

Air Balloon Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135867
Local Authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	360770
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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 of pupils on the school roll	615
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Pearce
Headteacher	Rob Worsfold
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 22 lessons and 21 teachers and practitioners were observed. The inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, samples of parents and groups of pupils. The school's work and a range of documentation were reviewed. This included the analysis of pupils' records, teachers' lesson plans, the school improvement plan, senior leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work. Ninety eight questionnaires from pupils and 208 from parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- The progress of different groups of pupils, especially more-able pupils particularly in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning across the school, and in which year groups pupils make the best progress.
- Teachers' use of assessment to challenge different groups of pupils.
- The quality of leadership and management at all levels in ensuring that all pupils make expected rates of progress.

Information about the school

This larger than average primary school was established in September 2009 following the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average as is the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. A very small proportion are learning English as an additional language. While the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average the school has an above average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs; their needs include physical disabilities and learning difficulties. The school runs a well-attended breakfast and after-school club. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of three Reception classes.

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's overall effectiveness is satisfactory but it is moving rapidly in developing all aspects of its provision since its amalgamation. Pupils are happy and well cared for because of the caring and inclusive ethos, which is based upon the headteacher's vision of equality of opportunity for all. Good links with parents ensure stakeholders' satisfaction. Parents and carers are delighted with everything that the school provides. As one explained, 'This is the best school in the neighbourhood, we have a fantastic headteacher and staff who look after our children as if they were their own.'

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good; as a result, they show respect and develop into mature and responsible individuals by the time they leave school. Pupils say that they like coming to school because of the good relationships they have with teachers. They confirm that they feel safe. Good systems for care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe and get on well together as evidenced by their good behaviour in lessons and around the school.

Children enter the Reception classes with skills that are below those expected especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress and reach the levels expected on entry to Year 1. However, their good progress is not maintained as well in some infant classes because teachers do not build upon their prior learning as quickly. Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory overall and attainment is average. By the time pupils leave school in Year 6 they attain average standards in reading, mathematics and science but attainment in writing is below average and a focus for improvement. Not all teachers make the most of opportunities for writing. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and problem solving in mathematics. However, progress is sometimes uneven in writing and reading because not all staff are equally familiar with using assessment information to challenge different groups of pupils. More-capable pupils sometimes do not learn as fast as they could in lessons and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills of independent learning.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving due to good monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior staff. There are examples of good and outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers generally ensure that pupils are clear about what they are going to learn but do not consistently check pupils' understanding and this slows down learning. Marking is regular but it does not always give pupils the chance to learn from their mistakes and edit and improve their writing.

A satisfactory curriculum with good provision for personal, social and health education results in pupils having good knowledge of keeping safe both through internet safety and around the school. The school promotes good links within the school community and with six schools in Jamshedpur, India.

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The strong, purposeful and caring leadership of the headteacher has successfully united the two schools and secure systems are in place to secure further improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and monitoring of provision and outcomes is thorough with the correct areas identified for improvement. Recent improvements in the use of data enable senior staff to be more rigorous in holding staff to account for the pupils' progress. The school has satisfactory capacity for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing across the school by ensuring that pupils:
 - edit and improve their work based upon teachers' thorough marking
 - write for a stimulating range of purposes across the curriculum including writing about what they have read or are working on in lessons
 - develop their construction of sentences and paragraphs.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school so that it is at least good or better by ensuring that all staff know how to:
 - use data from assessment to plan the next steps of pupils' learning
 - plan opportunities for pupils to use their skills of independence
 - mark pupils' work with pointers for improvement
 - challenge more-able pupils by providing them with extension activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Learning in the Reception classes is characterised by children being engaged in good opportunities to develop basic skills through play and pursue their independent learning. What prevents learning from being good in the rest of the school is that not all staff are using information from assessment to move pupils on in their learning to very best effect. The best rates of progress are in Years 5 and 6 where pupils are confident in their independent work, such as when seen using dictionaries and researching independently using computers, but opportunities for pupils to edit, improve and develop their sentences in writing are inconsistent, as seen in the sample of work and lessons. Occasionally, learning is good or outstanding, but overall there is not enough good learning to further accelerate achievement from satisfactory to become good. Pupils enjoy learning as seen in a particularly strong mathematics lesson in Year 6. In this lesson, pupils who generally find learning difficult made rapid progress in finding the perimeter of different shapes because of the outstanding modelling of problem solving by the class teacher. Throughout the school, pupils apply themselves exceptionally well to problem solving in mathematics because there is consistency in all year groups in their learning in this aspect.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the help given by teachers and support staff and achieve satisfactorily; they make as much progress as other groups. This is also the case for boys and for the few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

Pupils know about healthy lifestyles and participate in a good range of sporting activities. Pupils take responsibilities seriously and playground mediators, house captains and

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classroom monitors make a good contribution to the school community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a strong sense of justice; they enjoy learning about the history of their community and customs and traditions of India. The older pupils' 'Air Balloon's Got Talent' was totally devised, presented and scored by them. These activities, coupled with fund raising for charity, contribute to pupils achieving satisfactory future economic well-being. Pupils have good attitudes to learning because they know that they will be supported in their endeavours by their teachers. They use resources sensibly and say that even though the school is in an old building it is still a great place to be!

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	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is characterised by the good relationships teachers have with their pupils in most lessons. Teachers explain what pupils are expected to learn clearly and, in the best lessons, teachers regularly stop lessons to check pupils' understanding; this good use of assessment is not consistent in the school as a whole. In good lessons, pupils thrive and hang on the teachers' every word because of excellent explanations, use of assessment, a passion for teaching and ambition for all pupils to do well. This keeps pupils focused and motivated. All teachers use information and communication technology well, this helps pupils to stay focused. Lesson planning is satisfactory but sometimes misses opportunities to promote pupils' independent learning skills. Some teachers are better at giving pointers

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for improvement, when marking work, than others. There is also inconsistency in the way that teachers challenge more-able pupils by providing them with extension activities.

