

Ashbury Meadow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133770
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	381558
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2011
Reporting inspector	James Kidd

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Hersey
Headteacher	Lorna Rushton
Date of previous school inspection	08 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons or part-lessons, taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with pupils, including members of the school council, staff, parents and carers, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at internal and external pupil progress information, child protection and safeguarding documentation and school improvement planning. Inspectors also scrutinised 55 questionnaires, returned by parents and carers, 12 completed by staff and 97 returned by pupils in Key Stage 2.

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

- The impact of the school's work to address the apparently lower attainment in English in 2011.
- How the school is attempting to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of pupils with English as an additional language, to ensure they are able to benefit from everything it has to offer.
- Whether the curriculum meets the academic and personal needs of all pupils.
- How aware pupils are of their current performance and of what they need to do to improve their work.

Information about the school

This smaller than average sized primary school serves a mixed ethnic and social area close to the centre of Manchester. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average. There is a high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils in the early stages of learning English is well above average and increasing. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that usually found. Mobility is high: there are many more pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times. Ashbury Meadow holds Healthy School (Gold) status and the Eco Green Flag award. It also has the Activemark award for its work in physical education.

Ashbury Meadow Children's Centre shares the site with the school. It is inspected separately and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

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

This is a good and improving school. Outstanding care, guidance and support and excellent child protection and safeguarding practice ensure that pupils say that they feel exceptionally safe in school and have the highest regard for the adults who work with them. In their words, 'The grown-ups are always there for us and they help us when we have problems.' Good improvement since the previous inspection, accurate self-evaluation from senior and middle leaders and a well-informed governing body, which provides both support and challenge to the leadership, ensure that the school has good capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

From exceptionally low skill levels on entry to the nursery, particularly in social development and in communication, language and literacy, pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school to reach broadly average attainment by the time they leave. Attainment in mathematics has been consistently average since the previous inspection but the high numbers of pupils joining during Year 6 affected the standards in English which fell back to below average in 2011. Inspection evidence demonstrates that the school's strategies, to address this issue and to accelerate progress in English, are beginning to bear fruit but attainment in this subject still lags behind that in mathematics.

Pupils are proud of their school and, as school councillors, prefects and 'buddies', do much to support their peers and also younger pupils. Indeed, pupils across the school enjoy celebrating the successes of their classmates. Pupils behave well. Their enjoyment of school is demonstrated in their attendance, which has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now above average. They benefit from good teaching and accurate assessment, in which they are now increasingly involved through self- and peer-marking. The school recognises that it needs to ensure that there is more consistency across the school in providing pupils with work which is closely matched to their learning needs. Strategies to promote pupils' understanding of their progress and of how to improve their work are also not sufficiently embedded.

The curriculum has developed well since the previous inspection and there is a strong emphasis on continuity across all key stages, particularly from reception to Year 1. Pupils enjoy the cross-curricular themes, for example, literacy through history, and they speak highly of the many educational visits and visitors. There is support for pupils with English as an additional language but this provision is not

sufficiently well developed given that there are increasing numbers entering the school with little or no English.

Ashbury Meadow is a happy and inclusive school in which mutual respect abounds. Staff and members of the governing body are continuously searching for ways in which to extend the school's impact on the lives of children and young people: ongoing improvement, for the benefit of the pupils in its care, is most certainly the order of the day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in English, by:
 - sharing good practice across all years in providing pupils with activities which closely meet their learning needs
 - further developing the support for the increasing numbers of pupils at the early stages of learning English
 - embedding strategies to ensure that pupils are consistently fully aware of their performance and what they need to do to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Classrooms are calm: pupils adopt a purposeful approach to their studies and are keen to do well. They look forward to the activities in lessons and are more than willing to support their classmates in their learning and to celebrate the successes of their peers. Attainment is higher than at the time of the previous inspection and pupils' progress across the school continues to accelerate. Pupils enjoy mathematics in particular and attainment in this subject has been broadly average over time. Attainment is now rising in English and pupils' skills in reading and writing are improving apace. Attainment in English is, however, not at the same level as it is in mathematics. As a result of focused and sensitive support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, these pupils make the same good progress and achieve as well as their peers. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from minority ethnic groups and pupils new to learning English, all make good progress. The support for the increasing numbers of pupils arriving at the school with English as an additional language is not as well developed as it could be to ensure they can take full advantage of everything the school has to offer.

