

Ashfield Valley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105783
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	377296
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Westington HMI

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sabira Siddique
Headteacher	Elizabeth Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. They observed all the teachers in school over 19 lessons, including extended observations. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, parents and carers, pupils and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school's development plans, monitoring records, its data on the progress made by pupils, the files on pupils who are potentially at risk of underachieving, its procedures for safeguarding pupils and for vetting and recruiting staff. Inspectors scrutinised the questionnaires that were completed by pupils and staff, and 181 returned by parents and carers.

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

- Do all pupils, including the most-able, make as much progress as possible?
- How much progress has been made on tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection?
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals appear to attain more highly than their peers nationally. How has the school achieved this?

Information about the school

The vast majority of pupils attending this average-sized school are predominantly of Pakistani heritage. The school reports that many parents and carers are fluent in English, having been educated in Britain, but that many other parents and carers are not confident users of English. According to the school, most children are at an early stage of learning English when they enter the nursery class. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has declined recently and is now average. The school holds the Investors in People award, Healthy School status and an Activemark Gold award. It also has formal recognition for accelerating the progress of bilingual learners.

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

2

Main findings

Ashfield Valley provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support and, as a result, the vast majority of their personal outcomes are good. Their academic achievement is satisfactory. From their below-average starting points, pupils make uneven progress over their time in school to attain standards that are broadly average. However, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who may be at risk of underachieving, including pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals, achieve well. Teaching is satisfactory overall but variable in quality. It is this variability that contributes to pupils making uneven progress over time. The most-able pupils are most adversely affected, especially in reading. On entry to the nursery, pupils' skill levels are below those expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected level of skills is in line with the national picture. However, pupils' language skills remain weaker, especially boys' language skills. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory but variable; the provision for the development of pupils' language skills, especially for boys, is not as strong as it could be.

Leadership and management of the school are good in almost all aspects and good progress has been made on tackling the areas identified at the last inspection. The curriculum is good and the school works well with a range of partners to support pupils' learning. The school has already identified that work is needed to raise standards in reading. Pupils' attendance has improved considerably. The school has an accurate understanding of its work. Given these strengths, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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?

- Raise the attainment of the most able pupils across the school, especially in reading.
- Strengthen further the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage for the development of pupils' language skills, especially for boys.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' personal outcomes are good due to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school. Pupils' attendance is above average. Given the context of the school it is impressive. Long-term and persistence absence are negligible, the result of the school's efforts to impress upon parents, carers and the community the importance of schooling. Pupils report that they feel safe. They are confident that the adults in the school take good care of them; they understand the school rules. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They want to please their teachers and the adults around them. They are very friendly and keen to work. The adults support behaviour effectively, although at times do not encourage pupils to be more independent. Pupils enjoy the various school activities that are available to them and they learn a lot about maintaining healthy lifestyles. Pupils are learning about children from different backgrounds through their links with schools in other parts of the country. They contribute to and organise charitable and fund-raising events and appreciate the opportunity to make a difference to their locality, such as by cleaning up the path close to school.

Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress over their time in school although they make better progress at some points than at others. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and others who may be at risk of underachieving, achieve well. In 2011, the proportion of pupils known to eligible for free school meals who reached the expected Level 4 in both English and mathematics was higher than is the case nationally. In contrast, more-able pupils do not achieve as well as they could, especially in reading. Pupils, girls especially, have very high aspirations about their future career and employment possibilities. They articulate well their hopes for the future and understand the need for hard work and determination. In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and attentive.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3
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	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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will	3

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

contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but it is variable. The strongest teaching is towards the end of Key Stage 2 and in mathematics. The school has been successful in raising the attainment of girls in mathematics. Where teaching is less effective, there is insufficient challenge for the more-able pupils. The school has strengthened the provision for teaching reading and pupils follow a rigorous programme to learn letter-sound combinations. As a result, pupils learn to decode words quickly. However, this tremendous start is not built upon as well as it could be and in some lessons more-able pupils especially are held back by having to read books which are too easy for them. Elsewhere, in group reading sessions, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported and challenged well by the discussions within the group and by the bilingual teaching assistant support. The teaching assistants provide good support for pupils and make a significant contribution to their progress. As a result of the work done to tackle one of the issues identified at the last inspection, pupils are now more aware of their learning targets, and how to work towards them. The school's system for tracking pupils is well-established and the school has a rich data base of pupils' scores and results from a range of assessments. This data, though, is not always used to best effect in planning lessons to meet the needs of all pupils.