The curriculum is being given a major overhaul in order to make it more interesting. It is enriched with a good range of visits to places of interest in the local area. There are good links with sports partnerships and pupils' good participation in musical festivals and opportunities for drama are contributing to pupils' good attitudes to learning. The new curriculum has only been put in place very recently and is, at present, being trialled and amended accordingly.

Good care, guidance and support result in pupils feeling safe. A key feature of this provision is the good attention paid to the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families. Many parents have praised the school for this support. Satisfactory links with external agencies such as social services and an educational psychologist help remove pupils' barriers to learning. The school has good systems for monitoring behaviour, tracking pupils' progress and highlighting any aspects of underachievement which immediately triggers well-focused intervention and support from trained support staff. Breakfast and after-school clubs are valued by those parents who have work commitments and good care is provided for all pupils including those children from the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by the two deputy headteachers, is relentless in his approach of implementing rigorous systems and procedures that aim to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Teaching and learning are monitored well. High quality training for staff, coupled with rigorous monitoring, embeds ambition and drives improvement for giving pupils secure learning experiences. The impact is already seen in the improvement of teaching in year groups where previously there had been weaknesses. Much has been done in a short time of the school's history to improve teaching and learning and this is a strong feature of the leadership and management of senior leaders. However, the role of middle leaders is not yet fully developed in evaluating data and helping teachers to raise standards; this prevents the management of improving learning from being good.

The leadership and management of the school have been successful in establishing a safe and caring learning environment through thorough implementation of safeguarding procedures and in regular risk assessments and child protection training which ensure good health and safety of pupils.

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Promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling any aspects of discrimination are good and at the heart of the school ethos and contribute significantly to all pupils developing a sense of worth and self-esteem. Leaders are now working to ensure that the most able are always well challenged. Partnerships with parents are good and there are secure links with a Bristol university where a project promoting pupils' understanding of their learning is narrowing the gap in attainment to ensure that the same progress is made by all. Community cohesion is well promoted on a local, national and global level with good links with the local church, Gudwara and India. This promotes good awareness of multicultural issues.

The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are dedicated, hard working and fulfil their statutory duties. They are beginning to ask challenging questions that hold the school to account. The school deploys its resources effectively and achieves satisfactory value for money.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of good leadership, the good quality of teaching and learning is characterised by carefully planned learning opportunities to make learning fun. This leads to good achievement and progress of all groups of children. Firmly established routines and high priority given to the welfare of children contribute to children feeling safe and enjoying learning. There is a well-organised balance of inside and outdoor activities where children can pursue their interest levels.

Adults help children to improve their speaking skills and in a range of situations, by intervening in their learning. For example, during snack time, adults encourage children to eagerly talk about the morning activities while sharing their fruit with others. The teaching

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of basic skills for early reading, writing and number is good. There are many opportunities for children to follow up their learning through activities which they choose themselves.

Parents are encouraged to get involved in their children's learning by practising the correct letter formation of sounds learnt during the school day. Parents are very pleased with the good care and safety of their children and the many opportunities provided for them to learn through play. They are particularly appreciative of the sharing of good quality evidence provided on the progress that their children make in all areas of learning. Children in the after-school setting are well looked after and take part in a range of activities that are suited to their interest levels such as building, painting and listening to stories.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

The majority of parents who returned questionnaires or who spoke with inspectors are very happy with the school, particularly that it keeps children safe and that they are well looked after. As one put it, 'An excellent school! The leadership team is always available to speak with you. The headteacher is amazing, warm and welcoming.' The school encourages a feeling of community between pupils, staff and parents are just a few of the positive statements made by them. Several parents had concerns over minor bullying and misbehaviour of pupils. Inspectors found behaviour to be good in the school and the incidents of bad behaviour have been significantly reduced since the school reopened. Furthermore, procedures for dealing with misbehaviour are robust and consistently applied by staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Air Balloon Hill 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 208 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 615 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	143	69	64	31	0	0	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	133	64	72	35	1	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	111	53	94	45	1	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	112	54	91	44	3	1	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	122	59	83	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	107	51	93	45	3	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	108	52	94	45	4	2	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)	94	45	83	40	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	109	52	93	45	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	85	41	98	47	10	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	88	42	105	50	4	2	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	122	59	81	39	1	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	134	64	71	34	0	2	1	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Air Balloon Hill Primary School, Bristol BS5 7PB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you about your work. A special thank you to the group of pupils who came to meet one of the inspectors to share your views about the school. Here are our findings.

- You attend a satisfactory and quickly improving school. This means that you do some things well but other things need improving.
- Those of you in the Reception classes make good progress.
- Most of you make satisfactory progress; it gets better as you move through the school because of the good and better quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6.
- You do well in learning how to solve mathematical problems.
- You are well looked after in school and your teachers take good care of you.
- Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- You have good relationships with your teachers.
- You take your responsibilities seriously and you have good knowledge of the many different nationalities of your friends and others in the wider world.
- You know about staying safe.
- You have good links with the community and with India.

To improve your school further, we have asked you headteacher, senior leadership team, teachers and governors to do certain things to make your school even better.

- Ensure more teaching is at least good and all teachers help you to do as well as possible.
- Help you to improve your writing.
- Make sure that those of you who find learning easy have a few more challenging things to do.
- Check your understanding of new things more in lessons and help you to do better by giving you ideas about how to improve when teachers mark your work.

You can play your part by trying as hard as possible with your writing and by telling your teachers when some of the work they set for you is too easy.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

Lead inspector

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