

Avonmouth CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109140
Local Authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	337228
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Terry Hills
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Dupras
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's development plan, monitoring and assessment information. In addition they looked at governors' minutes, reports from the school improvement partner and the local authority. Thirty-five parents' questionnaires were also scrutinised as well as responses from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills.
- To what extent the curriculum reflects pupils' needs and interest and develops their basic skills across a range of subjects.
- How well the work of the school is monitored and how well the information is used to decide priorities and move the school forward.

Information about the school

Avonmouth CE Primary School serves an area near the Avonmouth Docks on the outskirts of Bristol. Nearly all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most needs are related to learning or behavioural difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school has the Healthy School award and holds the Activemark. The headteacher took up post in September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It is improving rapidly and the last three years have seen attainment by end of Year 6 steadily rising to a broadly average level in 2009. This is because all staff show great dedication and commitment to improvement and want to make the best provision for the pupils. However, progress for pupils, while satisfactory overall, remains patchy because of remaining variations in the quality of teaching. The school is benefiting from the dynamism of a new and enthusiastic headteacher. She has already monitored all areas of the school effectively and, together with the deputy headteacher and other staff, has identified where improvements can be made. As one governor put it, there is a 'new energy and a real buzz' in the school. There is an expectation that the rate of improvement will further accelerate and, in particular, higher attainment and improved achievement will become embedded in school outcomes. The improvements already made in behaviour, attendance and attainment illustrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

The pupils really enjoy their learning and those who spoke with inspectors could not think of anything that they really wanted to change. They are polite and generally behave well. They understand well the importance of keeping themselves safe. Conversely, they only have a limited awareness of the diverse culture in which they are growing up. Their good attitudes towards learning are partly due to the good care, guidance and support they receive. The excellent work of the learning mentor has been instrumental in bringing about many improvements, particularly to behaviour and attendance.

In the Nursery and Reception classes the children benefit from good teaching and make consistently good progress, particularly in their communication language and literacy skills. In Years 1 to 6 most teachers plan lessons carefully to capture pupils' interest and motivate them. However, there is not enough consistently good teaching to secure good learning. There are several reasons for this. Teachers' questions are not always sufficiently focused on the subject in hand. Activities are not always matched closely enough to pupils' actual needs, although they may be set at different ability levels. Teachers do not always use the information gained from assessing the pupils' work effectively enough to identify where pupils might need some additional support or require more challenging activities and tasks. In addition, because teachers have not always been sure of how much progress pupils are expected to make during the course of a year, pupils have not always made the expected progress and have had to spend some time 'catching up' when they get to Year 6. Although teachers are now more confident, actions taken have not yet had time to have a positive impact on progress in

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all classes.

Across the school progress in writing is not as good as in other subjects. This is because pupils have a limited vocabulary and do not have sufficient opportunities to explore language and experiment with new words. Teachers do not always expect extended answers to their questions and will accept one- or two-word answers. In addition standards in spelling are not high enough because the approach to teaching this is not sufficiently well structured. In other respects, however, the school's curriculum has undergone a substantial review since the last inspection and is now good. It makes good provision for pupils' personal development. It provides well for the needs and interests of most pupils and effective links have been made between subjects. A very good range of themed days, visits and visitors, as well as an excellent range of after-school clubs, all enrich pupils' learning effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that all is at least satisfactory and 75% good or better by the end of July 2010 by:
 - improving the quality of teachers' questioning skills
 - ensuring that tasks are more closely matched to pupils' needs
 - ensuring that information from assessments is used more constructively in planning next steps in pupils' learning.
- Improve standards in English, particularly in writing, by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their vocabulary and speaking skills
 - employing a more rigorous approach to teaching spelling.
- Ensure pupils gain a greater awareness of different faiths and beliefs and the multicultural society in which they are growing up.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The 2009 Year 6 test results confirm that considerable improvement has been seen in all subjects. Although test results show a significant improvement over previous years, the school's own tracking systems show that most of the progress made was in Year 6 and that progress across the rest of the school was more inconsistent.

In lessons the reasons for this became clear. The questions asked of pupils were not always sufficiently challenging and sometimes pupils were not given enough time to respond. In a good Year 6 literacy lesson, where pupils were a little hesitant, the teacher gave a pupil time to think by saying 'I'll come back to you in a minute', which enabled the pupil to organise his thoughts and answer appropriately. In some classes all pupils were given the same task, only moving on to more extended work when the initial task had been completed. In others, the extension task was not closely related enough to the learning objective. In an effective Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher

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thought on her feet during a session of short burst mathematics tasks. She sped round from group to group evaluating and assessing pupils' responses and challenging them with questions of steadily increasing difficulty. This kept pupils motivated and interested and because all pupils were appropriately challenged, they made good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were generally well supported in lessons; they were able to check their answers and ask questions which enabled them to gain confidence and make progress in line with their peers.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and generally behave well. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in school, outside school and when using the internet. They have a sound understanding of how to live healthily and of the benefits of exercise. They contribute well to the school community 'MOPs' (Mediators on Patrol) play a vital role in ensuring the playground is a happy and harmonious place. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and reflects the Christian ethos of the school appropriately. The school has established very strong links with the local community and pupils take a very active part in school and local events. However, pupils' awareness of different faiths and cultures is limited. Their satisfactory English, mathematics and information and communication technology skills ensure they receive a sound grounding for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

In nearly all lessons observed teaching was at least satisfactory and much was good. Tasks are interesting and pupils have appropriate opportunities to share ideas with each other or in small groups. This sustains their interest and increases the pace of their work. Pupils are beginning to develop independence though opportunities to check and assess their own work. However, in drawing answers from questions teachers rely too much on pupils putting up their hands and rarely directly challenge pupils. Since the last inspection assessment systems have been improved and there is more information available as to how much progress pupils are making. Teachers are only just beginning to use this information effectively to ensure that pupils are adequately challenged in lessons and in setting targets for improvement over time. Marking encourages pupils to assess and improve their work. It is not systematically employed in all classes, which means some pupils do not understand how their work can be improved.

