

Ash Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125116
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359837
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Grove

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Arnold
Headteacher	Jan Herd
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, records of governing body meetings, the school's development planning and documents relating to monitoring, safeguarding and the curriculum. Inspectors analysed inspection questionnaires returned by 34 parents and carers and those completed by staff and 42 pupils.

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

- How effectively the school's monitoring of pupils' outcomes and provision informs the priorities for improvement.
- The impact of the governing body and senior leaders in their strategic roles on school improvement.
- The school's evidence that teaching across the school offers sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils.
- How well the school promotes equal opportunities for all pupils.

Information about the school

Ash Grange School is smaller than the average primary. Almost half of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, and a similar proportion is of Gypsy Roma Traveller heritage. A small number of pupils come from other backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, principally moderate learning or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, is above average. The adjoining Ash Grange Sure Start Children's Centre is managed by the governing body. It makes provision for children aged 2-7, including wrap-around care, and houses the school's maintained Nursery and Reception classes. The Centre was the subject of an earlier inspection, and only the Nursery and Reception classes were included as part of this inspection. The breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body, was also included in this inspection. There is an after-school club that is not managed by the governing body. The school holds the Healthy School and Activemark Awards.

At the time of the inspection, the substantive headteacher was on compassionate leave. Since September 2010, the school has been led by an interim headteacher who was appointed from within the local cluster of schools known as the West Surrey Foundation. An experienced governor, who is the Chair of the Governing Body at another school, is also leading the governing body on an interim basis for the current school year.

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: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science has remained significantly below average since the last inspection, and their progress has been inadequate. The last inspection reported that some pupils required skilled intervention by adults in order to ensure that their behaviour did not prevent others from learning. In most classes from Years 1 to 6 some pupils, mainly boys, are sometimes actively disruptive or disobedient and their behaviour still too often distracts teachers and other pupils from learning in lessons. Pupils' attendance is low and has declined in each of the last three years.

One reason for pupils' slow progress is that the quality of teaching is too variable. Expectations for pupils' achievement, behaviour and presentation of work are not high enough. The roles of teaching assistants are not sufficiently clear. Although there is some good teaching and learning, for example in a Year 1 class, work does not consistently meet pupils' needs. This sometimes causes loss of concentration, and behaviour deteriorates. While some steps have been taken to improve teaching, these have not accelerated all pupils' learning. In particular, pupils are not regularly involved in reviewing their targets to help them understand how to improve. Furthermore, the marking of pupils' work includes too little guidance about improvement. Arrangements for pupils' pastoral support are satisfactory. However, the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is inadequate in more than one respect, including unsatisfactory maintenance of the central record of checks on staff, and other weaknesses in arrangements to ensure effective child protection.

In contrast to the weaknesses in pupils' outcomes in the main school, children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good quality of the provision, and the positive impact of the leader.

Although many parents and carers made positive judgements about the school, some were critical of the school's leadership. One family encapsulated concerns in writing, 'Individually, we see helpful and dedicated staff. However, they seem to be lacking the management and guidance to hold them all together and give a consistent view and direction.' Members of staff also express concerns about leadership. A majority of those who completed the staff questionnaire do not believe that the school is well led, or that it runs smoothly on a daily basis.

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Until recently, leaders and the governing body were not sufficiently self-critical, and had not responded adequately to major weaknesses in the school's provision and in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and performance. However, the acting Chair of the Governing Body and the interim headteacher have accurately diagnosed some key weaknesses, such as aspects of safeguarding and the unacceptable behaviour of some pupils, and have begun remedial action. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the leaders' ambition for the school and the drive for its improvement are inadequate, as is the effectiveness of the governing body. Although some decisive action has recently been taken, it is too early to assess its impact.

The school is unable to provide evidence of longer-term strategic planning for development. Improvement planning is limited to the raising attainment plan drawn up in response to the local authority's identification of weaknesses in pupils' standards of work. The use of targets has been inadequate because, too often, they have not been insufficiently challenging or realistic. The areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection, including raising standards in English and mathematics and making better use of assessment information, have not been satisfactorily tackled. These inadequacies are the result of a lack of clear vision and sense of direction. The school does not therefore have an adequate capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders, managers and the governing body take steps urgently to accelerate the pace of improvement by:
 - evaluating the school's performance with greater rigour
 - monitoring all initiatives carefully so that effective practice becomes embedded and inconsistencies are eliminated.
- Ensure that all safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements and that:
 - all entries in the school's single central record are complete and up-to-date by the end of December 2010
 - all other weaknesses pertaining to safeguarding and child protection arrangements are fully addressed by the beginning of March 2011.
- By July 2011, improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise pupils' attainment in Years 1 to 6 in English and mathematics by:
 - setting higher expectations in lessons for pupils' achievement and their rates of working
 - improving the guidance for pupils, particularly through marking which better indicates the next steps in their learning and make more rigorous use of learning targets
 - clarifying the roles of teaching assistants so that they support pupils' learning effectively and consistently well
 - paying more attention to pupils' handwriting and presentation. ♦
- Develop a more consistent approach to the management of pupils' behaviour in Key Stages 1 and 2 in order to address the inattentive and occasionally disruptive behaviour, principally of boys.

