

Ashton-under-Hill First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116650
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	357998
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Martyn Groucutt

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Bryony Baynes
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. A total of six lessons were observed and six teachers seen. Meetings were held with representative governors, the headteacher, teachers and pupils, together with the Family Support Worker employed by the local cluster of schools. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, arrangements for safeguarding and a range of policy and planning documentation. A total of 71 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed, together with 14 from staff and 54 from Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- Systems for monitoring and tracking the progress of pupils.
- Systems for assessing pupils' work and how this influences teaching for individuals and groups of pupils.
- The effectiveness of the generous staffing in classrooms.
- The promotion of community cohesion and pupils' understanding of different communities locally, nationally and globally, as it was an issue at the last inspection.

Information about the school

Ashton-under-Hill is much smaller than average, serving primarily the village and its surrounding area, but with increasing numbers coming from further afield. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, while the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is around average. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has been awarded the Activemark and has achieved Healthy Schools status. The local authority has given it awards for Effective Practice in Early Years and for Working Towards Extended Schools.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a good school that has demonstrated rapid improvement since the last inspection. Dynamic and outstanding leadership is focused on driving up standards while ensuring that individual needs are met, with effective support from committed staff. The governing body is fulfilling its legal responsibilities well, including duties for safeguarding and for promoting community cohesion.

Children get off to an excellent start in Reception, where virtually all achieve their Early Learning Goals. They are happy and confident learners, acquiring the skills to support effective learning. Provision has improved since the last inspection and is now outstanding. In the main school, the pattern of decline seen at the last inspection has been reversed. Improvement in each subsequent year now sees Key Stage 1 attainment significantly above the national average, a pattern replicated in Year 5 after which pupils leave for Middle School. Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding, and learn effectively. They enjoy their learning and a large majority make good or outstanding progress. Effective tracking of individual progress allows teachers to be held responsible for meeting the learning needs of all their pupils. This ensures that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are able to make progress in line with that of their peers.

Pupils say they feel safe and behaviour is outstanding. When incidents do occur they say that adults deal with them effectively. The school works hard to help pupils understand and engage with the wider world, and to engage in a range of cultural, artistic and sporting activity. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy going to school and being such effective learners brings positive rewards. This helps them acquire the skills needed for later life.

Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers enthuse and challenge, supporting the good progress of their pupils and helping them reach challenging targets. Most reach or surpass the expected national levels. Assessment and tracking are detailed, but the information gained is not always used fully in reading. Marking and target setting are used effectively to help pupils know how they can improve and here the school is refining its good practice. Resources, including the outstanding use of teaching assistants to support teachers and the effective use of technology to promote individual learning, help to boost individual achievement, which has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The curriculum is largely topic based and teachers take great care to ensure that due weight is given to the acquisition of the key skills in literacy and numeracy. Very good enrichment provides opportunities for developing wider skills and interests. Outstanding arrangements for care, guidance and support, including provision of a Family Support Worker, contributes to well-being and promoting effective learning, especially for those pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable and in need of support.

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Links with parents and carers are generally very positive, although a small number prove difficult to reach and are not fully engaged in the education of their children. Effective partnerships are used to promote learning and wider enjoyment through providing extra expertise. Equal opportunities are supported by the detailed knowledge of every pupil, so that all can fulfil their potential, while good value for money is secured by careful financial management and a relentless focus on achieving successful outcomes. This is especially effective in the targeting of resources, such as staff, into classrooms to best support teaching and learning. Promoting community cohesion has been a priority for the governing body and this is now effective in developing pupils' understanding of their world at local, national and international levels. Outstanding leadership, illustrated by accurate self-evaluation and the focus on successfully raising standards, the ambition and commitment of governors and staff, and the rapid progress made since addressing issues from the last inspection and moving forward, demonstrate an outstanding capacity for continuing sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that individual learning and progress are accelerated further by:
 - refining the use of marking and target setting
 - improving the way the school assesses progress in reading.
- Continue to develop ways for increasing the involvement of the small number of parents and carers who are hard to reach and uninvolved in school life and the education of their children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and classrooms are buzzing with activity and enjoyment. For example, the mixed age Key Stage 1 class, after some preparatory written work on Jack and the Beanstalk, were able to interview Jack himself with great enthusiasm to gain his perspective, enabling the pupils to develop a range of written, verbal and social skills. The focus on individual data shows pupils to be making good, sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points. Attainment has improved in recent years. On entry it is generally a little above average and by the end of Key Stage 1 and thereafter is now significantly above the national expectation. Pupil progress as demonstrated over the last three years has also improved, achievement is now good, and increasingly is outstanding. Where this is not the case teachers are able to identify and address individual problems quickly. Since teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of all pupils they are individually supported, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the gifted and talented and those identified as being potentially vulnerable. This means the outcomes for all groups and individuals are equally positive. One parent wrote, 'My son's ability was picked up early in Reception and strategies have been put in place to support him throughout.'

Parents and carers and pupils strongly believe the school is a safe place, where an understanding of how to be safe is a priority from the outset. Behaviour is equally outstanding, both in class, where it supports effective learning, and generally around school where older pupils can be seen taking good care of younger ones. The skills required in later life for economic well-being are promoted effectively, including enterprise

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and computer skills. Since pupils enjoy school so much attendance is good. Many pupils take part in a range of sporting activities as part of an excellent programme of after school clubs and they understand the necessary attributes for a healthy lifestyle. Initiatives to support health promotion are well supported by the school nurse. Many pupils enjoy taking part in community activities in school and the locality. A good example was the invitation by Year 5 pupils to former soldiers in the village to attend a Remembrance Day Cafe that they organised, where they were able to reinforce their class-work on the Second World War through talking to soldiers who had participated. Understanding of different communities is promoted effectively, not least through the whole school links that have been developed with urban schools in Worcester and Wolverhampton.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
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?

