

Ashington Church of England First School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 125971 |
| Local Authority | West Sussex |
| Inspection number | 381160 |
| Inspection dates | September 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Julie Sackett |

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

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of school | First |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 174 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dawn Watson-Jones |
| Headteacher | Judith James |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 May 2007 |
| School address | Foster Lane Ashington, Pulborough West Sussex RH20 3PG |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 11 lessons taught by seven teachers. Discussions were held with senior staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, safeguarding arrangements, policies and records of pupils' progress and attainment. The inspection team considered 113 responses to questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from staff and pupils.

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

- The learning, progress and attainment of all pupils across the school with particular reference to pupils' progress in reading.
- The quality of pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of the school's measures to enhance pupils' awareness of, and respect for, different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs within the United Kingdom.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, monitor pupils' learning and well-being and use this information to maintain and improve outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Ashington is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school has achieved a range of awards including Healthy Schools and Activemark.

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

2

Main findings

Ashington is a good school. The headteacher provides sensitive and thoughtful leadership for her team of dedicated and committed staff and staff morale is high. Strong teamwork and excellent relationships support the school's successful drive for improvement, evident in the way the school has consistently maintained pupils' above average attainment. The school has improved well since the last inspection, demonstrating the school's good capacity for further improvement. For example, increased challenge in lessons and raised expectations since the last inspection have improved the quality of teaching. This has resulted in a larger proportion of more-able pupils achieving higher levels of attainment, particularly in reading and writing.

The strength of the school's community is underpinned by its caring and Christian ethos and excellent relationships with parents and carers. Pupils are proud of their school, work hard and thoroughly enjoy all that school has to offer. Pupils' very positive attitudes to school are reflected in their excellent behaviour and in consistently high levels of attendance. One parent commented on the 'great behaviour, the enthusiasm of the children and how supportive they are of each other', reflecting the positive views shared by the vast majority of parents and carers. A wide range of strategies, including regular surveys and meetings with parent representatives, is used to seek the views of parents and carers and to inform planned developments. Initiatives such as reading workshops are popular and very successfully enable parents and carers to work with the school to support pupils' learning. Safeguarding is given a high priority and systems are rigorous. High quality care, guidance and support provided for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, make a substantial contribution to pupils' good achievement and to their strong sense of personal safety and security. One parent commented, 'Our child's self-esteem and confidence is really high as a result of being at this nurturing school.'

Children start in Reception class with levels of skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. Effective provision means that children settle quickly and happily and make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in the development of language and literacy skills and in their personal development. Consistently good and some outstanding teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities continue to make good progress overall, particularly in reading and writing, through Years 1 to 5, so that, by the end of Year 5, attainment in English and mathematics is above average. However, pupils' progress in mathematics is slower than in English so that standards in this subject are below those in other

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disciplines.

The school has ensured that effective tracking systems are in place to monitor the progress made by groups of pupils. These are used well by staff to monitor the progress made by groups of pupils. That said, this information is not always used to its full potential to inform planning so that, at times, the level of work set by teachers for pupils in lessons does not fully match pupils' individual abilities and aptitudes. Consequently, progress slows where work is insufficiently challenging or too difficult. Teaching is regularly monitored by the senior leadership so that the management team, including the governing body, has an accurate view of the school's strengths and development needs. This ensures that learning and progress are good, but the contribution of subject leaders to the monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching is underdeveloped.

International links, such as the exchange of emails and letters with pupils in Ghana, in addition to well-established local links, successfully contribute to pupils' awareness of different cultures and beliefs globally. Pupils respond very positively to such activities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate sensitivity and maturity when considering moral and ethical questions. For example, a group of pupils talked with feeling about the conditions in which Nelson Mandela was imprisoned and knew that he was 'fighting for the rights of black people in South Africa because they weren't treated very well'. However, pupils' knowledge of people's lives in different parts of the United Kingdom is an area for development. This is recognised by the school and plans are already under way to provide pupils with more opportunities to appreciate and value different backgrounds and communities in other parts of the country. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and embrace sporting opportunities and clubs with relish. These strengths are reflected in the school's Activemark and Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils' assessments and tracking are used fully and consistently to accurately match learning to individual needs and maximise individual pupils' progress.
 - developing the role of subject leaders in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and contributing to school improvement.

- Extend the existing good strategies to promote community cohesion by:
 - increasing the range and number of opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of, and respect for, the diversity of beliefs and backgrounds represented in differing areas of the United Kingdom.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Inspection evidence shows that pupils of all abilities achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. By the time pupils leave Year 2, their attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. A strength observed in many lessons is the way that pupils support each other, for example as 'talk partners'. Pupils' above average achievement and their obvious enjoyment of learning were evident in an outstanding Year 2 science lesson, during which pupils demonstrated strong negotiation and cooperation skills to select and use the most appropriate measuring apparatus to tackle a range of challenges with relish.

Pupils make good contributions to their school and wider community, responding maturely to a range of opportunities, including helping to look after the school chickens and serving as members of the school council to represent their peers. Pupils' understanding of what they need to do to stay healthy is excellent. For example, many pupils enjoy cycling, scooting or walking to school and thoroughly enjoy the sporting clubs available. Pupils' behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are consistently outstanding. For example, during a walk to the local woods a Year 4 class behaved exceptionally well and demonstrated high levels of respect for the different habitats in the area. This makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils' good achievement, along with high attendance, excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to learning, mean that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to plan and organise interesting and engaging lessons. For example, in an outstanding Year 5 lesson a story was skilfully used to help pupils of all abilities consider the impact of language and successfully develop their own use of descriptive vocabulary. As a result, one pupil wrote, 'as my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom I saw a mossy green cave wall... I was in a cavern as cramped as a caretaker's store room', while another described stalactites 'like a goblin's pointy hat'. Teachers make good use of teaching assistants, whose good quality questioning supports pupils' learning very well. For example, one teaching assistant skilfully used open-ended questions to enable a Year 2 pupil to work out for himself that he could measure the amount of liquid he had in his measuring jug more accurately by placing it on a flat surface.

