

# Ashcott Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123678
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314663
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sudworth

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Dore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	Ridgeway Ashcott Bridgwater TA7 9PP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01458 210464
<b>Fax number</b>	01458 210319

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

All pupils at this four-class school are White British. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about the same as in most schools. The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual ones is higher than that normally found. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Half of the teaching staff has only been in post for one year, together with two new teaching assistants.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Ashcott Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils with some good features. This is a very caring and a happy school, with a real sense of community. Care, support and guidance are good. Staff know the pupils and their families very well, resulting in strong parental support and pupils who are keen to attend. Teachers are very approachable and really make it easy for both parents and children to communicate with them. Pupils have an acute awareness of 'eco' matters and waste avoidance, for example, they collect rainwater in butts and compost waste matter from their school garden plots. They show obvious pride in their school and take on responsibilities willingly. The good encouragement of pupils to be involved in the school's life and their mature attitude to global matters contribute effectively to their good personal development.

Almost unanimously, parents are delighted with the school. Good induction arrangements help their children to settle very quickly as new entrants. Parents feel that staff are prepared to go the extra mile and that the school helps pupils to become well rounded and confident young people. As one parent puts it, 'The children are happy, confident and enjoy their time at school. I have nothing but praise.'

The curriculum is good. Staff address pupils' interests well through it, for example, Foundation Stage children thoroughly enjoy their 'welly walks' into the school grounds to find variety in nature, such as the range of colours in the leaves. Other pupils enjoy visits, such as to a water treatment plant, and the extra activities that help enhance their understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. The links with a Kenyan community contribute effectively to the pupils' global understanding.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good elements. Standards reached are broadly average and progress is mainly satisfactory, but pupils' progress in mathematics is inconsistent and standards are more variable. Some pupils have not been making enough progress in mathematics because they cannot recall number facts quickly enough. This slows their work and learning. Not enough attention is given to the teaching of basic recall skills in mathematics. A good emphasis on reading, combined with supportive help from parents, assists pupils' better progress in reading and enjoyment of books. Pupils do well in science, particularly enjoying the practical approach.

