

Ashmead Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100716
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	354873
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Smith
Headteacher	David Collen
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2008
School address	Ashmead Road Deptford London SE8 4DX
Telephone number	02086926081
Fax number	0286926632
Email address	headteacher@ashmead.lewisham.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Inspection number	354873

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons and saw nine teachers and held meetings with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at its policies, records, assessments and documents, including responses to staff, pupil and 108 parent and carer questionnaires.

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

- What do the most recent school assessments indicate about pupils' progress?
- Is there sufficient good or better teaching to raise pupils' attainment and progress?
- What impact do the recent activities of the governing body have on the school's provision, particularly community cohesion?

Information about the school

Ashmead Primary School is slightly larger than average. Approximately 50% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is about double the national average; of these the largest groups are Black or Black British of African and Caribbean minority ethnic heritages. The school has an above-average proportion of pupils whose first language is not English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average; the largest group of these pupils has speech, language and communication needs. As part of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school has a Nursery attended by 39 children. Approximately half attend in the morning, half in the afternoon. In recent years, the headteacher has had responsibilities in other schools thus reducing his time at Ashmead. These continue.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Ashmead is a satisfactory school. Pupils make sound progress in response to satisfactory teaching and leave Year 6 with average attainment. The achievement of all pupils, including those with speech, language and communication needs, is satisfactory. The school is a welcoming and caring environment which contributes to pupils' good personal development. Pupils show good understanding of how to stay safe because they have been well informed, particularly by visitors from the emergency services. They behave well and enjoy school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but inconsistent. Some lessons are lively and challenging for all, but too many do not plan for the full range of abilities in each class. Pupils of lower abilities usually learn satisfactorily because they are supported by teaching assistants, and those of average abilities generally find their work has the correct degree of difficulty. However, the more able are sometimes insufficiently stretched. Some pupils have simple targets in English and mathematics but most have none. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully but, while there are encouraging comments, insufficient advice is given to pupils about how to improve their work. Many pupils have limited understanding of how to raise their attainment.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle well into school and make satisfactory progress. The school does not compare these children's attainment with what is expected for their age and leaders and managers have an imprecise grasp of their progress. Monitoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage is underdeveloped. The school is aware of this and plans to address it rapidly.

The governing body is proactive with a good grasp of the school and the need to challenge it. It regularly canvasses parents' and carers' views and invariably finds a high degree of satisfaction linked to the good information that flows from school to home. Strong partnerships provide additional colour to the curriculum, in modern foreign languages and other areas.

Comprehensive assessment information provides the school with a reasonably accurate picture of its provision in Years 1 to 6 and this is used to promote higher attainment. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is irregular and lacks the sharpness needed to bring about rapid improvements. Recent changes in personnel among key leaders have slowed the pace of development but, with these staff now settled in, there is greater drive and ambition. Sound self-evaluation and planning for the future is sufficient to enable continued improvement. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By December 2011 improve pupils' achievement through teachers' better use of assessment so that:
 - pupils know their levels of attainment and understand how to improve their work
 - lessons are effectively planned and delivered to challenge all pupils, particularly the most able.
- By December 2011, develop more rigorous systems for leaders and managers to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, to promote best practice and raise the quality of teaching so that 80% of lessons are good or better.
- Develop assessment and planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and thus improve the provision and outcomes for children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes that are slightly below expectations for their age. They enter Year 1 with attainment that is average. Attainment at the end of Year 6 rose last year but remains broadly average. Given these starting and finishing points, most pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, make satisfactory progress. Recent school assessment evidence indicates that changes in staff and more effective teaching in some areas have led to improved progress, but that it is not good. The pace of learning is not as rapid for the most able, particularly when planned activities do not challenge them sufficiently. Pupils' limited understanding of the next steps in their learning slows their progress. Effective support for pupils facing difficulties, such as those for whom English is not their first language and those with speech, language and communication needs, means that these pupils make satisfactory progress. Achievement is satisfactory.

