

Ashill Community Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	123639
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314652
Inspection date	1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

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 on roll	
School	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gareth Mee
Headteacher	David Scotney
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	School Road Ashill Ilminster TA19 9ND
Telephone number	01823 480637
Fax number	01823 481130

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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement and standards of pupils, including their abilities on entry to the school; personal development and well-being; care, guidance and support; and aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; nationally published assessment data; examination of a wide range of documentary evidence provided by the school; parents' and carers' replies to the inspection questionnaire; observation of the school at work; and interviews with staff, children and two governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a very small school and the size of the year groups varies considerably. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of boys to girls varies in most year groups; in Year 2, there are considerably more girls than there are boys. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or learning difficulties is below average. A separate pre-school shares the site and generally the children move from the pre-school provision to this primary. The school boosts its numbers on roll by attracting children from the wider community.

The school has strong links with five other small schools and the Chard area federation of schools. It has Activemark and the new Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a very small school with a big heart providing a good quality of education. Nearly all parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and all of them who did were extremely positive about the school and all the work that it does. One parent summed up the views of the majority, writing, 'Children leave the school well rounded in all aspects of life; they cope well with larger schools because of the wonderful grounding they have received.'

Because, overall, teaching and learning are good, pupils achieve well, producing standards that are higher than the national average. The use of specialist teachers and the support given by classroom assistants is part of the way that the school makes excellent use of resources.

Standards reached in English, mathematics and science fluctuate from year to year and need interpreting with great caution because of the small numbers of pupils taking national tests each year. Pupils start school with the nationally expected levels of skills and knowledge, although this too fluctuates annually. Children get off to a cracking start in the Foundation Stage. By the time they start Year 1, all pupils are working at the nationally expected level in all areas. In the recent past, test results at the end of Year 2 showed a slight decline in reading and writing, where one or two of the more able pupils were not doing as well as they could. This trend has now been stopped. In 2007, results were higher than the national average and school data show a further improvement for results in 2008. All pupils do very well in tests at the end of Year 6. This represents good progress and good achievement. In 2007, all pupils reached the nationally expected levels in English mathematics and science, with 80% of them gaining the highest level.

Standards in art and design, design and technology and music throughout the school are outstanding because of exceptional teaching and learning. Music is a key feature of the good quality curriculum provided and a large majority of pupils learn to play one or more musical instruments. Pupils are thrilled with the music opportunities they have and parents appreciate the confidence they gain from performing to an audience. The annual Ashill Gazette also demonstrates pupils' accomplishments. The portfolios of achievement produced termly also allow pupils to show what they have done and how well they have worked and met their long-term targets.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding and contributes significantly to children's outstanding personal development and well-being. Assemblies help to develop pupils' understanding of human feelings and emotions and the way in which they affect people's lives. They also provide a time to pray and reflect as well as celebrate the wonderful community singing.

The excellent relationships that exist throughout the school community ensure that pupils enjoy school very much and are motivated to learn. Attendance is good and pupils arrive promptly to school and to lessons. The behaviour of pupils is impeccable; they are excellent ambassadors for their school. This is because they model the relationships and respect shown by the adults around them. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm of the discussions and decision-making with which they were involved, for example, the 'Pentagon school's council'. The new 'Ashill school council' will provide even more ways that they can demonstrate citizenship skills. There are frequent and consistent awards and opportunities for teamwork with other schools and for taking responsibility.

The school has made many improvements since the last inspection and the capacity for further improvements is good. The last inspection report asked the school to make more use of ICT, increase writing across the curriculum and ensure the accuracy of records from statutory reviews. This it has done. The school has also increased the opportunities for pupils to learn about and understand the world of business and commerce. Pupils are prepared exceedingly well for the world of work and the next stage of their learning. A good example of what the school does that is so special is 'The Ashill Business Enterprise Scheme'. Here pupils in Key Stage 2 learn how to run a business and have produced Christmas cards and bookmarkers, which they sold. They are using some of the profits to choose for themselves new outdoor play equipment for their 'huff and puff' activities at lunchtime. The rest of the profits are to be spent on materials for the next scheme.

Healthy living and 'fitness' for learning are important features of this school. In addition to taught physical education lessons, the school offers many varied extra before- and after-school exercise/sport activities. Several of these were the result from pupil requests. Three times a week pupils can join staff for a pre-school dance and twice a week for an early run. Pupils' use of 'brain gyms' and 'wake and shake' in class to refocus and improve concentration has proved so successful that governors use the techniques in their meetings.

This is not an insular community. Pupils and staff regularly meet and take part in activities with the Pentagon groups of schools. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the wider community. A charming example of this is its community garden, which it rightly won an award for in 2006. This garden created by a committee consisting of pupil, parent, teacher and community representatives is now a haven for wildlife and learning, and eating, resource. The school continues to raise money for charities, and takes part in drama and cultural events including the highly successful community arts project Alive (Ashill live). It is able to do these things because of the highly committed and hardworking staff, enthusiastic children and supportive parents.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The schools self-evaluation is accurate and reflective, leading to development plans that focus on the most important improvements that are needed. The care, guidance and support of pupils is outstanding. Child protection procedures are rigorous. Pupils say they feel safe and that adults help them sort out problems if needed. Pastoral support is exemplary. Staff use all available resources and support for those pupils who are the most vulnerable or in need through the excellent relationships they have developed with external agencies. There are good monitoring and assessment systems. Long-term targets are challenging and known by pupils and parents. The school is aware that it needs to look at how well it shares shorter-term targets with pupils so that when a pupil has met their given target, or on the occasions where it or the task is not challenging enough, they can let the adults in the class know.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage (the Reception year) provides a good quality of education. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are in line with what might be expected for their age. Those children who come from the pre-school unit, which shares the same site, generally start with levels of skills and knowledge that are higher than those of other children. Staff ensure that extra support is given to those who need it. Consequently all children make good progress in all areas of their learning, achieve well and are ready for Year 1 when they leave Reception.

Children new to the school this year have settled to school life quickly. They are proud of their achievements and pleased to see their work and faces on display in the classroom. The Reception children are taught in a class with the Key Stage 1 children. The curriculum provided for them covers all the required areas of learning well.

As for the main school, leaders and managers are aware that the school needs to look at how well it shares shorter-term targets with children so that when a child has met their given target, or on the occasions where it or the task is not challenging enough, they can let the adults in the class know.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that short-term targets are shared better with all pupils so that children can tell adults when they think they have met the target and be able to indicate when they think the target is not challenging enough.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashill School, Ashill, Somerset TA19 9ND

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I came to inspect your school. I came to see how well all the children are learning. I enjoyed my day at your school, which has a lovely family feel. Thank you for talking to me about your work and what it is like being a pupil at your school. This letter is to tell you what I found out.

- Ashill is a good school. It is a small school with a big heart.
- You are taught well and you make good progress in your learning.
- You are very responsible, play sensibly and look out for each other.
- All the staff really work well together and, as a result, your school is very friendly. As you told me, this has also helped make sure that you feel safe and secure.

The adults in your school take very good care of you and help you to grow up well. They are keen to make the school even better and they talked to me about how they might do so. I have asked them to focus on improving the following thing:

- Ensure that they share with you the smaller steps you need to make in your learning.

This is so you can tell adults when you think a target has been met and so that you can tell them when you think your work is not challenging enough. Can you think of ways to help them do this?

Thank you for being so polite and helpful during the visit. I hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and do your best. Please thank your parents for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

With my very best wishes for your future

Steffi Penny Her Majesty's Inspector

2 November 2007



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