The school's systems generally enable it to know where it needs to improve but the strategies adopted to plan and monitor development are not rigorous or secure enough. As a result, the school cannot easily assess its rate of improvement. Furthermore, the monitoring of pupils' progress during the year is not regular enough in gauging whether pupils are on track in their progress. The work of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school but have not yet adopted strategies that help them to understand the school's work fully. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Several long-term staff absences during the last four years have undoubtedly affected the school's rate of development adversely. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. It demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is mostly below expectations. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. Most reach the expected standard in personal and social development and in number recognition. In other aspects, the attainment of a significant proportion of the children is below expectations by the end of the Reception Year. The good teaching provided by new staff in the Reception class has not yet made its full impact on the children's rates of progress and attainment. Good use of the thorough assessment of the children's learning, backed up by a good evidence base, results in work being well planned to match children's learning needs. The staff provide a good curriculum with a good emphasis on improving the children's knowledge and understanding supported by visits to a farm and the locality. Staff recognise, nevertheless, the need to improve the organisation of learning in the outside area.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching, standards and pupils' rates of progress in mathematics.
- Improve school development planning so that the steps to tackle the priorities are clear and the monitoring of progress is rigorous.
- Track pupils' progress more regularly during the year.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards broadly average. Following on from their satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Results are broadly average but vary from year to year because of small numbers. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 to 6 and good progress in science because they enjoy the practical investigations. Pupils' progress in mathematics is less consistent, although they tend to make better progress in the subject in the second year of the mixed-age classes. Nevertheless, pupils made less progress by Year 6 in mathematics in 2007 than they did in 2006. A particular difficulty is that pupils do not have instant recall of number and multiplication facts. Pupils make better progress in reading because of the good attention given to it. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress to other pupils.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and understand boundaries without being prompted. They work and play harmoniously together and show a high level of respect and concern for others. Many of the older pupils take care of the younger ones. For example, they act as 'buddies' to them when they first arrive and to other new arrivals. Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe and well and participate in activities regularly that promote these aspects, such as physical education and sport. They know that they must not talk to strangers. Pupils act together as a community and work well in teams, for example, the school council is becoming well organised through various committees. They support charities and have real interests in their links with a Kenyan community, all of which helps to prepare them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development is good overall. Pupils are developing a good understanding of a range of world cultures, but show more limited understanding of living in a multicultural society.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There are some good features within teaching and learning, such as the good relationships between teachers and pupils, which results in pupils trying hard. Good teaching of letter sounds and guided reading sessions support pupils' progress in reading effectively. Teachers often match work well to pupils' different needs in lessons so that they understand what they have to do. Lessons are well prepared and soundly paced. Marking is satisfactory. It promotes pupils' self-esteem, but written comments do not help pupils to improve their work enough. In some lessons, teachers use too many worksheets and these do not demand enough of pupils' own efforts. The teaching of mathematics is not yet secure enough because the staff do not ensure a consistency of approaches in written calculations and in the setting out of work. They have not ensured that pupils think quickly enough and have good recall skills. Pupils particularly enjoy science because of the investigations they can carry out for themselves, which support their understanding.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Staff plan the curriculum carefully to ensure that work is not repeated because classes cover a two-year age span. They make natural links between subjects, such as experiments with solubility in science and river studies in geography, which support pupils' learning well. Good provision is made in English and science, although it is not as strong in mathematics. A strong feature of the curriculum is the emphasis on sustainability. In the Year 3/ 4 class, pupils had designed their own pop-up book to demonstrate most effectively how simple habits can reduce wastage and so help the environment. The provision for personal, social and health education is a real strength and supports the harmonious relationships in creating a settled community. Pupils have good opportunities in information and communication technology. The school provides well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Visits both locally and further afield help pupils' understanding of their studies. A good range of extra-curricular activities widens pupils' interests and supports their good involvement in regular exercise.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Staff know pupils very well, value each one and nurture them effectively. Very good procedures are in place for child protection. The school makes good links with outside professional agencies to help with specific social circumstances or to support individual pupils with emotional and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff promote understanding of health and safety very well so that pupils know how to care for themselves and how to help others. Communication with parents is most effective. Very good relationships with them ensure that the school receives their good support and cooperation. This supports pupils' progress effectively, particularly so in reading. Staff set challenging targets for pupils and translate these into simple terms, which are easily understood and aimed for. Teachers assign these targets to pupils more regularly in English than they do in mathematics.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The staff's good knowledge of the pupils and their families helps to promote pupils' personal development and well-being very effectively. The headteacher has forged a very good working relationship with staff and so staff work well as a team in what is difficult accommodation. Together, they identify the correct priorities to develop the school further.

Staff are not as effective in making plans to carry out these developments and in monitoring them. This is because they do not map out the steps to achieve the objectives well enough, nor do they define the ways in which they will know whether they have been successful. The school development plan has too many separate tasks without sufficient reference to standards. The school addresses standards in mathematics, but is not sufficiently rigorous in identifying the success criteria for improvement. The school has not undertaken enough formal monitoring of pupils' work in mathematics to identify reasons for the fluctuating rates of progress. Tracking procedures to monitor pupils' progress more generally across the school are not yet rigorous enough. Consequently, the school does not systematically identify those pupils who are not making expected progress or those who need greater challenge.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and keen to learn but place much reliance on staff to inform them of the school's progress and the standards that the pupils reach. They do not yet have a sufficiently effective formal monitoring programme to inform their judgements.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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.

## Annex A

**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	3
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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

2 October. 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashcott Primary School, Ashcott, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 9PP

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. Your school has some good features to it and provides a satisfactory education for you. We were very interested in your link with Kenya and the way in which you contribute ideas to the running of your school. You clearly appreciate the lovely grounds that you have. We were very impressed with your knowledge in avoiding wastage of the earth's resources.

The staff take very good care of you and provide interesting lessons. You make satisfactory progress overall and reach standards that are about the same as those in most schools. Teaching is satisfactory with some good elements. Some of you are not making as much progress in mathematics as in reading and writing and so we have asked the staff to attend to this by helping you to think more quickly in mathematics lessons.

The staff work well as a team under your headteacher's leadership and they have the good of all of you at heart. Staff know what needs improving in the school to make it even better. However, we have asked them to make their planning for these improvements clear and to check more systematically whether the improvements have been successful. We have also asked them to improve the way in which they track your progress during the year to make sure that you are making expected rates of progress.

I wish you well for the year ahead and for the future. I hope that you will continue to do your best and enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth Lead inspector



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Lead inspector