

# Ashley Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116488
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	357984
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Lake

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Laurence Tams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Rix
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Norman's Road New Milton, Hampshire BH25 5BP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. ♦ They visited 23 lessons or parts of lessons, observing 11 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, teachers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school development plan, governors' minutes and assessments of pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 109 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging for these pupils.
- The achievement of lower attaining pupils especially boys in English to determine if the curriculum and teaching meet their needs.
- The impact of the improved assessment procedures to determine if targets set for pupils are sufficiently challenging.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to promote community cohesion at national and international levels.

## Information about the school

This is an average size junior school serving mainly the town of Ashley. The great majority of pupils are from a White British background and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; their needs include behavioural and emotional issues as well as specific and more general learning difficulties. ♦ The school has a learning support unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Although the proportion leaving or joining the school other than at the usual time is average, this disguises the fact that most of the movement in or out is created by pupils joining the school in Years 5 or 6. A much larger-than-average proportion of the pupils joining the school late have learning difficulties often associated with literacy and numeracy. The majority of the senior and middle managers are new to their post.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

Ashley Junior School provides a satisfactory education. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their progress is satisfactory and attainment is improving steadily after a dip of several years, but remains broadly average. The school has some strong features. Pupils behave well, make a strong contribution to the school community and have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and keep fit. The school promotes community cohesion well.

This school's undoubted strengths lie in the way it enables pupils to feel safe and secure and engages effectively with parents and carers who are extremely positive about all aspects of its work. Consequently, the school has a caring family atmosphere. It is an extremely harmonious place where pupils feel valued and where staff work hard to make learning enjoyable. The impact of this can be seen in the pupils' good behaviour and the way they mix with, and show concern for, each other. Pupils' social skills are outstanding. They were very keen to tell inspectors how much they like the school. The good quality care, guidance and support provided are particularly evident in the concern shown for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the learning support unit. This is helping these pupils to become more confident and effective learners, enabling them often to make better progress than their peers. Teaching assistants make a particularly effective contribution to the learning of these pupils and to other pupils in small groups but their impact in lessons is variable as they are not always deployed to best effect.

The quality of teaching is improving, especially in English which has been a school focus for the last year, but remains satisfactory overall. Information on how well pupils are doing is starting to be used more effectively, especially in English, through the use of individual targets for pupils and, as a result, attainment in English has improved considerably in the last year. In many lessons teachers ask searching questions that assess how well pupils understand the work and challenge them to achieve more. Nevertheless the use of assessment information to plan work that challenges all pupils is inconsistent. Sometimes assessment is not rigorous enough and, consequently, planning does not meet all the differing needs of the pupils in the class. Teachers provide good oral feedback and mark work regularly but written comments do not always help pupils to improve. The curriculum has been strengthened by a focus on activities that make learning relevant and provide pupils with better opportunities for developing their key skills. It is enriched by a good range of activities which ensure that all pupils, especially boys, are motivated to learn.

The considerable improvement taking place in the school is largely due to the re-formed and highly motivated senior leadership team led well by the headteacher. They have a clear vision for the school that is focused well upon school improvement. Assessment information has not always been used well enough in the past to track the performance of

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different groups of pupils and to compare this with schools nationally. New and effective systems have now been established designed to provide leaders and governors with a much clearer picture. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and uses this information well to target key areas for school development. As a result achievement has accelerated markedly in English, and teaching and learning continue to improve. There is substantial evidence to show that the pace of change is increasing. This indicates a good capacity to improve further.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to match the best seen by:
  - ensuring that teachers assess pupils' attainment and progress more rigorously, and consistently use this information better to plan work that challenges all pupils to do their very best
  - ensuring that teachers' marking makes it clear to pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work
  - building upon the good practice in some parts of the school to improve the effectiveness of learning support assistants.
- By December 2010 improve the way information on pupils' attainment and progress is analysed and presented ♦ to:
  - give governors and managers a clearer overall picture of school performance
  - enable easier comparison of school performance against that of other schools nationally
  - set challenging targets to enable all pupils to make good progress.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

The changes to the curriculum to enable a better focus on reasons for writing are enabling an improvement in pupils' attainment in writing. Lessons link reasons for writing better to the topics studied. For example, in an English lesson on poetry the theme of sounds in a medieval market place provided pupils with a good stimulus for writing. Very challenging but realistic targets have been set for most individual pupils at the end of the current Year 6. However, this is inconsistent and in a few lessons further acceleration of progress is limited because work is set for the whole class and not enough attention is given to the differing abilities of pupils. Good teaching of pupils with additional learning needs in the learning support unit helps those pupils with more and complex special educational needs make good progress. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make the same progress as the majority of other pupils. In many lessons the good use of talk partners helps pupils to assess how well they are doing and improve their own performance.

