



Air Balloon Hill Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108994
LEA Bristol, City of
Inspection number 278095
Inspection dates 22 February 2006 to 23 February 2006
Reporting inspector Jill Arnold HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Hillside Road
School category	Community		St George
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Bristol BS5 7PB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0117 9030077
Number on roll	255	Fax number	0117 9030080
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Nikki Jackson
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Rob Worsfold

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Air Balloon Hill Infant School is situated in an urban area on the eastern edge of Bristol. It is slightly larger than most infant schools. Most families are of White British origin and the percentage of children from minority ethnic groups is average. When children start school, their attainment is generally below that expected for their age, although there is wide variation within each group.

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 good school that provides children with a secure start to their education. The good teaching, stimulating curriculum and high levels of care result in the children making good progress, socially and academically. Many children start school with standards that are lower than average, but achieve average standards by the time they leave. However, some of the more capable children could be doing even better, particularly in writing. The school is well led by an effective headteacher who has a clear vision for the school. He is well supported by a committed staff team and an organised governing body. The school has a clear plan for improving the quality of education provided, based on an accurate evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. It has made good progress since the last inspection and has a secure capacity for further improvement. However, a lack of rigour in monitoring, evaluation and target setting is holding back the rate of improvement. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on developing children's language skills so that they can make good progress and attain satisfactory standards. Although the curriculum throughout the school is broad and exciting, children would benefit from more opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Most parents and children have very positive views about the school. They appreciate its welcoming atmosphere and caring staff. Attendance is lower than found nationally despite the school's efforts to improve it. The school works effectively with a wide range of outside agencies to support children. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards by:

- developing a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and setting clear targets for improving outcomes for children
- improving the achievement of higher attaining children by setting more challenging work, especially in writing
- providing more opportunities to develop basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills
- improving attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children make good progress as they move through the school as a result of consistently good teaching. Given the low starting point of many children, they do well to attain expected standards by the time they leave. Children start in the Reception class with a wide range of capabilities. However, a large proportion of them have weak language and mathematical skills and their attainment is below that expected. Children make good progress in all areas of their learning, although many still have weak language skills when they enter Year 1. Children continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and most meet the challenging targets set for them. In 2005, results in the Year 2 national tests were average in writing and mathematics, and were slightly

better in reading. Children from minority ethnic groups achieve well. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well in relation to their capabilities. However, higher attaining children do not always achieve as well as they could.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good. They display good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They generally behave well and work hard and this helps them to make good progress. The school is very inclusive and all families feel welcome. Cultural development is promoted successfully through international links, and through celebrating the different cultures and customs of children attending the school. Children develop a good awareness of social and moral issues, but assemblies do not always provide a rewarding spiritual experience. Children feel secure at school and recognise many strategies that will keep them safe. They have a very good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and take an active part in many initiatives to promote enjoyable exercise, including Brazilian dance and 'Jump Rope for Heart'. Children participate in a range of community activities, including charity fund-raising events. The school places appropriate emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, which contributes to their future social and economic well-being. Although the school has worked hard to improve attendance and has brought it in line with the local average, it is still below the national figure, largely as a result of holidays taken in term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, which means that children make good progress and achieve well. They enjoy most lessons, especially those where the pace is brisk and they are actively involved in tasks that are matched well to their differing abilities. The best lessons are thoroughly planned and children know what is expected of them. However, more capable children are not always sufficiently challenged, for example by writing longer stories. Well organised classrooms and stimulating displays effectively support learning and promote self-esteem. As a result of training opportunities, teachers are now confident in delivering literacy and numeracy lessons, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Basic skills are taught well, preparing children effectively for junior school. Less able children, and those with specific difficulties, make good progress as a result of the help they receive. Teaching assistants provide high quality support enabling all children to play a full part in lessons. Classes are happy and productive because relationships are good and staff know the children well. Children's work is marked carefully with motivational comments but these do not always identify how they might improve. The changes to teaching and learning in Reception and Year 1 by including plenty of outdoor activities are having a beneficial effect and compensate for the limited classroom space.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and creative, meeting the needs of learners well. It is organised effectively and thoughtful attention is given to providing a range of experiences outdoors for both Reception and Year 1 children. Initiatives such as international links, creative partnerships and sports projects actively engage children's interests. Children enjoy what they do and have access to a wide range of activities in which to experience success. Nevertheless, there are not yet sufficient opportunities to practise key skills across a range of subjects, particularly in writing. A variety of visits, visitors and activities, for example puppet shows, artists in residence and the giant Churchill balloon, enliven the curriculum. Children appreciate the outdoor opportunities that also support healthy living. 'I love going outside because there's so much to do', said one child. The school has not yet fully evaluated what effect the new curriculum initiatives are having on improving children's achievements.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for children is good. Teachers assess children's academic and personal needs well and use this knowledge effectively. There is good provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Staff adopt an effective, positive approach to managing children's behaviour, which has improved since the last inspection. There are good arrangements for ensuring the safety and welfare of children. As a result, children feel safe and have confidence in the adults in school. Satisfactory child protection procedures are in place and risk assessments are thorough. Links with parents are strong and the majority are pleased with the way the school responds to questions and concerns. Annual reports to parents provide helpful information about their children's progress. Parents greatly value their partnership with the school, which has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. One parent made the following comment, 'The school is amazing. It accommodates parents and children in every way'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and works with energy and determination to drive the school forward. He is well supported by an enthusiastic team who share his sense of purpose. The year group leaders manage their teams effectively. However, the role of subject leaders is having insufficient impact on improving children's achievement. Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are very supportive and provide good levels of challenge. They are involved in evaluating the school's performance and planning for improvement. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Effective use is made of assessment data to determine whether children are making good progress and to identify those in need of additional support. The

school improvement plan identifies a clear set of appropriate actions to improve the quality of education provided. The success of the recent drive to improve reading indicates that the school is well placed to make further improvements in the future. However, a lack of rigour in the school's approach to monitoring, evaluation and target setting is holding back the rate of improvement. The school works effectively with parents and outside agencies to provide high levels of care and support which contribute to the good progress made by the children.

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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	2	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	3	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	4	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

Dear Children Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we came to visit your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I am writing to tell you what we found out. These are some of the things we liked about the school

- You are cared for well and your school is a friendly, happy place.

- The teaching is good and you also get a lot of help from the teaching assistants.
- You are given a wide range of interesting things to do.
- The staff are good at organising the school and making sure things work well for you. These are some things we have asked the school to do next

- Look more closely at how well you are learning and make sure you know how to do better.
- Make sure that everyone is doing as well as they could, especially with their writing.

- Provide more opportunities for you to practise your writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in real situations and in different lessons.
- Improve attendance.

Yours is a good school. Make sure you come to school every day unless there are very good reasons why you should not. You do not want to miss out on what is happening!

With best wishes Jill Arnold Her Majesty's Inspector