Pupils speak highly of their school, of their classmates and of the adults who work with them. They are delighted to welcome visitors and enjoy showing them their work in books and their part in the impressive display around school. The school council enjoys an enviable reputation among its constituents, and members are proactive in offering ideas to improve the school further. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet and enjoy the many opportunities they have to take part in games and sports, to ensure they keep fit. 'Wake-up! Shake-up!' is a highlight of the school day and pupils and staff take part with gusto. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site and prefects and 'buddies' are always on hand to make sure that no-one is lonely at playtime and

lunchtime. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good: the school is a racially harmonious community and pupils value the celebration of religions and cultures which are different to their own.

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	3
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	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good and pupils benefit from teachers' secure subject knowledge and from questioning in class, which encourages them to think more deeply about the subject-matter. In the best lessons, a Year 6 mathematics session for example, there was good use of new technology as a teaching and learning tool and pupils shared their ideas with their 'talk partners', thereby acting as extra learning resources for each other. In such lessons, learning is also active, there is an emphasis on pupils' understanding and use of subject-specific terminology and pupils' progress is fostered by links with real-life situations and by targeted support from teaching assistants. In a minority of lessons, activities do not always meet pupils' individual learning needs closely enough and there is a 'one size fits all' approach, with the same work being set for the whole class. The school recognises that good practice, already evident in how some provide activities which are closely tailored to individual pupils' needs, ought to be shared more widely if pupils' progress is to continue to accelerate. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection. Detailed marking, which celebrates success but which also gives targets for improvement and an emphasis on pupils gauging their own performance and that of their peers, means that pupils are now more aware of what they need to do raise their attainment. This approach is currently not fully embedded across the school.

The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' personal and emotional development and the school places considerable emphasis on raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem as the foundation for their success in academic work. Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum to give pupils opportunities to be creative in their learning and to find things out for themselves.

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

There is a good range of after-school activities, including a gardening club, 'Let's get cooking' and the 'digi smart' group, which are popular and well supported. In addition, there is a wide variety of enrichment sessions, including visits and visitors, and each year group benefits from at least one such activity every half-term. Spanish is taught across the school and pupils are proud to address visitors in the language and show them just how much they have learned.

Pupils and their parents and carers speak with one voice about the outstanding pastoral care provided by the school. The talented and motivated team of teaching assistants supports pupils and their families with great skill and with sensitivity to their individual situations. As a result, pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and those who often find the work difficult feel both valued and valuable in the school. Induction arrangements for children entering the nursery are exceptional and children settle down quickly into their new surroundings. Transition arrangements are of the same excellent quality. Very well-founded strategies, including rewards, to encourage pupils to come to school regularly continue to be most successful and, as a result, attendance is now above the national average.

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?

Perceptive and principled leadership from the committed headteacher, who is supported well by the talented senior team, ensures that staff at all levels of experience and responsibility share the same clear vision for how the school is to develop. Indeed, staff believe that their senior colleagues 'lead by example' and that they value their opinions. As a result, teaching, support and administrative staff play their part in promoting ongoing improvement in provision, for the benefit of the pupils in their care. As teachers say, 'We really enjoy working here and the support our pupils receive is a real strength.'

Governance is good. Members of the governing body support the school well and have an accurate view about school performance in all areas of its life. They are never afraid to challenge the leadership when they feel it is necessary to do so.