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- Improve the school's procedures to promote good attendance so that pupils' attendance is close to the national average by December 2011.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

When pupils enter Year 1, their levels of attainment are below average. Although pupils in Key Stage 1 made good progress last year in reading, writing and mathematics because of good teaching and attained standards that were closer to average, few gained the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics, and none in writing. Pupils' progress in the present Years 1 and 2 is no better than satisfactory. One reason is that some pupils, mainly boys, are easily distracted and fail to concentrate well.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils make inadequate progress in literacy and numeracy. ♦ Inspection observations showed that progress in Years 3 to 6 is no better than satisfactory, and is sometimes inadequate. In recent years, attainment has consistently been significantly below average, and was markedly lower in 2010 than in the previous year, especially in English. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of their peers. However, pupils of Gypsy Roma heritage make better progress than their counterparts nationally.

Satisfactory progress was observed in some lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 made adequate progress in a numeracy lesson devoted to revision of the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes as a result of the satisfactory pace to the learning, and effective management of potentially inattentive behaviour. Nevertheless, low attainment in literacy and numeracy, and the low rate of attendance, mean that too many pupils are not well prepared for their secondary education and are not acquiring the basic skills needed for the workplace.

Distractive behaviour, typically by boys, often interrupts other pupils' learning and progress. The school's log also indicates poor behaviour outside classrooms. This restricts pupils' enjoyment of school and their moral and social development. Furthermore, there are insufficient opportunities for reflection in assemblies and during lessons, which limits their spiritual development.

Although most pupils say they feel safe in school, their views are disproportionately influenced by recent improvements to the security of the site. Moreover, they have a worryingly inaccurate perspective on their own safety. Many members of staff believe that children are not safe in school. ♦ Some parents and carers also justifiably mentioned weaknesses in ensuring that pupils are adequately safeguarded.

Through the work associated with national awards, pupils develop a sound understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and participating in physical pursuits. Pupils who attend the breakfast club benefit from the healthy eating options. These pupils enjoy the associated activities such as hockey and martial arts, and the social opportunities that foster their personal skills well. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to play positive roles in school. In addition to the school council, which is involved in charitable fundraising, pupils play supportive roles as classroom monitors. ♦

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	4
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

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

How effective is the provision?

Too much of the teaching observed was satisfactory or inadequate. Across the school, expectations about pupils' readiness to learn and what they should achieve are not high enough. There is too little insistence on acceptable presentation and neatness in handwriting. Teachers' marking does not regularly point out how pupils can improve their work. Target setting is not being used well enough to raise attainment. The impact on pupils' learning of the large number of teaching assistants is variable. Some support learning well. However, others are less effective because they do pupils' work for them, or play no part while teachers are working with the whole class. Despite these weaknesses, there are satisfactory features in teachers' planning, such as the focus on matching the learning tasks to pupils' different prior attainment, and on discussing the criteria for successful work.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests by providing increased linkage between different subjects. This was demonstrated in a Year 4 lesson where pupils classified 'minibeasts' on a spreadsheet, linking science with information and communication technology (ICT). ♦Activities ranging from the Eco club to the ICT club enhance the curriculum. These, together with visits to places of interest such as the local church, provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to broaden their personal and academic skills. Satisfactory pastoral care is provided for pupils, so that most enjoy school. Medical care is well organised, and pupils' welfare is successfully supported through the involvement with

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local authority services. Counselling is provided for those with emotional difficulties. The transition to secondary school is well managed for Gypsy Roma pupils, or pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day. However, action to improve attendance has yet to have an impact. Although there are these positive aspects, weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements lead to inadequate care, guidance and support.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

It is clear that difficulties with leadership and governance have resulted in a loss of direction. Leadership and management, including governance, are inadequate because there is no common sense of purpose, or clear drive and ambition to improve provision. The interim headteacher and the acting Chair of the Governing Body are aware of this, and communicate ambition for improvement and a readiness to tackle identified weaknesses. However, there has not been adequate long-term planning for school improvement. Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' outcomes and the school's provision to identify and tackle weaknesses, including those concerned with safeguarding, are unsatisfactory. Although the English and mathematics managers have successfully developed a system to track the attainment of individual pupils, this has not yet been extended to track the performance of different groups of pupils, or to analyse the extent of pupils' progress.

