ashland's Childrens' Centre. Governance is good. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They successfully challenge and support the school, led by the loyal chair who visits the school regularly. The school is ensuring that new governors are developing their monitoring role.



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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 |
|---|----------------|

### 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 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?              | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve?   | 3 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 3 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?                                 | 3 |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress                           | 3 |

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 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   | 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                                    | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

## The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 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 |

## Leadership and management

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| 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  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| 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  | 3   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 2   |
| 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**

11 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Ashland's Church of England First School, Crewkerne, Somerset, TA18 7AL

Thank you for the friendly welcome we received during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. We think your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. With your help, we are sure that the headteacher and all the staff in the school will continue to make your school even better.

We were impressed with your good attitudes to work and how well you get on together. We would like to thank the school council for sharing their views with us and were pleased to see how many of you take responsibility at school. Most of you try hard in your lessons and many teachers make them interesting, challenging and enjoyable. We think that you could improve still further in your writing and mathematics and we have asked the teachers to help you do even better by making sure that work is always at the right level for you.

The youngest children in the school really enjoyed learning and playing together indoors and we have asked your headteacher to make learning outdoors even more enjoyable and give children opportunities to play freely and safely outside with a variety of resources and play materials.

We know that your teachers teach you about healthy eating and the importance of taking regular exercise. You tell us there is always an adult to help you if you have any problems and that you feel safe in school. We think that you need to learn more about life in Britain as a multicultural society and to find out about communities across the wider world. We have asked your headteacher to help you learn more about these things.

We enjoyed our visit to your school and we wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson

Lead inspector