

New Ash Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130938
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	360164
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Joanna Toulson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Brown
Headteacher	Caroline Cain
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2008
School address	North Square Longfield DA3 8JT
Telephone number	01474873858
Fax number	01474874921
Email address	headteacher@new-ash.kent.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 14 teachers, observed an assembly and held meetings with parents, pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and a variety of policies and risk assessments. They also looked at other documents including information relating to pupils' progress and attainment, safeguarding, lesson planning and pupils' work. The questionnaires returned by 161 pupils, 87 parents and carers and 26 staff were also scrutinised.

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

- How well improvements are being driven in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children get off to the best start possible.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels are tackling weaknesses and, specifically, bringing about improvement in the quality of teaching.
- How much progress the school has made in addressing the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection, particularly in the use of assessment.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly higher than the national average. Most of these difficulties relate to moderate learning needs, speech and language difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The school manages a breakfast club. The child-care provision on site is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school has achieved the Gold Artsmark and has Healthy Schools status. With the exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.

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

New Ash Green Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school. There are also a number of good features to its work. Pupils feel safe in its well-organised, bright learning environment. They have a good understanding about how to keep healthy. There are good relationships across the school. Adults provide consistently positive role models for pupils and have high expectations of behaviour. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils are polite, friendly and kind to each other.

The headteacher provides clear direction and has the confidence of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and pupils. Those parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are supportive of the headteacher and the school. Typical comments were, 'School is a happy, safe and well-organised environment' and, 'The school has really helped my child's confidence.' Robust strategies are in place to promote regular attendance, which is improving for most pupils as a result and is currently broadly average. There remain, however, a few parents and carers who do not consistently support the school's efforts in this regard. The quality of learning and progress that pupils make are satisfactory. This is a direct result of the commitment and drive of leaders at all levels to improve the quality of teaching, consequently, the rates of progress for all pupils are improving. As a result, attainment has improved at the higher levels in mathematics in Year 6 and the decline in attainment at the end of Year 2 has been halted. By the time pupils leave the school, attainment in both English and mathematics is broadly average. Appropriate action plans are in place and are based on accurate self-evaluation. The quality of the learning environment has improved and pupils report that they like the changes. The governing body provides satisfactory support and challenge to the school. All this demonstrates that there is satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Teachers have created stimulating learning environments with high-quality displays of pupils' work. In the best lessons, teachers and pupils know precisely what the learning intentions are and pupils are appropriately challenged. The previous inspection highlighted the use of assessment and marking as areas for improvement. Teachers' marking now gives useful guidance about how pupils should improve their work; however, pupils have too few opportunities to respond to teachers' comments or to assess their own work or that of others. Assessments by teachers are now more accurate but the information derived from them is not used consistently well enough to meet the needs of all individuals. For example, work is sometimes pitched too high for pupils, especially the youngest in the mixed-age classes. There is also sometimes an over-emphasis on the 'hands up' convention which means that pupils listen passively while other pupils volunteer answers. The curriculum is adequate, with some good features, such as the provision for art as reflected in the Gold Artsmark award. The progression of learning through planning, however, is not sufficiently rigorous, with too many concepts covered superficially. This is hindering pupils' ability to build securely on their learning and restricting the potential to

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raise their attainment and achievement. The Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children satisfactorily for the next stage of their school life. There are some better aspects of provision but it is not consistent; the outside area is not used well enough to promote improving outcomes for children.

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?

By October 2011:

- Make better use of the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it is at least as good as the indoor provision.

By April 2012:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
- assessment information is used well to match work to the needs of individuals and to provide appropriate levels of challenge
- pupils are given opportunities to respond to marking and to assess their own work and that of others
- lessons have a brisk pace and pupils do not have to listen passively for too long.

By July 2012:

- Raise attainment and achievement in English and mathematics by ensuring that planning provides for a coherent progression of learning.

By October 2011:

By April 2012:

By July 2012:

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

Children join the school with levels of skills and knowledge that are in line with those expected but with slightly lower levels of communication, language and literacy skills. The school's own data, as well as pupils' work, show that progress is satisfactory overall but inconsistent, with too much catch-up needed in Years 5 and 6. Small group and individual support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is at least satisfactory and sometimes good, meaning that these pupils make satisfactory progress overall. During the inspection, good learning was seen where teachers used assessment well to match work to individual pupils' needs. For example, in a mixed-age Year 1 and 2 class, pupils were appropriately challenged while making posters highlighting the decline of bees. In a mixed-age Year 5 and 6 class, pupils made good progress in English because questions and tasks about using senses to write descriptions were pitched at appropriate levels for different pupils. In other less effective lessons, however, work was sometimes too difficult or too easy and too much teacher talk meant pupils had too few opportunities to talk about their learning.