The school does not have a well-informed understanding of its context. Although there are satisfactory links that promote cohesion with the local area, the school has yet to develop a strategy to offer pupils experiences that foster their sense of national and global citizenship. Satisfactory partnerships have been developed with local authority services, for instance in support of vulnerable pupils. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate. The school does not have sufficient evidence of the performance of different groups of pupils to ensure that discrimination is eliminated and that all pupils achieve as well as they can. For example, the information held by teaching assistants does not include evidence about improvements in the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities after they have completed intervention programmes.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children first come to school, their attainment is typically low, particularly in their language and early literacy and numeracy skills, and in their emotional development. By the end of the Reception Year, most children make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of their learning. A minority meet the expectations for their age. Children learn to behave well, to pay good attention and to cooperate. They move successfully from one activity to another without loss of concentration. They know about healthy eating and how to keep themselves safe. As a result, children are keen to learn and enjoy the range of learning experiences, including activities such as singing and role play.

The provision for children's learning and development is well planned, and builds successfully on their interests. The relationships between adults and children are relaxed and friendly, which provides good support for the emphasis given to learning to cooperate. The teaching of children in small groups is mostly good. Activities such as snack time are well organised, as is classroom learning. The curriculum is stimulating. However, the match of tasks to children's learning needs is not consistently well judged, and is sometimes too ambitious. The use of assessment information has improved. High staffing levels help to ensure that the welfare and care for children are good. However, teaching assistants are not consistently deployed to best effect, for example to observe and record aspects of children's learning.

◆ Leaders and managers have had a good impact. As a result of good self-evaluation, the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is clear about where to make improvements. For instance, a greater emphasis on the learning of letters and sounds has been introduced because it was noted that children's scores in this respect were lower than in other areas. The overall records about children are good because they give a clear picture of their progress. However, short-term observations are not yet as thorough as they could

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be, and reports to parents and carers do not include information about children's progress. Because the Nursery and Reception classes are located in the secure premises of the Children's Centre, the concerns about safeguarding in the main school do not apply. Parents and carers are very appreciative of children's achievement, and of the provision and leadership. This was evident in the questionnaires, where every response was entirely positive about all aspects of the setting. ♦♦

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The rate of response to the parental questionnaires was low. A small number of parents and carers who responded were not happy with their child's experience at the school, although most were more positive. Most parents and carers thought that their child enjoyed school, and that the school helped their child to lead a healthy lifestyle. Most also thought that their child's particular needs were met. More than one in three parents and carers who returned the questionnaires did not believe that the school was led and managed effectively, and a slightly lower proportion were unable to agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. These, and other concerns, were discussed with the interim headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ash Grange Primary 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	56	11	32	3	9	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	13	38	15	44	5	15	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	38	16	47	4	12	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	41	14	41	4	12	2	6
The teaching is good at this school	11	32	14	41	5	15	2	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	35	12	35	7	21	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	35	20	59	2	6	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)	11	32	16	47	4	12	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	29	19	56	4	12	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	21	16	47	3	9	7	21
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	21	17	50	6	18	3	9
The school is led and managed effectively	6	18	14	41	6	18	6	18
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	32	12	35	9	26	2	6

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



5 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ash Grange Primary School, Ash GU12 6LX

We would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at breaktimes and lunchtimes. We would especially like to thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaire.

These are the positive things we found in ♦ your school:

- many of you have satisfactory attitudes and behaviour in school
- the adults in the school take care of you
- children in the Nursery and in Reception make good progress in their learning ♦♦♦♦♦
- you understand healthy living and adopt healthy lifestyles
- you make satisfactory contributions to your school and community.

However, your school is not as good as it needs to be, and you are not all making the progress you should. We have asked the school to make some important improvements and we think the school needs some extra help to put things right as quickly as possible. We call this 'special measures'. ♦ Other inspectors will do more checks in the future to see that things are getting better.

What your school needs to do now:

- ensure that school leaders and governors improve your school by taking steps to tackle all the weaknesses listed below
- make sure that concerns about safety are tackled immediately
- improve attendance so that it is close to average
- make sure that all adults expect good behaviour so that everyone can get on with their work without being interrupted by those who don't always pay attention or who don't behave well
- make sure that you improve the presentation of your work and your handwriting.

All of you can help too, by working hard and by coming to school regularly. We wish you success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove
Lead Inspector

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