



Ashley Down Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108910
LEA Bristol, City of
Inspection number 278077
Inspection dates 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Jill Arnold HMI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Downend Road
School category	Community		Horfield
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Bristol BS7 9PD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 3772637
Number on roll	234	Fax number	0117 3772637
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tony Davison
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Laurence Pitt

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated in Horfield, about two miles north of the centre of Bristol City. Although the majority of pupils are of White British heritage, others are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds representing 22 different nationalities. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges its overall effectiveness to be good, and inspectors agree. Parents and pupils have very positive views about the school. They appreciate the good care and education provided and feel the school is welcoming and inclusive. They are right. The good teaching, curriculum and care mean that pupils achieve well, reaching above average standards by the end of Year 6, and they make good progress in their personal development. They also enjoy school a lot, although the attendance of a minority is poor.

Leadership and management are good. Issues highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. The headteacher is leading the school effectively and is well supported by a committed team of staff and governors in the drive to raise standards further. The school provides good value for money and is well placed to improve further.

The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's strengths and its areas for development. It rightly recognises that some pupils could do better in writing, particularly boys. The school's hard work to accelerate pupils' achievement in writing is having some success, and this correctly remains a priority. A consistent approach to planning, marking and the use of targets has not yet been established, which is the main reason that teaching still requires improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in writing, particularly of boys.
- Clarify expectations for lesson planning, marking and setting targets for pupils.
- Work with parents to improve pupils' attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When pupils enter the school in Year 3, their attainment is above average. They make good progress so that by the end of Year 6 many attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are above the levels expected for their age. The good progress of the pupils is demonstrated by the fact that the school exceeded its targets for 2005, and most met or even exceeded their 2006 targets, which were more challenging. Pupils who have particular learning needs make good progress as a result of the good additional support they receive. The few pupils who are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language also make good progress.

Writing is an area the school has correctly identified for further improvement. Some pupils, particularly boys, are not achieving as well in writing as they are in reading. The school is working hard to address this, with some success, by improving the way writing is taught, including the use of targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils and their general well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very keen to take advantage of the many opportunities available to them. They trust the adults to keep them safe and think of them as friendly and helpful. They are not worried about harassment or bullying. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and during other activities, including playtimes. They pay attention in class, confidently answer questions and make suggestions, often in lively and imaginative ways. The school recognises that there is scope for improvement in the attitudes to learning of a small minority of pupils. However, these are the exception rather than the rule.

Pupils are regularly active in physical education lessons, after-school and lunchtime clubs and 'huff and puff' sessions. The numbers walking to school have increased following the introduction of the school travel plan. They have a good understanding of healthy eating, and learn about physical changes and new challenges in their lives as they grow. They have good opportunities to discuss their feelings and beliefs. Pupils are keen to be involved in community events such as fund raising and school performances. There are many examples of their views being taken into account, especially through the work of the very effective school council. Pupils work well collaboratively in pairs and groups in lessons. This teamwork, together with the above average standards they reach in basic skills, contributes to their good preparation for their future adult lives. The attendance of most pupils is good but despite the action taken by the school, the poor attendance by a minority means that it is only average overall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. Pupils enjoy their learning, take an active part in lessons and work productively. Staff have very good relationships with pupils and high expectations of their behaviour. The majority of lessons are characterised by engaging, sharply focused teaching that provides sufficient levels of challenge and support to enable pupils to make good gains in their learning. Activities are carefully chosen to motivate and actively involve pupils, including purposeful opportunities for them to explain their ideas and evaluate their work. Carefully phrased questions and explanations are effective in extending pupils' thinking. Teaching assistants work sensitively and productively with small groups and individual pupils, with clear objectives for developing skills and understanding. Attractive and stimulating displays effectively support pupils' learning.

The pupils' progress is slower in a minority of lessons because aspects of planning, target setting and marking are weaker. The school has recognised this and put in place a number of initiatives that are currently being evaluated. Evidence from the inspection

indicates that they are successfully supporting the school drive to improve teaching and achievement but have still some way to go. The leadership team is now working to refine these initiatives to improve consistency in teaching still further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum and broad range of activities engage pupils' interest and make them enthusiastic about school. There is a strong emphasis on sport, music and the arts. Pupils have good opportunities to perform in school productions and assemblies. New strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing have been well planned. These strategies put the development of speaking, listening and collaborative group work at the heart of the curriculum. Introduced in science, the approach is being adopted in all subjects. Another strong feature is the 'focus work' at the beginning of the school day. In these short sessions pupils are challenged to develop their thinking skills through interesting tasks which the pupils find fun. The school rightly plans to develop its use of writing in different subjects and to provide pupils with as many 'real' reasons for writing to motivate pupils even further. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good. Great care is taken to ensure that these pupils are following programmes of work that match their needs. Each class has at least three trips out of school each year and these are carefully planned to enrich classroom learning. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have residential trips. The range of after-school and lunchtime clubs is very good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is good. All procedures to safeguard them are in place and are robust. Due attention is given to health and safety issues and risk assessments. There are good individual plans in place to meet needs of vulnerable pupils, and these are regularly reviewed. There are good arrangements for introducing new pupils and their parents to the school and for Year 6 pupils to make a smooth transition to secondary school. The learning needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are clearly identified and appropriate action plans to support them are prepared. All pupils are aware of the challenging targets set for them and know what they have to do to achieve them. The individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are helpfully written in child-friendly language. The progress of these pupils is monitored effectively by the teaching assistants and the coordinator for special educational needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively to plan for improvement. The school has a good record of improvement under the new headteacher and a good capacity to improve further.

The headteacher has succeeded in restoring staff morale following an unsettled period and is providing strong leadership. A new staffing structure has improved teachers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The leadership team is committed to raising standards and has introduced several initiatives which are beginning to have a positive impact. Suitable systems for tracking pupils' progress have been introduced and these are effectively identifying which pupils are not achieving as well as they could. However, the leadership team has not yet ensured that the approaches to lesson planning, target setting and marking are consistently good across the school.

Partnerships with external agencies are productive. The school works hard to involve parents and maintain good relationships. Their views are sought and acted upon, for example in agreeing the new homework policy and reviewing the school improvement plan.

The governing body plays an active part in working with staff to develop aspects of the school's work. Its new structure and procedures are helping to provide a clear picture of the school's performance and benchmarks to measure future progress. There is a clear sense of teamwork amongst staff and governors and a commitment to providing high quality care and education for all pupils. There is a rigorous approach to reviewing policies and managing the performance of staff.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and hearing what you had to say. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

You attend a good school. The people who run your school are doing a good job to make sure you are safe, happy and enthusiastic about your learning. Most of you behave really well and try your hardest in lessons. You are taught well and are making good progress. We were especially pleased to see how well you work together and how confident you are to share your good ideas. Many of your parents told us how pleased they are with your school.

There are a couple of things we have asked the school to make even better. Although you work hard and are doing well, we think that some of you could be doing even better, especially with your writing. We have asked the teachers to help you to improve by tightening up on how they plan your lessons, how they mark your work, and how they set you targets. You can help, too, by trying your hardest to act on the advice they give you to make your writing better. Although most of you attend school regularly, a few of you stay away from school too often, which interrupts your learning. Make sure you come to school every day unless there is a good reason not to.

We wish you great success in the future!