The school engages well with parents and carers and the 'Families and Schools Together' project organised by Save the Children and hosted at the school was well received. One parent/carer commented, 'It was wonderful to see staff and families working together.' In addition, the school has good links with a range of outside partners, including the local football club, the children's centre and neighbouring primary and secondary schools.

Equality of opportunity is promoted well and the school tackles discrimination in all its forms whenever and wherever it occurs. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are of the highest quality and often exceed current requirements. Record keeping is comprehensive, policies are fully up-to-date and regularly reviewed and all staff are fully trained in child protection. The full-time home/school liaison officer supports families very closely and continues to have a most impressive impact on pupils’ emotional development. The school promotes community cohesion well. The emphasis it places on celebrating diversity is demonstrated by the school council’s active involvement in the inter-school council project, which has ‘Where do we come from?’ as its focus.

These are the grades for the 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	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	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

This is a good Early Years Foundation Stage and the setting continues to be a strength of the school. Good leadership and management from a talented and experienced coordinator, good teaching in both nursery and reception and impressive levels of teamwork amongst all staff ensure children get on well with each other and are inquisitive in their learning. As a result, they make good progress personally and academically across both years. They are delighted to learn new things: nursery children were beside themselves with joy when they recognised colours accurately on their ‘colour hunt’ around school.

Staff treat their charges with the utmost sensitivity and relationships are strong between children and between the children and adults. Children are never afraid to ask for help or to make suggestions about how they think activities could be even more interesting for them. There is a good balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities and the outdoor area complements indoor learning well.

The assessment of children’s performance is accurate. ‘Target folders’ are a good working tool and facilitate effective curriculum and lesson planning, to meet individual learning needs well. Self-evaluation is a strength and all members of the setting are actively involved in offering their ideas for improvements to provision. There are strong relationships with parents and carers, who feel they are welcome in

the setting and are well supported in removing any barriers to their children’s learning. Welfare and child protection policies and procedures are outstanding and children are happy in their learning and feel safe.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a 25% return of questionnaires, which is below average for primary schools. All parents and carers who returned the questionnaires express the view that their children enjoy school and that it keeps them safe. Almost all believe that the school informs them about their children’s progress and a very large majority is of the opinion that teaching is good at the school and that their children make enough progress. Most are entirely happy with their children’s experiences at Ashbury Meadow. A very small minority of parents and carers do not believe that the school ensures that their children are well prepared for the future. Inspectors examined this concern and found no evidence to endorse the view. Indeed, they judge that induction and transition procedures are exemplary.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashbury Meadow 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 inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 218 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	60	22	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	55	25	45	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	53	24	44	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	42	27	49	5	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	44	26	47	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	35	25	45	4	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	27	36	65	2	4	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)	15	27	30	55	5	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	31	26	47	5	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	27	33	60	4	7	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	33	30	55	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	35	32	58	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	51	23	42	2	4	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 is 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.



16 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashbury Meadow Primary School, Manchester, M11 3NA

I promised to write you a letter about what we think about your school and here it is! First of all, the inspection team would like to thank you for your kindness and courtesy to us during both days. You represented your school and your families well and you should be very proud of yourselves. A particular 'thank you' goes to those of you who gave up your time to meet us on Monday lunchtime and Tuesday playtime.

Ashbury Meadow is a good school and you are very proud of it. Your teachers and teaching assistants take excellent care of you and you say that you feel very safe in school. The teachers teach you well and you are making good progress in your studies. Your skills in English are improving but they are still not quite as good as they are in mathematics. You behave well and your attendance has improved and is now better than in many other schools. You enjoy taking on responsibilities and members of the school council and also prefects and 'buddies' do a lot to help the adults run the school and make suggestions about how to improve it.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are also always looking for ways to make Ashbury Meadow an even better school. I would like to help them do this so I have asked them to improve your skills in English by giving you all work which matches your needs and by making sure you all always know what you need to do to make your work better. I have also asked them to develop the support for those of you who speak other languages and are new to learning English.

Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. Please keep working hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely,

James Kidd
Lead Inspector

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