

Asfordby Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	119904
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379905
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Miller

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 of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christina Moulton
Headteacher	Tracy McConnell
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2010
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Miller

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. During the inspection, 14 lessons were observed over nearly seven hours. All five teachers, including the headteacher, and their teaching assistants were seen working with the pupils. Two lesson observations were held jointly with the headteacher. Discussions were held with the headteacher, all class teachers and teaching assistants, office staff and representatives of the governing body. Many informal opportunities were taken to talk with the children as they worked and played. The inspector attended sessions of the school's breakfast and after-school clubs and spoke with the staff running these facilities. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of school documents including: development plans; policies; self-evaluation reports; monitoring files; safeguarding and curriculum materials; and information for parents and carers. Minutes of governing body meetings were examined, including the headteacher's reports to the governing body and other reviews of the school's performance. The inspector spoke with a number of parents and carers, and analysed the 78 responses to the parents and carers questionnaires returned during the inspection.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with four mixed-aged classes. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion from other ethnic heritage groups is well below average; there are currently no pupils for whom English is not their home language. The percentage of girls is above average. The numbers of pupils entering or leaving the school during a school year, other than at the start of the autumn term, is increasing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs, mainly for specific learning needs, is well below average. The governing body provides a daily breakfast club, and an after-school club each Tuesday and Wednesday for up to 16 of the school's pupils. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award, and has achieved intermediate International School status.

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. Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. Standards are higher in mathematics than English, but the school is focused well on the development of pupils' reading and writing skills. This is helping to close this gap and enabling the more-able pupils to gain higher levels.
- Staff and governors are ambitious for the pupils to ensure they gain the best start to their education. This underpins well the school's ethos and its approach to development and improvement planning.
- Good leadership and management ensure that comprehensive records are maintained on the pupils and their progress. These are used well to support the pupils' personal and academic learning and progress.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The records and assessments kept on the children are thorough. However, information is maintained in different files, and not collated in the children's 'learning journeys' to enhance their value as a record of children's achievements.
- Work on letters and sounds (phonics) is systematic throughout the school, and integrated well with the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching is good. Lesson planning is a strength as it takes into account the day-to-day successes and needs of individual pupils.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are enabled to feel safe, because the school places a suitably high priority on their care and welfare.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is integrated well throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils are attentive and concentrate well in lessons. Their attitudes to learning are very good because they enjoy school and have fun while learning. They appreciate that their teachers and teaching assistants have much to offer them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the pupils' improving attainment by the end of the Year 6, and ensure that achievement in English improves further across the school by:

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- providing additional opportunities, across the curriculum, for pupils to develop their reading skills in the interpretation of written texts
 - applying these analytical skills in order to enrich further their written work
 - ensuring enhanced challenge for the more-able pupils in their literacy work, so that they gain even higher levels in the Year 6 national English tests.
- Enhance the value of the children's 'learning journey' records in the Early Years Foundation Stage by including with them the helpful and relevant records, and family contributions, currently maintained in separate files.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All parents and carers responding to the questionnaire agree their children make good progress, including those who have transferred their children from other schools during the course of the school year. This is confirmed and underpinned by the extensive and accurate tracking and analysis of pupils' attainment, learning and development. This confirms that the starting points of the large majority of children on entry to Reception are below those expected for their age. Children's skills in communication, language and literacy tend to be lower, with few in advance of their age. Their personal, social and emotional skills are relatively stronger; this helps significantly in their attitudes to learning when they first start school. The school's focus on daily phonics, and the systematic development of letter formation skills, enables children to make good progress in their alphabet recognition work. In a Reception and Year 1 lesson, children were exploring happily the Chinese New Year greeting 'Kung Hei Fat Choi!' This not only added significantly to their cultural development and knowledge and understanding of the world, but also provided a very good opportunity to explore unfamiliar words and the sounds the individual letters and blends make. On transfer into Year 1, children's attainment across their areas of learning is broadly average.

The secure foundation built in the Reception class enhances well pupils' achievements in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2 attainment is above average, including in reading. Learning throughout the school for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. This is because staff are willing to undertake additional training to ensure they maintain the skills necessary to meet the pupils' needs. The school believes in ensuring pupils learn in ability groups, and some more-able Year 4 pupils are integrated successfully into the Year 5 and 6 class. School data show an important minority of pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class, including the more-able, are working well above expected levels in English. Although achievement continues to be good overall in Key Stage 2, there remain residual issues in literacy and for some older pupils. While individual support for pupils with additional learning needs has enabled them to attain well above similar groups nationally in English, the attainment of other pupils in the subject was average in 2011. Fewer pupils gained

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higher levels in the Year 6 national English tests than in mathematics. The school recognises there have been insufficient opportunities to enhance pupils' higher level reading skills. Pupils' critical and analytical approaches to the interpretation of text have proved weaker. Work is in hand to remedy this and the curriculum is being adapted. Pupils now have extra opportunities to apply their interpretative skills in writing across the curriculum; attainment in English is rising.