Progress in lessons varies with the quality of teaching. In the best lessons, for example where Year 6 pupils investigated properties of numbers, the challenge for each ability level was precise and the pace lively. The support from the teaching assistant was proactive, and positive relationships kept all pupils fully engaged. This ensured outstanding progress. However, some lessons fail to challenge all pupils and teachers expectations are too low. As a result pace of learning slows.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well so most lessons are calm and enjoyable. There is little bullying and almost no racism. Attendance is above average. Pupils display good attitudes to learning and relate well to one another and to adults, but where classroom management is less assured they occasionally become inattentive. The positive ethos of the school rightly encourages pupils to feel safe and they say they know who to turn to, should they have any difficulties. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to avoid dangers on the busy local roads and are aware of the potential hazards of the internet and cyberspace.

The high uptake of healthy choices in school meals is evidence of pupils' good understanding of how to grow up healthily. Lunchboxes usually contain nutritious items but there are occasional lapses. Pupils respond well to the initiative that encourages them to walk to school, but not many participate in the limited after-school sporting opportunities. The newly revived school council is starting to represent pupils' views and

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

has already had an impact, for example in prompting the refurbishment of the pupils' toilets. Pupils regularly raise money for worthwhile causes, such as the Haitian earthquake. Older pupils help younger ones in the spirit of a caring school but their roles are informal and many do not have specific responsibilities.

Pupils develop social skills of cooperation and independence well. They make good progress in the basic skills of computing but progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy only make a satisfactory contribution towards preparing them for the future. The positive ethos of the school is a good testament to pupils' good moral and social development. Pupils celebrate cultural events, such as the Chinese New Year. The curriculum provides few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' experiences so their spiritual development is only satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

The school uses information and communication technology and its excellent resources well to provide interesting learning experiences for pupils of all ages. There has been some adaptation of the curriculum to meet pupils' needs. For example, an emphasis on personal, social and health education strongly supports their personal development. There are satisfactory links between subjects, but this has not been fully extended to provide stimulating units of study that develop skills across curriculum areas. The school's previous links with a Chinese school provided a stimulus to learning Mandarin Chinese. Visitors offer

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

additional interesting experiences but limited educational trips and few after-school clubs mean that enrichment of the curriculum is limited.

Teachers use a variety of techniques to enhance learning. They question pupils perceptively to check progress. Good relationships between adults and pupils enable all pupils to feel confident in asking and answering questions and seeking help. Teaching assistants make a sound contribution to learning but are not always deployed to where they could be of most help. Some classes, with a wide range of aptitudes, have no teaching assistants in important subjects, such as mathematics.

In the best lessons, planning is clear and outlines appropriate learning for all abilities. In other lessons, the learning objective is the same for all pupils or is unclear. When all pupils complete similar tasks, the more able find the work unchallenging and, while behaviour remains good, progress is less rapid than it should be.

Teachers mark work carefully but most written comments, while very encouraging, lack the precise advice required to move learning on. Some pupils have general targets stuck to the front of their English and mathematics books and ticks show when they have been achieved, but this is unusual. Older pupils, those from Year 6 in particular, have few targets and display only a vague understanding of what they should do to improve their work and raise their level of attainment.

Pupils and parents and carers acknowledge the school's good standard of care. Support for individuals makes a real difference for many and there are striking examples where pupils have been assisted to overcome significant barriers to progress. The occasionally ineffective deployment of support staff mars this positive picture. The work of the learning mentor has successfully promoted the emotional well-being of a number of pupils. Arrangements for older pupils to move on to the next stage of their education are well developed because the school has positive links with the many receiving secondary schools. Good liaison with outside agencies, such as the educational welfare officer, encourages positive outcomes, for example high attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is a ubiquitous presence about the school and knows pupils and parents and carers very well. He leads a cohesive team of staff that is motivated to seek improvement. School plans for the future focus on appropriate priorities and have some positive effects. With the headteacher having had responsibilities elsewhere and some leaders newly in post, the pace of change has been slowed in recent years. Leaders and

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

managers are aware of what requires improvement and all are poised to move things forward. Sound provision for all groups of pupils across the school ensures satisfactory equality of opportunity and good care means that there is no discrimination.

