

Four Acres Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109128
Local authority	Bristol
Inspection number	377878
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2012
Lead inspector	Jenny Batelen

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jerry Woods
Headteacher	Robert Lane
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 July 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jenny Batelen	Additional inspector
Colin Lee	Additional inspector
Marion Hobbs	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors watched 14 lessons, observing nine teachers. They heard some pupils read from Years 2 and 6. Inspectors also held meetings with pupils and staff, including senior leaders, as well as with members of the governing body. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including policies, the school development plan, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress. They observed and discussed behaviour and the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspectors analysed 64 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and by members of staff.

Information about the school

The school is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average; the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Pupils in most year groups are organised in single-age classes, but some pupils from Years 1 and 4 are in mixed-age classes. The school has achieved national Healthy Schools Status and the Bike It silver award. The governing body manages a breakfast club in the school. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. Four Acres Children's Centre is located on the same site and is managed by the governing body. It was subject to a separate inspection at the same time as the school.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school where the strong, caring ethos and good-quality safeguarding enables pupils to feel safe and know that adults are there to help them. Attainment in English and mathematics is below average, but pupils are making good progress and, as a result, the gap to the national averages is steadily closing, particularly in reading. It is not an outstanding school because, although the leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good, subject leaders have not yet had enough opportunity to strengthen pupils’ achievement across the whole curriculum and particularly English and mathematics.
- Consistent teaching of sounds that letters and groups of letters make (phonics) enables pupils to develop successful strategies for reading and writing. Standards in writing have been improving steadily over a period of time. Well-planned support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language enables these pupils to make good and, sometimes, outstanding progress.
- Teaching throughout the school is mainly good, with some outstanding practice. Pupils receive feedback about their work which is often very clear about what they have done well and how they can improve, but this is not consistent across the school and there is not always time for pupils to respond to these comments or to make judgements about their own work.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They work and play well together and those who may find this difficult are supported well through consistent routines to make the right choices about their behaviour. As a result, there is no disruption to learning.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a clear focus on the right priorities to improve the school further. Teachers are given strong support to develop their skills, particularly in using and understanding the information regarding pupils’ achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - developing greater consistency in oral and written feedback in order to confirm what pupils have done well and explain how they can improve
 - giving pupils more opportunities to assess their own work.
- Enhance subject leaders' ability to monitor and evaluate pupils' achievement across the whole curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels that are well below those normally found, especially in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy development. They make good progress in all areas of learning through the Nursery and Reception classes. This good start is built on well in Key Stages 1 and 2 and pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 with attainment that is currently below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics, but improving steadily. School assessment data, pupils' work and lesson observations reflected pupils' good progress in English and mathematics and, particularly, the improved achievement in writing, as demonstrated when Year 5 pupils explored and developed complex language to use in describing characters in their stories. Parents and carers, overwhelmingly, recognise that their children make good progress and develop a range of skills throughout their time in school.

Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 benefit from regular and consistent phonics teaching. As a result, the standards of reading are now rising and getting closer to the average in both key stages. Pupils enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about the books they are reading.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because there is a clear identification of their needs and appropriate support in place to help them tackle their tasks, whether individually, in a group or in the whole class. Challenging targets are set and there is regular monitoring of their progress. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress and reach standards close to the average for their group. This is because the school identifies where they need extra provision to enable them to access the whole curriculum successfully.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers agree that their children are taught well. Teachers make good use of regular and accurate assessments so that they have a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing. As a result, lessons are well planned and varied tasks are set that enable all pupils to make good progress in their learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to show their knowledge and to learn new skills. This was clearly demonstrated in an English lesson for Years 1 and 2 pupils

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who were learning how to describe a setting for their story. A picture and accompanying sound effects allowed the pupils to imagine themselves in the jungle. They shared ideas with a partner and then took turns to act them out by moving around and using their senses in the jungle, leading to successful group work about descriptive language. Teachers' strong subject knowledge means that probing questions can extend pupils' thinking, as was demonstrated in a lesson for Year 4 pupils when they learnt to select the right calculation method to solve problems.

Clear learning objectives mean that pupils understand their tasks, for example when Year 1 pupils explained clearly the problem of finding how many different combinations of ice-cream flavours were possible from the choice available. Oral and written feedback is often clear about how well pupils have completed tasks and the next steps that will improve their work. However, this practice is not consistent in all work and often pupils do not have the opportunity to respond to the comments made. There are opportunities for pupils to reflect on how confident they feel about the work they have done, but there is not a regularly used system that allows pupils to consider how well they have met the learning objectives for the lesson and so consolidate their learning.

