

Ashbrook Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112602
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357142
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	James Kilner HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Steare
Headteacher	Jenny Jaszczuk and Mell Julian
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons and five teachers. Meetings were held with the two co-headteachers, pupils, members of the governing body, staff with leadership and management responsibilities and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including: the school improvement plan, monitoring records, pupils' progress records and safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires from 50 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of current leadership and management arrangements and development planning in securing improvements and embedding ambition, including a focus on the extent to which monitoring and evaluation have improved the link between teaching, learning and progress in lessons for all pupils.
- The consistency in teaching and use of assessment for learning in securing better rates of progress and attainment for pupils.
- The quality of the curriculum in relation to a themed approach and opportunities in mathematics as well as in English.

Information about the school

Ashbrook Junior School is smaller than the average-sized school of its type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than in most schools. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. At the time of the inspection the leadership of the school was under a co-headship arrangement. The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Award.

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

Ashbrook Junior School is satisfactory. It is emerging from a period of inconsistency, particularly in the stability of the staffing structure. Shortly after the previous inspection, the school was adversely affected by unforeseen and unavoidable staff illness and budgetary constraints. While the governing body, in consultation with the local authority, made provision to secure the leadership and management of the school, there was an unacceptably high turnover of teaching staff and pupils' achievement dipped significantly. Consequently, planned actions to bring about required improvements lost momentum. Also during this period, parents and carers felt that they were not kept fully aware of changes as they occurred. While information to parents and carers has improved, there is still some way to go as a small minority do not feel that the school takes their views and concerns into account sufficiently well. Under the co-headship arrangements, however, the majority of weaknesses are now showing positive signs of recovery.

Subject leaders have a sound understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and work closely with the local authority to evaluate their areas and implement strategies designed to raise attainment. Sound leadership by the school's manager for special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that support staff are given appropriate training to work effectively with the pupils assigned to their care.

Self-evaluation, firmly linked to regular monitoring, is largely accurate. For example, the subject leader for mathematics and senior leaders evaluated the effectiveness of grouping pupils in classes of similar ability in the subject. As a result it is proposed that these arrangements will be reviewed. Rates of pupils' progress throughout the school have recovered so that most achieve satisfactorily and attainment is generally in line with that found nationally. The work that the school has achieved to date to improve achievement for girls and the all-round improvement in pupils' reading ability are worthy of note. There are recent gains in the number of Year 6 pupils on target to achieving the higher Level 5 in their writing. Progress is not as secure in mathematics across the school although in the Year 6 class almost a third of pupils are expected to achieve the higher Level 5 in the subject.

While the pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and communities, their ability to apply the information beyond the classroom is limited. Consequently, their understanding of the multi-faith and culturally diverse communities close to their own is insufficient and the school is working to address this

A robust system to monitor teaching and learning ensures there is a stable and largely effective team of teachers. Information about the rates of pupils' progress are used in conjunction with classroom monitoring to hold teachers increasingly to account for the achievement of pupils in their classes. This work is already having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching across the school. Teaching and learning are

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satisfactory, overall, with some strengths in teacher's creative approaches and use of practical resources. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils were enthusiastic in their efforts to reduce the costs of supermarket bills in line with the retailer's percentage reductions. Pupils are presented with targets for their learning on classroom walls and, in some cases, in their books. Generally, these refer to a class or large group rather than to specific individual needs and abilities. As a result, pupils do not always understand how they are to move to the next level in their work. Also, as a consequence of high staff turnover, inconsistencies remain in marking of pupils' work and providing them with advice on how to improve. This inconsistency concerns a number of parents and carers who highlight differences in the way in which some teachers of the same class operate, for example, when they correct pupils' spellings or the consistency with which inappropriate behaviour is managed.

The school's satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement is demonstrated by the positive changes that have already taken place in achievement and teaching and learning, and in the commitment by the local authority to support governors in their decisions concerning the co-headship for the foreseeable future. Also, the governing body are becoming more skilled in holding the school to account. For example, the governor for numeracy takes a keen and informed interest in the performance of pupils in mathematics.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' rates of progress, particularly in mathematics by:
 - focusing teachers' planning of lessons and work more precisely on the different needs of all pupils
 - ensuring that marking of pupils' work is consistent, in line with the school's policy and gives them clear advice as to how to improve
 - involving all pupils more effectively and consistently in discussion about their learning and targets to help improve their progress.
- Strengthen the leadership and management of the school by:
 - establishing an effective partnership with parents and carers, which takes more account of their views and supports their children's achievement and enjoyment.
- Improve community cohesion by increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse and multi-faith communities

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry to the school is average. The achievement of pupils has fluctuated over the last three years with girls underperforming in mathematics. Close monitoring identified this weakness, and strategies to improve girls' performance in mathematics are bearing fruit, although they still need to go further. Pupils make better progress in English, with outcomes in reading and writing improving across the school and learners achieving as they should, and reaching standards that are broadly in line with national expectation. Pupils' current work and data seen during the inspection indicate that a minority of pupils

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in Year 6 are on target to exceed the national average in reaching the higher levels in English. Pupils' enthusiasm for English is fired by the range of opportunities presented for them to write at length and for a purpose. For example, they use persuasive text to argue the rights and wrongs of bottled water. A mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class delighted in conjuring up descriptions for 'The Gruffalo' to present to their peers in the neighbouring infant school. Rates of progress in mathematics are not as marked and only just beginning to come on track to expected levels of progress. Progress is better in practical lessons when pupils are able to use and apply mathematical knowledge. As a result of effective support in lessons pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities enjoy their learning and make satisfactory progress.