The school has plenty of assessment information. This is carefully analysed and shared among all staff. Colour coding identifies pupils' rates of progress, which enables those falling behind to be given additional help, largely through being taught in small groups or individually. Class teachers have good access to these data and they are used by senior staff to hold teachers to account for the progress of each pupil. Monitoring of teaching is limited in its extent and range. For example, inspectors saw no evidence of leaders and managers checking teachers' planning and marking. Lessons are observed intermittently, in varying detail and with little follow up. Consequently, there are weaknesses in teaching, planning and marking.

The governing body is developing its understanding of assessment information and is active in challenging the school about pupils' progress. Frequent questionnaires for parents and carers enable members to have direct access to their views. The governing body has clear procedures to ensure that safeguarding is thorough, including the regular review of school policies. Safeguarding is good. Staff are thoroughly trained and risk assessments are well managed. The school site is secure and pupils say they feel safe and have a balanced view of risk. The school is aware that some minor administrative matters, such as the dating of policy reviews, need to be addressed.

Parents' and carers' views confirm that relationships between school and home are generally positive. Regular canvassing of parents' and carers' opinions leads to changes, for example a few recent concerns over behaviour have led to a review of the school's behaviour policy. Good information flows home through newsletters, emails, texts and the school's interactive website. Partnerships are strong. Teachers from a nearby secondary school deliver French lessons and a local special school provides additional expertise in supporting individual pupils. Good links with the local authority are valuable, especially in providing speech therapy.

The governing body has taken the lead in auditing the school's community cohesion and encouraging a stronger focus on this area. It rightly found out that the school is actively promoting cohesion within the school and locally through links with organisations, such as the Brownies. The school is aware that it does not do enough to develop liaisons with schools and groups in contrasting environments, both in this country and further afield.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As children move into Year 1 their attainment is average and this represents satisfactory progress and achievement, for all groups. However, the progress of the most able is a little slower because these children do not receive sufficiently challenging activities. Effective induction procedures, consistent classroom routines and a safe, nurturing environment enable children to settle quickly into school life and promote good behaviour. Children develop good personal, social and emotional skills because they have many opportunities to cooperate and collaborate in activities.

Information gathered from ongoing assessment provides clear indications of children's current levels but it is not used systematically to compare attainment with what is expected nationally. This means leaders have an imprecise view of children's start and end points and so cannot accurately evaluate progress over time. This, in turn, means that planning tends to be based on subjective information and, in consequence, challenge for the most able is sometimes limited.

Teaching provides the correct balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities and offers good opportunities for play and learning out of doors. Relationships with children and between children are positive and supportive. The learning environment both indoors and out is stimulating and well equipped.

Staff promote close relationships with parents and carers by encouraging them to be active partners in their children's learning. The limitations of assessment and monitoring mean that new leadership has been slow to develop a strategic view of the area's strengths and weaknesses but very recent changes indicate that the school is acting vigorously to make improvements.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers express largely favourable views of the school. Most who responded to the inspection questionnaire are happy with their child's experience of the school and that they are happy there. A small minority have concerns about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour but inspection evidence indicates that the school manages such behaviour well. A few parents and carers did not think the school was led and managed effectively. Inspection evidence shows leadership and management to be satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashmead 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 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 276 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	69	33	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	55	44	41	4	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	25	66	62	12	11	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	28	63	58	11	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	38	59	56	5	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	35	56	53	12	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	30	64	60	9	8	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)	28	26	58	54	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	30	61	56	12	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	24	42	39	19	19	7	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	26	60	56	10	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	31	29	56	53	17	16	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	49	44	41	8	7	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

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">■ 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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashmead Primary School, London SE8 4DX

Thank you for the kind welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to meet such well-behaved pupils and we were pleased to hear how much you enjoy school.

Ashmead Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It has some strengths, especially in the good care you receive and the good personal qualities you develop, such as your strong understanding of how to stay safe and how to grow up as healthy individuals. Teaching is satisfactory and some lessons are good. However, some lessons do not do enough to promote good progress, especially when they do not challenge all of you fully. The headteacher and his team of staff work hard to keep you safe and improve the school. However, there is more to be done. I have asked the school to:

- raise your achievement by giving you more information on how to improve your work and make sure that all lessons challenge you, whatever your ability
- check up on teaching and learning more thoroughly so that more lessons are good or better
- gain a clearer view of children's attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help teachers plan more thoroughly.

You can help by keeping up your positive approach to learning. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.