The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of activities which motivate and interest the pupils. The 'Tudor Day' taking place during the inspection was a memorable experience and pupils who benefited from this last year still speak of it with excitement and enthusiasm. Pupils have good opportunities to consolidate their basic skills across the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, but opportunities to develop vocabulary and improve spelling skills are not consistently implemented across the whole school. The school has established a number of partnerships and links which enhance pupils' experiences. Out-of-school clubs are supported very well; these embrace a wide range of topics from drumming to chess as well as a variety of sports. Many of these are run by the learning mentor, whose wide-ranging role ensures that the care and support of pupils is of a good quality. A wide range of links with outside agencies ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties receive good support. Pupils joining the school are welcomed and transition into and out of the school is effectively managed to make it as smooth as possible.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The newly appointed headteacher has a very clear vision for the school. This is well focused on improving standards and accelerating pupils' progress, while maintaining the strengths that make the school a happy and secure place for pupils. Staff at all levels

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share this ambition and there is strong commitment to providing the best for the pupils, and this is beginning to be realised in the standards attained. Subject leaders have been involved in monitoring the quality of their areas by examining planning and pupils' work. However, they have had few opportunities to observe lessons and work alongside colleagues in the classroom.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They have arranged training to raise their understanding of the school's assessment systems in order to be better able to challenge its performance. They have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are robust and leaders endeavour to ensure that pupils, whatever their ethnic or cultural background, are valued and free from discrimination. An audit carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's community cohesion policy has recognised that although local links are particularly strong, pupils have too little awareness of growing up in a culturally diverse society. Plans are being made to ensure that pupils understand the range of ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain today, but these are still at an early stage of implementation.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with attainment below that which is expected for their ages in all the areas of learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is mainly due to the extremely good preparation for school that the children receive before they enter the Nursery class. The provision of family group workshops and home visits all help the children to settle swiftly and they quickly adapt to school life. Provision for

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children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved greatly in the last two years and this has led to them making good progress and entering Year 1 at the expected levels for their age in most areas of learning, although their early writing skills are still a little below expectations.

There is extremely good liaison between the Nursery and Reception classes. Planning procedures are consistent and follow the same format, as do observations and the way in which 'Learning Journeys' (children's assessment records) are kept. This means that there is a good continuity which makes records easier for both staff and parents to access. The Learning Journeys are useful records of children's achievements with observations in all areas of the curriculum and they are enhanced by photographic evidence.

Children make good progress because the provision is exciting and appeals to their interests. Children in Reception are were eagerly making porridge for the three bears and playing in the wonderful 'storyland' role play area. Here they can use their imaginations in exploring and enacting their favourite stories and further develop their language skills. Making porridge provided useful opportunities for reinforcing messages about healthy eating, as did growing vegetables in their own vegetable plot and then eating them. Children's welfare and safety is of optimum importance and the care and guidance provided for children is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support and are integrated highly successfully into the learning environment.

The reason for the good progress is the good and ongoing improvement of the leadership and management. This is being rapidly enhanced through the work done to attain the Bristol standard in work in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The leader has analysed and self-evaluated practice in the Nursery and Reception classes and has used the results to identify key areas for improvement. This shows a very good knowledge of the needs of the young children and identifies how things can be made even better. For example, the outdoor area, although acceptable, does not offer the same high-quality opportunities outside that already exist for the children indoors. In addition the lack of a covered area limits the extent to which the outside accommodation can be used effectively.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

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Thirty-five questionnaires were returned by parents, representing about a sixth of the families attending the school. Most of the parents are pleased with all that the school has to offer, and this was reflected in the comments made both on the questionnaires and in person to the inspectors. Parents and carers are very confident that their children are safe and well cared for. They also express confidence in the leadership and management of the school. Most are happy overall with the experiences their children are receiving. There are some reservations, mainly concerning whether their children are making sufficient progress and are well prepared for the future. The inspectors found that pupils are making satisfactory progress and this has been improving in the last three years. The indications are that the school has a sound capacity for further improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Avonmouth CE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	49	17	49	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	49	18	51	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	34	18	51	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	37	17	49	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	40	20	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	31	21	60	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	26	26	74	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	11	31	21	60	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	29	20	57	3	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	23	23	66	0	0	3	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	26	23	66	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	34	20	57	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	40	18	51	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Avonmouth CE Primary School, Avonmouth, BS11 9LG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were really polite and friendly and helped us to learn a lot about what you do and what you enjoy. Your school gives you a satisfactory education overall and we think there are also lots of good things about your school.

What we found about your school

- It is a friendly and happy place in which to work and play.
- You enjoy coming to school and behave well.
- You achieve the standards you should in English, mathematics and science.
- You show a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- Adults look after you well and make sure you are safe, in and around school and on visits.
- You benefit from a really wide range of after-school clubs ' we thought the drumming was excellent ' as well as many interesting visits and visitors.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you to improve your standards of writing, especially your use of language and spelling. You can help by checking your work carefully and trying to find really interesting vocabulary to use when you answer questions.
- Try to make sure that more teaching is good, and use information from assessing your work to set you tasks that will help you to learn more effectively.
- Give you more opportunities to find out about the different faiths and cultures of people living in this country.

We are sure that you will do all you can to help all adults who work with you make your school even better. You can do this by trying as hard as you can in lessons.

Yours Sincerely

Christine Huard

Lead inspector.

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