Playtimes are enjoyable and fun with a variety of equipment available, supervised by members of the school parliament. While pupils say they feel safe, some expressed concerns when the school's security fence was damaged recently. The school has been swift to act in resolving this concern and is now working with the neighbouring infant school to improve arrangements for the whole of the campus.

Pupils are generally polite and courteous, welcoming visitors and taking responsibility as members of the school parliament. However, there are a small minority of pupils who do not take enough responsibility for managing their own behaviour. Consequently, behaviour can fall short of the school's expectations. Some parents and carers and pupils do not feel sanctions to remedy poor behaviour are consistently applied. The school had already identified this as a concern and are in the process of reviewing the whole behaviour policy in consultation with parents and carers. Pupils understand well how to keep healthy and are active in the range of out-of-school activities. Opportunities to make a contribution to the wider community are satisfactory but the school recognises that these are currently limited to members of the school parliament. This situation is about to change to allow more involvement for all pupils. Pupils' sound skills in literacy and numeracy mean that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

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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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Several lessons seen were well taught. Relationships are sound and lead to positive attitudes from most pupils towards their work. When planning of lessons and work takes into account pupils' prior learning, no time is wasted from one session to the next and pupils are very clear about what is to be achieved. For example, in a practical warm-up session in mathematics, pupils enthusiastically manipulated shapes to produce five- and six- sided ones building on the knowledge gained earlier. However, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain, which slow pupils' progress. When work is not consistently well matched to pupils' needs, they are unclear as to what is expected of them. Although the school sets targets, not enough use is made of them to clarify, for pupils, the next steps in their learning. When lessons lack flair or are dominated by teachers' direction, pupils disengage from their learning.

After a faltering start following the last inspection, the curriculum has developed to be satisfactory. It increasingly provides opportunities for pupils to use the skills learned in English, mathematics and information and communication technology across a range of other subjects. For example, a recent study of the Tudors gave opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills to produce ships' logs and describe conflicts in great detail. There is good participation in the programme of extra-curricular activities.

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Satisfactory arrangements ensure a smooth transition from the neighboring infant school and on to secondary education. Of particular note is the sensitive and supportive help given to pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Attendance is average and the school does much work with individual families to maintain it at this level.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Current arrangements for the co-headship ensure senior leaders have a satisfactory understanding of the school - as reflected in its self-evaluation. The school collaborates closely with the local authority in monitoring provision and improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders are motivated and determined in the pursuit of higher standards. Improvement planning is appropriately linked to better outcomes for pupils. Equality of opportunity is a priority, and pupil-achievement information is scrutinised so that any underperformance by groups is remedied.

Subject leaders are dedicated in the work they do to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning. They ensure that all staff are aware that they are responsible for the rates of progress achieved by the pupils in their care. Much is at an early stage of development in tackling identified weaknesses. For example, while senior leaders have been supportive, they have not been as methodical in dealing with deep-seated weakness in teaching. However, the increasing confidence of the co-headteachers means that the school is working in close partnership with the local authority in taking swift action to bring about further improvements in this area.

The governing body utilise the strengths of their members to take a more active role in the monitoring and challenge presented to the school. They and all staff are trained appropriately in child protection procedures and in the safeguarding of pupils and requirements are met.

Although the majority of parents and carers are supportive of the work of the school, many of those responding expressed concerns on some aspects of the school's work and provision. While many of the concerns are already recognised as priorities by the school it is apparent that better communication and involvement of parents and carers are required. Despite the school providing opportunities for parents and carers to meet with staff and the governing body, more meaningful links are lacking and await being forged. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory and it is developing plans to improve the pupils' deeper understanding of cultures and faiths outside the immediate community. The school deploys resources soundly to achieve satisfactory value for money.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers feel that the school is providing well for their children. However, a small minority commented on shortcomings in communicating with and taking heed of their views. In particular, some felt that the school did not deal consistently with unacceptable behaviour, that their children were not making sufficient progress and that the school did not keep them informed well enough on progress. While the inspection found all these areas to be satisfactory overall, inspectors have given the school the task of improving its partnership with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashbrook 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 154 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	44	19	38	9	18	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	36	25	50	6	12	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	30	24	48	9	18	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	28	19	38	10	20	5	10
The teaching is good at this school	12	24	23	46	9	18	3	6
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	28	20	40	10	20	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	22	37	74	1	2	1	2
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)	14	28	23	46	8	16	4	8
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	26	21	42	11	22	5	10
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	16	24	48	10	20	7	14
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	24	24	48	8	16	5	10
The school is led and managed effectively	7	14	29	58	6	12	8	16
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	32	21	42	9	18	3	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	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.



25 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashbrook Junior School, Derby, DE72 3HF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We particularly enjoyed meeting and talking to you during lessons, in the playground and in especially arranged meetings. You were most helpful and courteous at all times.

I am writing to tell you what we found out. We think that your school is satisfactory. Some of you told us that there have been too many different staff teaching your classes recently. We found that this is now more settled and that most of the teachers with you now are determined to stay and make things much better for you.

At the moment, you have two headteachers who work together to run the school and this is proving to be a satisfactory arrangement. You know how to keep healthy and play well together.

Some of your parents and carers felt that the school could do more to keep in touch and to listen to what they have to say. Although there are opportunities such as the parents' and carers' forum for them to meet, we agree that more needs to be done and have asked the school to improve this.

You enjoy your lessons, especially when you are excited by interesting work. We have asked your teachers to plan more precisely what they want you to learn. We think that you should know more about how to improve your work and that you should have your own targets as well as your class ones.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

James Kilner

Her Majesty's Inspector

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