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Pupils have extensive knowledge about how to keep healthy, as reflected in the Healthy Schools award, and enjoy involvement in activities which promote a healthy lifestyle, for example, walking to school and participating in extra-curricular sport. Pupils usefully contribute to the community, for example, helping at playtime as 'Red Hats', raising money for charity and taking part in the annual Remembrance service in the local village. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils develop good spiritual, social and moral understanding and during the inspection were engaged in an assembly about how their lives are different and similar to those of children in Zambia. Events such as 'Stories around the World' support the development of good cultural understanding and are enjoyed.

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	3
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?

Where teaching is strongest, teachers' subject knowledge is good and work is well matched to the needs of all pupils because teachers use assessment information well. However, opportunities are sometimes lost for pupils to demonstrate good independent learning skills. This is because pupils are not always shown how they can use marking and assessment information to improve their work through peer and self assessment. Pupils have opportunities to learn from the local environment and visits, such as to the zoo, support the satisfactory curriculum. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs which pupils enjoy. The school is beginning to develop a more cohesive, creative curriculum but

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this is in the early days of development and has yet to be fully implemented. The school provides a welcoming environment and there is evident care by the staff towards the pupils. Pupils who attend the breakfast club say they enjoy the healthy breakfast. Pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are supported effectively, and this contributes to their satisfactory learning.

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?

The headteacher, together with her restructured leadership team, communicates a clear vision for improvement. The recently introduced system to track pupil progress is enabling the school to tackle discrimination appropriately and promote satisfactory equality of opportunity by ensuring that it has pertinent information about how well groups of pupils are doing. The school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers and a new parent forum is providing an additional channel through which they can communicate with the school. As a parent said, 'The headteacher is very approachable and there is a new sense of pride in the school.' More frequent information sessions about how parents and carers can support their child's learning are planned for the next academic year. Senior leaders monitor accurately the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations and provide support to teachers to improve their practice. The headteacher provides good information to the governing body, which enables it to hold the school to account for tackling important weaknesses. The governing body fulfils its duties satisfactorily and has ensured that good safeguarding procedures are in place across the school, with all staff receiving appropriate training and robust quality assurance systems in place. The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion both in school and further afield, including, for example, its work with a community in Tanzania. Good progress has also been made in developing systems to evaluate the impact of the school's planned actions.

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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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a secure learning environment. Parents are made to feel welcome, for example, through regular coffee mornings. Relationships are positive and this helps children to make positive choices about the activities they engage in. During the inspection, children were captivated by the idea of creating a treasure map and good questioning by the teacher helped children to develop their imagination. Children enjoyed following a map in the outside area to move 'over a volcano under the sea'. However, this good practice is not consistent across the Early Years Foundation Stage and so progress overall is satisfactory. Although staff carry out assessments of children's learning, information from these is not used consistently well enough to ensure individuals' learning moves on quickly. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Indoors, recent improvements to the environment provide children with a broad range of interesting and stimulating activities but the outside environment remains dull and under-developed. Consequently, its usefulness in supporting learning is limited.

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

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Views of parents and carers

A lower-than-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these, most agree that their child enjoys school and that the school helps to keep them safe and healthy. A very large majority supported the school's work. The main concerns from a few parents and carers were about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, the amount of progress their child is making, how the school informs them about their child's progress and how it helps parents and carers to support their child's learning at home. The inspection found that behaviour management is good and that pupils make satisfactory progress. The school is developing better links with parents and carers to improve communication with them and to keep them informed about their child's progress and how they can be helped at home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at New Ash Green 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 inspector received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 311 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	59	34	39	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	52	41	47	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	41	44	51	7	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	38	48	55	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	37	43	47	54	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	39	48	55	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	32	56	64	3	3	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)	27	31	54	62	4	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	38	50	57	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	24	56	64	7	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	34	50	57	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	40	45	52	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	44	46	53	2	2	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



29 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of New Ash Green Primary School, Longfield DA3 8JT

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. The other inspectors and I really enjoyed meeting you. You told us that you enjoyed school. We thought you were well behaved and it was lovely to see how kind and respectful you are to each other. All the staff care about how well you are doing and how happy you are. You have a good understanding about how to keep safe and healthy. Most, but not all, of you attend school regularly and arrive on time. We think that New Ash Green Primary provides you with a satisfactory education. To make it even better, we have asked your headteacher and the governors to:

- Make better use of the outside area for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Make teaching and learning as good as possible by:
 - Help you to do better in your English and mathematics by the time you leave the school by making sure teachers plan work which helps you build up your skills and understanding more rapidly.
 - making sure that your work challenges you to think and work hard
 - making sure that teachers give you opportunities to respond to their marking
 - giving you more opportunities to assess your own learning and that of your friends
 - making sure that your lessons move along quickly and always engage your attention.

You can help by always working hard and telling your teacher if the work is too easy or too difficult for you. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Toulson
Lead Inspector

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