Effective teaching underpins the quality of learning and the good progress of pupils. Careful planning supports adventurous and effective practice. This was illustrated in a Year 3 lesson on the use of similes and metaphors, in which the teacher was successfully getting pupils to come up with original and powerful ideas, supported by her teaching assistant who had dressed up in a threatening way in cloak and mask to create a visually scary figure. Similarly, effective collaboration between the Year 4 teacher and two teaching assistants produced an outstanding lesson where groups of pupils were undertaking independent research using library and internet resources to develop

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environmental work they had undertaken in the school grounds. Both examples reflect detailed planning and collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants, and the excellent use of resources to support and develop learning. This enables most pupils to reach their challenging targets and, as they get older, the intellectual confidence to be involved in the setting of their own targets and the assessment of their own and other pupils' work. On a few occasions a loss of focus slows the pace of teaching.

Assessment and tracking of each pupil enables teachers to challenge each at the right level in order to accelerate their learning and challenge them intellectually. This involves planning work that is differentiated and teaching that is stimulating, has pace and maximises learning for all. The curriculum has developed into a much more topic based framework, which is becoming embedded in good practice. The extended curriculum provides an excellent range of artistic, creative and sporting activities in after school clubs. The large majority of pupils take part and some are supported by the expertise brought into school through successful partnerships.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding because the needs of individuals in a range of ways are translated into highly effective, targeted support. Sometimes this is in collaboration with the school's Family Support Worker, or with other professional support agencies. Those who might have significant barriers to their education are therefore able to make good progress. The guidance and support given to all pupils helps them to achieve well not only in their learning, but also in their personal development and well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Outstanding leadership is at the heart of the significant improvements since the last inspection, when the headteacher was newly in post. A member of staff, in the questionnaire, wrote, 'I feel immensely proud to be part of Ashton school. The headteacher's drive, hard work, commitment and endless enthusiasm are infectious.' The school is also well supported by its governing body, led by its committed and effective Chair. It fulfils its statutory duties to good effect and provides appropriate challenge. This is reflected in the provision for safeguarding. This is good because it helps give pupils an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and ensures that there is very good practice throughout the school, with all staff aware of their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, community cohesion, an area for improvement at the last inspection, has provided a powerful focus and pupils now have a good understanding of communities at the local, national and international level and direct contact with pupils in urban

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communities in Britain and schools in other continents. Positive links with parents and carers are maintained in a variety of ways such as the open door policy, the colourful weekly newsletter and the school's website. However, there remains a small number of parents and carers who are proving harder to reach. Links with the community also put the school at the heart of village life. As a result of the detailed knowledge that teachers have of their pupils, and their commitment to accelerating individual achievement, the promotion of equal opportunities and the tackling of discrimination is good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in Reception is outstanding and has shown significant improvement since the last inspection. Children settle quickly because of the excellent induction arrangements and get a real enjoyment from their learning. All activities, both adult- and child-initiated, now have a learning focus. Indoor and outside learning areas are used creatively to create exceptional learning opportunities. Children enter at slightly above the expected level and make good, sometimes outstanding, progress. This means that virtually all achieve their Early Learning Goals. The teacher, teaching assistant and parent volunteers plan and collaborate very effectively, so a range of stimulating activities are available. Personal, social and emotional development is a focus and provision is excellent. There are high expectations of how children will learn and play together. Very positive relations exist with parents and carers and also with the local playgroup, supporting a successful start. From then on individual progress is monitored and recorded in detail. Leadership and management, provided by a teacher new in post since the last inspection, are now good. There is a clear focus on helping children to maximise their progress in learning and social development, as well as on promoting their safety and welfare.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and the large majority show their support for the school, its leadership, staff and the education it provides for their children. Several responses note the positive changes introduced since the arrival of the current headteacher and the improvements in the quality of provision since that time. All agree that their children enjoy school and are safe.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashton-under-Hill First 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	69	21	30	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	83	12	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	56	29	41	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	54	25	36	3	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	49	70	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	59	26	37	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	54	31	44	1	1	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)	39	56	26	37	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	56	27	39	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	57	23	33	4	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	53	27	39	5	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	66	21	30	1	1	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	69	18	26	4	6	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.



19 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashton-under-Hill First School, Evesham, WR11 7SW

I would like to thank you all for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited. You go to a good school where everyone works hard to help you. You told me that you enjoy school and feel very safe. Your behaviour is outstanding.

Lessons are usually well planned and give you lots of opportunities to develop your learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very well, so there is often lots going on in your lessons. You also take part in a good range of clubs and activities. Sometimes people come from outside to help run activities, so you gain from the expertise that they bring. These, together with visits and visitors who come into school to talk to you, all provide you with a lot of exciting learning experiences. Sometimes it also helps you learn more about how other people live in our country and around the world. Your teachers are careful to record how well you are doing and try to ensure that they are able to support you if you need any extra help. Those of you who find learning a bit more difficult are also given very good help, so you too are able to show that you are learning well during the school year.

I have asked your school to improve a couple of things.

Your teachers should look at ways in which they can make the marking and recording of your work even better.

In those very few cases when some parents or carers are not fully working with the school to help you learn as best you can the school should try new ways of getting those parents or carers fully involved.

I hope you will continue to do your very best and to enjoy your learning - that is the way to get the best out of life and to prepare for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Groucutt

Lead inspector

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