Pupils are polite, friendly and confident when talking to visitors to the school. They say there is almost no bullying in the school and they trust teachers to deal effectively with any that might occur. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities such as school council representatives, or as helpers on the playground. Pupils particularly enjoy looking after the school's animals

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and collecting eggs from the chickens. The wider personal skills pupils gain from these activities together with their satisfactory literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills help prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and show respect for themselves and others. They show this, for example, in the way they respect children with complex physical needs in crowded environments such as the dining room. They have a good understanding of their own and other cultures throughout Britain and the wider world.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Much of the improvement in English is owing to two factors. First, the introduction of new systems for assessing pupils and using the information gained to plan work which is more closely matched to their needs. Second, there have been changes to the curriculum to provide activities that give better reasons for and stimulation for writing and a higher degree of challenge. ♦ For example, in one lesson where pupils were watching a video on the Romans, the teacher continually increased the challenge by asking the pupils to compare the video with the information they had obtained through research. Teachers' good oral feedback is reinforced well by the new mentor system where pupils have the opportunity to sit down and discuss their work with an adult. However, these good features are not always supported by the quality of written comments which do not

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consistently guide pupils on how to improve their work or meet their individual targets. ♦ Learning support assistants often provide good support to pupils in the unit and in small groups withdrawn from the classroom. Nevertheless, it is inconsistent. ♦ In some whole class lessons they are not sufficiently engaged in supporting learning, which can slow the pace of these lessons. ICT is used effectively to support learning in lessons and in other ways, for example, by a group of gifted and talented pupils making an anti-bullying film or by filming a physical education lesson to allow evaluation by the pupils themselves.

The well-balanced curriculum supports learning well. It makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' personal development. ♦ Pupils enjoy music and the opportunities to learn an instrument. The many after-school clubs are attended by a large number of pupils and links with many local schools provide good opportunities for competitive sports. The impact of recent changes to the curriculum to ensure that topics studied are chosen to provide reasons for writing can be seen in pupils' improving writing skills. However, this has not yet developed to the same extent in mathematics. The many visits, especially the regular residential visits, make a good contribution to learning and a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The richness of the curriculum is evident in the high quality art, music and physical education seen during the inspection.

Pastoral care is very strong. The school is vigilant in ensuring the safety of vulnerable pupils and in monitoring their attendance. Close partnerships with other local schools enable good quality guidance and support for those identified as gifted and talented. The accelerating progress in English is due, in no small part, to the introduction of individual mentoring discussions with pupils and better individual targets. However there is still some inconsistency in this support and this is limiting improvement in achievement a little.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Many of the senior management are new to their roles. They share the clear drive and ambition of the headteacher to improve the school and raise attainment. This has developed the strengths of leadership at all levels but their work has not yet had time to be reflected fully in improving teaching and learning or raising attainment. As a result, although the headteacher has a very accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning, the new members of the leadership team do not yet have such a clear picture of how effectively pupils learn in different classes. A sound start has been made to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning through checks on the progress made by pupils, but this is presently at a pupil and class level.

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Checks on the performance of different groups are being used increasingly effectively to ensure equality of opportunity alongside the school's strenuous efforts to combat discrimination. Nevertheless, in spite of improving progress, pupils in the main school are currently achieving satisfactorily. The governing body support the school well and monitor carefully the implementation of the school development plan but do not yet have clear enough information on whole school performance to hold the school to account well enough. They are rigorous in ensuring the safety of pupils, and training in child protection is regularly updated. Community cohesion is taken seriously with a good quality plan to improve the school's national and international links together with secure systems for evaluating the effectiveness of strategies put in place. ♦♦

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are almost unanimously supportive of all aspects of the school's work. They are particularly pleased with the pastoral care and the after-school activities. Many of those who returned questionnaires also made positive written comments. Typical comments were:

'Both my children enjoy school'; 'Excellent after-school activities'; 'Everyone in this school is always happy and smiling, this provides an enjoyable environment for learning'; 'I am extremely happy with the school and my child has progressively grown while attending'; 'This is a happy school, happy kids equals good learning'.

Inspection evidence supports most of the positive views of parents although inspectors find that pupils' progress is currently only satisfactory except for those in the learning support unit.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashley 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 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 243 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	61	42	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	71	31	28	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	63	58	44	40	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	53	47	43	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	61	40	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	49	54	50	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	61	43	39	0	0	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)	60	55	44	40	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	56	46	42	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	44	56	51	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	40	58	53	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	69	63	40	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	67	36	32	0	0	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	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](http://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"><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.**



17 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ashley Junior School, New Milton, BH25 5BP**

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and polite manners and enjoyed talking with you. I particularly enjoyed watching your skills with a diablo at playtime.

Yours is a satisfactory school that is improving. You attain levels similar to those reached in most schools and make satisfactory progress in your learning. Here are some of the other things we found out about your school.

- The school looks after you well. It is particularly good at making sure you know how to stay fit and healthy.
- You make a good contribution to school life through responsibilities you take on such as helping look after others at lunchtime or looking after the school animals.
- You have excellent social skills and a good understanding of how to get on with other people from different parts of the world.
- The school provides a lot of activities to make your learning interesting.

In order to help the school continue to improve, this is what we have asked the headteacher and governors to do.

- Make sure that teachers use the information that they have on you to plan work that challenges all of you. You can help by telling your teacher if you find any work too easy.
- Make sure that marking in your books includes helpful comments that show you what you need to do to improve and meet your targets.
- Use the information they have on your attainment and progress in better ways that show how well your school is doing compared to other schools.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector

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