The curriculum is good. Its strengths lie in the range of extra-curricular provision which pupils enjoy and which leads to their good personal outcomes. Good links with a range of external agencies support the teaching, such as in sports lessons. Good emphasis is placed upon pupils' development of a broader knowledge of different cultures.

The provision for care, guidance and support is outstanding. Pupils are very well looked after. The school has very good partnerships with a range of agencies and the impact of its work is evident in the dramatic improvement in pupils' attendance, the good outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils most at risk of underachieving.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Almost all aspects of leadership and management are good. The headteacher is unswerving in her commitment to the pupils and parents and carers and she has the full support of her staff. There is a well-established programme of monitoring to

support the priorities of the school development plan and the deputy headteacher and subject leaders are involved in this activity. Reading has recently been identified as an area in need of improvement and the school has taken some steps to improve the teaching of reading, although there is more to be done. Lesson observations undertaken by the headteacher provide developmental points for teachers. Despite this, there remains too much variability in the quality of teaching which most adversely impacts on the more-able pupils. Governance is satisfactory. All safeguarding requirements are well met. The procedures for vetting and recruiting staff are good.

The school has strong relationships with parents and carers. A wide range of activities and classes are on offer to support and engage parents and carers, including a partnership arrangement with a local college to augment this work. Parent/carer workers play a key role in this aspect of the school’s provision. Parents and carers spoken to are very positive about the school and its work.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well. This aspect of provision is at the core of the work the school undertakes. Community cohesion is also promoted well. The school has audited its context and has an established programme to develop pupils’ understanding of other cultures.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry to the nursery, children have skill levels below those expected for their age group. They make good progress across the six areas of learning, especially in developing their social and emotional skills and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of Reception, children’s attainment is in line with national expectations. Their language skills, however, remain lower than expected overall, especially for boys. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The bilingual teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils’ language skills, but in other respects, the provision to promote language development is not as strong as it could be.

The children are safe, well cared for and are happy. They settle quickly to their tasks and many will initiate conversations. They are interested and engaged in the activities provided for them. The adults have a sound knowledge of the development and welfare requirements for this age group. Children’s progress is monitored well. In Reception, the children make good progress in acquiring early reading skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	2
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	

Views of parents and carers

A very large number of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the impact of its work on their children. One parent wrote, ‘I appreciate everything the school does for my child and how it helps the children that need extra help...’

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashfield Valley 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 181 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 233 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	118	65	57	31	5	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	127	70	48	27	2	1	3	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	111	61	61	34	6	3	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	92	51	81	45	4	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	108	60	70	39	0	0	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	90	50	81	45	6	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	100	55	77	43	3	2	1	1
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)	84	46	84	46	4	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	84	46	87	48	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	101	56	74	41	5	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	81	45	85	47	11	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	101	56	72	40	6	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	120	66	57	31	1	1	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	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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashfield Valley Primary School, Rochdale, OL11 1TA

As you know, I recently visited your school with two other inspectors. Thank you so much for talking to us about your school. We could tell that you are very proud of it. We think that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. There are lots of good things about your school. These are some of them.

- The adults look after you exceptionally well.
- Your school is well led.
- You behave well; you know a lot about how to keep safe and healthy and you are learning a lot about your community and how to contribute to it.
- Some of you who may find learning a bit more difficult than other children make good progress.
- Your attendance has improved a lot. Well done!

There are a couple of things that we thought the school could do a little better. We think that some of you, especially those of you who find learning easier, could make more progress in your school work and reach even higher standards. We also think that some of the youngest children could be helped a bit more with their language skills.

Thank you again for making us feel welcome at your school. I am sure that all of you will continue to work hard and be a credit to your school and your families.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector

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