The school has developed the curriculum very effectively over the past three years, including the introduction of aspects of the Forest School curriculum which are much enjoyed by pupils and help to make learning relevant and meaningful. One pupil expressed the excitement of many when he said, 'I love going to the farm and learning about nature', while another said, 'We get to make animal homes. We get to light the fire and make toast and marshmallows – but it's safe!' Music provision is a strong feature of the school, including a specialist music teacher. Year 3 pupils participate in violin lessons and all pupils are members of the school choir. The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of additional activities, visits and visitors, with one parent summing up the common view by commenting appreciatively on the 'wide and varied curriculum that will provide a great basis for further education and life in general'.

The excellent levels of care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are reflected in the very positive and successful way the school works with parents and carers of pupils with specific learning needs so that they are fully included in all aspects of life of the school.

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?

The headteacher has a clear vision and sense of purpose, which she has communicated successfully to all staff, who share her vision. Although the roles of

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subject leaders are underdeveloped in terms of some aspects of monitoring, leaders at all levels are committed to ongoing improvement. Accurate school development planning and the use of challenging targets represent good tools to sustain the drive for improvement. Senior leaders are supported by knowledgeable, active, supportive governors, who challenge and monitor the school’s work well and discharge their statutory duties effectively. Policies and systems underpin robust checking and vetting procedures; consequently the way pupils are safeguarded is excellent. The school successfully promotes equal opportunities and ensures that there is no discrimination. For example, pupils feel that their views are valued and this helps them contribute successfully to the school community. Exceptionally well-developed support systems within the school are complemented by a good range of partnerships with outside specialists to support those pupils with specific needs and to provide enhanced learning opportunities for all pupils. Plans to develop links with schools within the United Kingdom feature in school development planning. These build on the already successful aspects of the school’s contribution to community cohesion, most notable in its international links.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. An interesting curriculum, lively teaching and exceptional pastoral care mean that children make good progress towards their early learning goals. Children’s needs are identified promptly due to good leadership and management and detailed assessments. Safeguarding is given a high priority and relationships between adults and children are strong, so that children feel safe, secure and valued. As a result, children demonstrate good attitudes to learning and behave well. Questioning by adults is used effectively to probe children’s understanding and capture their interest. For example, one child was

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successfully supported in the development of counting and measuring skills by a teaching assistant who asked questions such as, 'What comes after 8?' and 'Can you count all the way from the beginning now?'

Children have good opportunities to make choices and to work indoors or outside, fostering their independence and helping them to develop personal preferences. The school has worked successfully to develop the outdoor area as an extension to classroom learning and, as a result, indoor and outdoor areas are well organised with a clear focus on learning opportunities. For example, several pupils using the sandpit were set a task which focused their learning, making it more meaningful and purposeful. As a result, the children made good progress in the development of coordination and social skills. The school has rightly identified the need to make some of the activities in the outdoor area even more stimulating and challenging and to accelerate their progress further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The return of the Ofsted questionnaire was above average. Questionnaires show that the vast majority of parents and carers are happy with the school and what it provides. They consider that their children enjoy all that the school has to offer and are safe and well looked after, and the inspection team agrees. Inspectors followed up the few concerns raised with the school, but these did not have a common thread and most were individual cases.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashington Church of England 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 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 174 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 69 | 61 | 41 | 36 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 81 | 72 | 30 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child’s progress | 42 | 37 | 60 | 53 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 41 | 36 | 62 | 55 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 51 | 45 | 56 | 50 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child’s learning | 51 | 45 | 54 | 48 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 52 | 46 | 57 | 50 | 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) | 54 | 48 | 55 | 49 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child’s particular needs | 49 | 48 | 57 | 50 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 45 | 40 | 56 | 50 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 29 | 26 | 69 | 61 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 42 | 37 | 65 | 58 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school | 56 | 50 | 54 | 48 | 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 | 43 | 47 | 10 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 46 | 42 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 36 | 41 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 30 | 48 | 19 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 50 | 31 | 5 |
| All schools | 10 | 44 | 39 | 6 |

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 08 April 2011 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.



30 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashington Church of England First School, Pulborough RH20 3PG

I want to say thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us all when we visited your school recently. Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We enjoyed visiting your school and it was a real pleasure to talk to you and listen to all the exciting things you do and how well you learn. Your school is a good school.

Here are some of the highlights of your school.

- Most of you do very well at school, especially in reading and writing, and enjoy your learning.
- You enjoy the many fun activities the school provides for you, such as the farm and the Forest School activities.
- Your school looks after you extremely well so that you all feel very safe.
- You behave exceptionally well and have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- The headteacher, together with the governors and her staff, have worked hard to improve the school and want to make the school even better.

These are the main areas for improvement which will help your school to be even better.

- Teachers need to use information on how well each of you is doing and make full use of this when planning lessons so that the work is just right for each of you, not too easy and not too hard. This will help all of you to make the best progress possible, especially in mathematics. I have asked your headteacher and other teachers to check that this is happening.
- I have asked your school to find ways of helping you to understand what it is like to live in different parts of the United Kingdom.

Thank you again for your help. You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett
Lead inspector

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