In mathematics, attainment is securely above average and improving. This was seen in an excellent Year 6 lesson on the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils of all abilities responded very well to the high levels of challenge. Higher attaining pupils made particularly good progress in analysing shapes and calculating angles.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers recognise correctly the range of personal and professional qualities the staff bring to their children's education. One parental comment stated. 'Teaching staff are always happy to talk with you and put your mind to rest if needed.' There is very effective partnership work between teachers and teaching assistants which benefits well classes as a whole, in addition to those pupils with specific learning needs. Assessments are effective because staff are constantly challenging pupils with appropriate questions. Occasionally teachers talk a little too much at the pupils, but usually active learning is the order of the day. Teachers' planning files are practical working documents. A flexible approach enables the good curriculum to be adapted effectively to meet the pupils' day-by-day learning needs. Teachers' evaluation of their own work has recognised the need to challenge further the more-able pupils. Consequently, the normal expectations that pupils 'must', 'should', or 'could' achieve the aims and objectives of each lesson are enhanced by the addition of 'could even ...'. Pupils enjoy rising to this extra challenge and point to good classroom displays relating to this enhanced learning.

Teaching strengthens well the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in a number of important ways. Spiritually, teachers' questioning approach enables pupils to reflect on and develop their ideas. Pupils feel free to share their thinking openly with others without fear of ridicule. Through the promotion of regular, cooperative group work and paired discussions, teaching strategies support well pupils' social development. In moral terms, mathematics and numeracy play an important role in developing the pupils' logical reasoning skills. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 3 and 4 lesson involving problem-solving and calculations relating to combinations of coinage. This also related effectively to the cultural, Chinese New Year practice of giving monetary gifts in special envelopes. All four spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements came together very effectively in an excellent Year 1 and 2 art appreciation lesson on Edvard Munch's painting 'The Scream'. Skilful teaching revealed gradually the different parts of the painting. This enabled the pupils to explore the work very effectively, and discuss their changing perceptions when the central figure was revealed. The development of the pupils' critical and analytical skills linked very effectively with the school's focus on improving interpretation skills in reading, whether of artworks or literature.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

'My child loves going to school because everyone is so kind and friendly', commented one parent. Attendance rates are high. Pupils' responses on the questionnaires confirmed they are happy to come to school. The good quality of the pupils' moral and social development, and their sense of community, means they are considerate towards each other, whether at work or play. Discussions with pupils show they know and understand well how to keep themselves and each other safe. A few parents and carers, writing on their questionnaires, expressed some concern about behaviour and/or bullying. However, bullying is very rare; all pupils responding to their questionnaire agreed that behaviour is good and the school deals with all types of bullying very well. The headteacher records, meticulously, any behaviour related issues or misdemeanours. School records show these are few, are dealt with promptly, and that parents and carers are always informed. Most incidents involve simple childhood squabbles or occasional thoughtless behaviour, which are very quickly resolved. Pupils do not have the time or inclination to misbehave in class because they are too interested in learning. Pupils rarely overstep boundaries and, should they come close, working relationships are such that a simple look, a raised eyebrow or a quiet word from a member of staff will suffice; the moment passes quickly, unnoticed by others.

Leadership and management

All parents and carers who returned their questionnaires agreed that the school meets their children's needs successfully. Almost all would recommend the school to others and these views were affirmed in discussions. They agree that the arrangements for safeguarding their children have a suitably high priority; the rigour of these was confirmed during the inspection. There is an appreciation of the school's good curriculum, which promotes well the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Typical was the parental comment, 'I have been delighted with the opportunities provided by the school, including through music, drama and sports, and the confidence which has developed in my child, both academically and socially.' The curriculum is enhanced further through the school's provision during the well run breakfast and after school club, which always ensures an educational focus. The school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for its pupils has ensured accurate self-evaluation and development planning. This is focused well on improving further attainment in English by Year 6, closing the gap with mathematics, and enabling even higher achievement on the part of the more-able pupils.

The school's successful track record of steady and consolidated improvement over the years has ensured good capacity for further improvement. Staff are often their own worst critics, and there is an open climate of accountability at all levels. The school does not consider 'quick fixes', but long-term, sustainable solutions which will enable the pupils to transform their good to outstanding achievement. Staff, parents, carers and governors alike refer to the headteacher's excellent leadership. Her monitoring of teaching and learning is perceptive, helping secure the pupils' good

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achievement through consistently good day-to-day teaching. Her role as special educational needs coordinator has also ensured good provision for those pupils who find learning more difficult. The school's leaders, managers and governors aim high, and are sensitive to the school's central role at the heart of its village community.

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.



25 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Asfordby Hill Primary School, Melton Mowbray, LE14 3RB

I enjoyed very much my recent visit. I would like to thank you all for your kindness, politeness, interest and the many ways you helped me to understand what life at your school is all about. From the very positive responses to your questionnaire, I can see that you are very proud of your school. From talking with you I know you enjoy your learning. I appreciate you are all determined to work together to help make your school become an even better place. Your school is a good school.

These are some of the things I found are best about you and your school.

- You get a good start to your education in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- You make good progress and achieve well during your time at the school.
- Your headteacher, other teachers and governors lead your school well.
- Your teachers are focused well on helping you to make even better progress.
- You behave well and know how to keep each other safe while at school.
- Your attendance is very good because you enjoy coming to school.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Your time at the school helps to prepare you well for your future lives.

I have asked your teachers to do some extra things to help all of you make even better progress in your English work. This is to help you understand and follow better what you read, so you can organise your thoughts better when you are writing, and to help you achieve as well in English as you do in mathematics. It is also aimed at helping all of you, including those of you who are more-able, to gain even higher levels in English by the end of Year 6. For those of you in the Reception year, I have also asked your headteacher and Reception teacher to put together, in your 'learning journeys', more of the useful information they have collected about you.

As you know, your school motto is 'Individual value, valuing individuals.' You made it clear you respect and value each other in your school community. Please continue to do so and thoroughly enjoy your time at Asfordby Hill Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Michael Miller
Lead inspector

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