Teaching assistants make a valued contribution in classes and in smaller group work. They are skilled in managing pupils who find it difficult to concentrate and in helping them to settle and make progress. The 'Sunflower' nurture group provides a range of activities to help pupils needing additional support work successfully together and concentrate on their tasks and so increase their self-esteem, participation and success.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have many opportunities to play and to develop their learning from the stimulus provided by adults, both indoors and outdoors. There is a strong focus on developing the children's speaking and listening skills. Children in the Nursery class enjoyed exploring and sorting the textures of different objects independently, following an adult-led activity introducing them to the language. Children in the Reception class, who were learning to tell and write a story in the correct order, were constantly reminded of phonics rules in order to help their reading and writing.

There are strong links made between topics across the curriculum, particularly in literacy and, as a result, pupils understand the relevance of their tasks. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to develop their moral and social awareness by working together, empathising with characters, understanding how to take turns, and listening to each other.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to their lessons mean that there is no evidence of any disruption and pupils are able to learn and thrive. The consistent and clear systems in place and support from all adults help those who find it difficult to concentrate and cope with classroom relationships to stay on task and work well with

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other pupils. Behaviour around the school is good. Older pupils act as role models for younger pupils and help them make the right choices.

Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They are confident that there is no bullying of any form and that any incidences of bad behaviour are effectively dealt with by the school. Some parents and carers have concerns about bullying in school and that their children's lessons are disrupted by bad behaviour. The pupils' views and the school's recording of incidents show that these are managed well and parents and carers are kept well informed. The support the school gives to pupils and their families is helping to eradicate or minimise behavioural difficulties.

Pupils are confident that they feel safe at school and parents and carers agree with them. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using modern technology, and how to respond to any possible cyber-bullying. Attendance has improved steadily and is now average, with evidence of strongly improved attendance for some pupils. The breakfast club, together with clear guidance regarding school start times, contributes to improved punctuality for many pupils.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers identify priorities clearly that will improve the school further. Good progress has been made in response to the school's identification of its weaker areas, as shown by the steadily rising achievement in writing and the improved environment and independent learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This demonstrates the school's good capacity to make improvements. Staff say how much they value the support they receive and how their planned professional development helps them address the school's priorities. Subject leaders have clear ideas about how to improve their subjects and the pupils' achievement across the curriculum, but have not yet had sufficient opportunities to develop their roles effectively. The governing body has a wide range of skills that enables it to give school leaders good challenge, as well as support. It is knowledgeable and well informed and, as a result, is able to monitor the work of the school independently.

The curriculum is good, with excellent cross-curricular links in literacy and in information and communication technology. Visits, visitors, and whole-school themed weeks enrich the understanding of topics studied and pupils are enthusiastic about these opportunities and the range of extra-curricular activities available. The governing body, senior leaders and staff work effectively to prevent discrimination and ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to access the full curriculum.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development well. There are opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work, relationships and behaviour. Pupils' awareness of the needs of others and respect for diversity, other faiths and cultures are encouraged through curriculum experiences, links with another school, charity fundraising activities and 'World Week'. The pupils enjoy

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opportunities to engage in theatre and music activities. Effective links with the Children’s Centre and with the local secondary school ensure smooth transition at all stages of the pupils’ education.

Some parents and carers say that they would like to be better informed about the work of the school. Inspection evidence found that the governing body and school staff work hard to engage parents and carers in the work of the school and respond to their views, as was demonstrated by the use of texts and the school newsletter as the main methods of communication. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and parents and carers expressed no concerns about their children’s safety.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

29 February 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Four Acres Primary School, Bristol BS13 8RB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who returned questionnaires about your school. We enjoyed joining in your lessons, assembly and breakfast club, and talking to you and sharing books with you.

Yours is a good school and, as a result, you make good progress in your learning. There are many good things about your school.

- You behave well, you help each other and you have a good knowledge and understanding of how to keep yourselves safe.
- You listen carefully to your teachers and work hard in your lessons.
- All the adults in the school care a lot about you and make sure that you are very safe and well supported.
- You thoroughly enjoy the visits and visitors that help you learn more about the topics you study.
- The adults who manage and run your school work hard to make sure you have the best opportunities to achieve well.

There are three things we have asked the school to do to make it even better. These are to:

- help you reach higher standards in English and mathematics by making sure you know how well you have done, how you can make your work better and give you time to make any improvements
- allow you regular opportunities to decide how well you have done in your work
- help subject leaders to plan how they will improve the progress you make in all the different subjects you learn in school.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and by responding to teachers' comments about how well you have done and how you can make your work even better.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Batelen
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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