

# Ascot Heath Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109986
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bracknell Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	378028
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rob Crompton

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	247
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Johane Pitney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Theaker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17–18 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Rhododendron Walk Ascot SL5 8PN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 883353
<b>Fax number</b>	01344 882521
<b>Email address</b>	secretary@office.ascot-jun.bracknell-forest.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed 10 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and staff, and talked with pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, policies, and assessment and tracking systems, safeguarding procedures and pupils' work. Inspectors examined questionnaires from 103 parents and carers, as well as those from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The school's effectiveness in addressing inconsistencies in pupils' progress and attainment in writing.
- The extent to which the school's plans to enrich the curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.
- The accuracy of the school's judgement that it provides outstanding care, guidance and support.

## Information about the school

The school is average in size and situated in North Ascot. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from minority ethnic heritages, but none is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social problems. A small number of pupils are hearing or visually impaired. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

This is a good school where pupils achieve well and reach above-average standards. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have extremely positive attitudes toward their learning. Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Typical of their many positive comments were, 'The wealth of opportunities offered to my children is fantastic. They both love school and are enthusiastic about their learning', and, 'The school provides a very caring, happy and safe environment for children.'

Pupils benefit from outstanding care, guidance and support, including first-class safeguarding procedures. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community and are extremely well prepared for their subsequent education, not least because of their first-rate spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Although pupils' attainment in writing is above average, the school has, rightly, focused on ensuring all pupils build on their starting points. Good headway has been made in this regard, although some inconsistencies remain. Although the teaching of literacy is generally good, lessons do not always provide sufficient time for pupils to develop their writing skills, with too much time being spent on introductions and going over old ground. Pupils increasingly review their own work against specific criteria but sometimes a focus on including various devices, such as metaphor and personification, is at the expense of having the opportunity to spend time on their writing and to engage the reader.

Excellent relationships underpin the good quality of teaching and learning. Most lessons move at a brisk pace and include tasks which motivate pupils and promote their learning skills. Teaching assistants work very effectively in supporting individuals and small groups both in lessons and in withdrawal sessions. However, their expertise is sometimes underused during whole-class introductions, particularly when teachers talk for too long. This means there are missed opportunities for pupils to be introduced to new work at their own level.

Outstanding partnerships, together with the school's success in engaging parents in their children's learning, contribute much to pupils' academic achievement and personal development. Overall outcomes for pupils are outstanding and this reflects the success of school leaders and governors in building on strengths and addressing relative weaknesses. Effective procedures for self-review and a strategic approach to development planning, together with the school's track record, indicate a good capacity for sustained improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
  - ensuring all teachers strike an effective balance between lesson introductions and pupils' independent work
  - avoiding pupils covering old ground before tackling new work
  - refining teachers' and pupils' understanding of what constitutes high quality writing.
- Ensure teaching assistants are deployed to best effect during lessons, particularly during introductions.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>1</b>
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Pupils enjoy school and achieve well. During lessons, they are attentive, cooperative, interested and keen to do well. Attainment in English and mathematics is consistently above average. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress, with most reaching the expected levels by the end of Year 6. Sensitive support for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social problems enables them, for the most part, to participate fully in lessons.

In recent years, pupils' progress in writing during Years 3 and 4 has been steady, followed by more rapid gains in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are now making good progress through the school, although some anomalies remain. More consistent progress is, in part, due to pupils gaining a good idea of the criteria used to evaluate writing. As a result, they are keen to show that they are meeting these in their written work. However, this sometimes results in rather mechanistic pieces. Pupils produce the most effective writing when they focus on engaging the reader and drawing an emotional response. For example, many wrote moving poems about Armistice Day, including:

'We remember...  
The women who gave up everything  
To keep our country strong  
No one knew when this would end  
The fear went on and on.'

Writing in her 'Demonology' booklet, one pupil wrote: 'No one knows how demons were made, who made them, what they are made of and why they are there. But I do, although I'm not going to share with you because it's so scary it will destroy your thoughts...'

Pupils' writing is not so effective when they try to include a simile and metaphor, or alliterative phrase in every sentence.

Pupils enjoy mathematics and science. They gain a very secure knowledge and understanding and hone their skills through much practical work. For example, Year 6 pupils rose to the challenge of constructing nets for three-dimensional shapes. Unsure of what a tetrahedron or dodecahedron was, they skilfully searched the internet to find out and made good attempts at constructing these complicated shapes.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Healthy Schools status and the Activemark

indicate that pupils have a secure understanding of what constitutes healthy living. Pupils participate enthusiastically in physical education lessons and other activities, including team sports, swimming and cross-country running. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are keen to support those less fortunate than themselves. They willingly take on roles which help the school run smoothly, such as peer mediators and school councillors. The sensitivity with which pupils support newcomers or help those who are visually impaired also indicates a strong sense of responsibility. Pupils’ spiritual and cultural development is enhanced through art, music, drama and visits. They demonstrate an expressive and creative impulse in their sensitive singing and thoughtful art work. This was also evident as they thoroughly enjoyed an introductory session on salsa dancing. Pupils’ positive attitudes and enthusiasm for school, together with their well-developed skills in language, mathematics and scientific enquiry, and their confidence in using modern technology, provide an excellent basis for their future education and beyond.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Excellent relationships underpin the teaching and learning. All teachers are skilled in managing behaviour and establishing a purposeful atmosphere where pupils have the confidence to offer ideas and ask questions. In the most effective lessons, teachers capitalise fully on pupils’ enthusiasm and ability to work independently. Pupils in Year 5 reacted immediately to the teacher’s announcement that the council ‘is thinking of building houses on our school field’. They shared their ideas about how they might respond and were seamlessly introduced to constructing a persuasive argument. During a Year 6 numeracy lesson, pupils were fully engaged throughout

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

by the teacher’s quick-fire questions, relevant anecdotes and use of humour. In some lessons, the pace of learning is hindered by introductions which are too long, cover old ground or provide too much guidance about how to complete the subsequent tasks. In consequence, the time left for independent work is limited and opportunities are missed for pupils to think things out for themselves.

Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons and track individual progress. Many pupils routinely evaluate their own work and that of their classmates, often using prepared tables with success criteria and spaces for these to be signed off by themselves, a partner and the teacher. This helps pupils to identify where they are and what they need to do next. Teachers mark work regularly but the guidance they provide about how to improve varies from class to class. Staff adapt resources very effectively to assist the few pupils with hearing or visual impairment. For example, they ensure the text and background of slides in interactive whiteboard presentations are in suitable colours and wear transmission microphones when appropriate. The most able pupils in each year are identified and benefit from weekly additional or alternative activities.

The curriculum engages pupils, provides memorable experiences and promotes their learning and personal development. Learning is enriched through a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Staff are in the process of devising a curriculum structure that teaches skills progressively and includes an appropriate emphasis on knowledge and understanding, while allowing the greatest flexibility in responding to pupils’ interests and local circumstances. This approach is not yet fully embedded and staff are, rightly, drawing on their experiences so far to refine their strategies to take full advantage of pupils’ high levels of independence and resilience.

A highly inclusive ethos ensures that pupils’ concerns are quickly highlighted and addressed with sensitive support; parents value this greatly. One reflected their views with the comment, ‘I have total faith and respect for the school and the help and support it has given my daughter.’ Pupils and families whose circumstances might make them vulnerable receive excellent support. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, with the help of external agencies when appropriate. Arrangements for transition into and out of the school are very good because of the well-established links with the neighbouring infant and secondary schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The Headteacher has nurtured leadership and creativity at all levels to successfully

move the school on since the previous inspection. The good provision has been sustained, with some aspects that are now outstanding, including the overall outcomes for pupils. The Headteacher and members of the governing body have a clear and critical vision for school development. Through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and careful tracking of pupils’ progress, the school recognises its strengths and ensures that weaknesses are properly identified and promptly addressed.

Procedures to ensure pupils are safe in school are firmly embedded. The governing body plays an important role in this by visiting the school regularly to check on the effectiveness of the safeguarding policy, and carrying out health and safety audits to the premises. The thorough way that staff check carefully the progress of all pupils reflects the school’s strong and successful commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. Any differences in the attainment of progress of different groups, such as previous anomalies in the progress of boys and girls, are identifying and addressed with vigour and determination to iron them out.

Parents are kept extremely well informed through regular newsletters, text messaging and curriculum evenings. A parent advisory group provides a useful conduit for information between home, staff and the governing body. Parents raise considerable funds through the parent–teacher association to support visits and other aspects of the curriculum, not least the attractive and stimulating resources which abound in the school grounds.

The governing body provides effective support and challenge. The skills and experiences of members, for example in finance, education and engineering, are deployed to good effect. Members regularly see the school in action, gathering first-hand evidence for self-evaluation. Their ability to interpret assessment data has recently improved so that they are becoming more adept in asking pertinent questions. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very effectively to provide valuable additional experiences for pupils, for example in art, sport and music. Staff increasingly share their expertise with colleagues from other schools.

The school plays a central role in the life of the church and the neighbourhood, and pupils’ sense of community is promoted well from a local perspective. Links with other schools provide pupils with insights into diverse communities within the United Kingdom and beyond.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>



<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

### **Views of parents and carers**

**An above-average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. The overwhelming majority were extremely positive in their views of the school. Almost all respondents were happy with their children's overall experience and in their views that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Concerns were expressed by a few parents about the information they receive about their children's progress and how the school responds to their suggestions and concerns. The inspection found that the school's open-door policy provides ample opportunities for parents to gain information about how their children are getting on, in addition to the more formal reports. Inspectors found that the views of parents and carers are taken seriously by staff and governors. There was no pattern to the other issues raised by very few of the parents and carers.**

## Views of parents and carers

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ascot Heath Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	58	40	39	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	62	38	37	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	32	31	53	51	16	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	35	59	57	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	44	43	52	50	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	34	33	62	60	4	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	40	59	57	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	35	53	51	8	8	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	37	36	54	52	7	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	28	59	57	9	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	30	48	47	13	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	43	48	47	7	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	47	46	50	49	3	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**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.**

11 November 2011

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Ascot Heath Church of England Junior School, Ascot SL5 8PN**

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed watching you work and play happily together. You get on extremely well with one another and with all the adults.

The school is providing you with a good education. You told us that you enjoy learning because your teachers make sure you have many exciting things to do. Inspectors agree that this is the case. You build well on the good skills most of you have when you start in Year 3. This means that you reach above-average levels of attainment by Year 6. We saw how keen you are to improve your writing and how you use check lists to remind you of the features that can enhance your written work. Sometimes, in your eagerness to include these, you include rather too many. Try to use similes and metaphors, for example, only when they can bring your writing to life. Some of your best writing does not include any of these devices! It was great to see how much the teaching assistants support you when you are working in and outside the classroom. We have suggested that some lesson introductions could be shorter or split into smaller groups so that the teaching assistants have more time to work with you.

We were very impressed with how everyone has their say in helping to improve the school. We enjoyed your lovely singing and saw how much you enjoyed all the other musical and sporting activities. The adults care for you extremely well and help you if you have problems. Those in charge of the school are working really hard to make it even better. All in all, the school ensures that you are extremely well prepared for secondary school. In addition to gaining the essential basic skills, your mature attitudes and sense of responsibility will be valuable assets for your future education and later life.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton  
Lead inspector

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