

Ash Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125116
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	388250
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2012
Lead inspector	James Henry

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Arnold
Headteacher	Marie Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2012
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

James Henry

Additional inspector

Veronica Young

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out at no notice. Inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed nine teachers. Meetings were held with senior staff, members of the governing body, a group of pupils and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, self-evaluation documents, data tracking pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour records and policies and procedures to safeguard pupils. Parental questionnaires were not available but inspectors spoke to parents and carers during the inspection.

Information about the school

Ash Grange is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school became subject to special measures following inspection in November 2010 and has had four monitoring inspections since that date. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is also well above the national average. Almost half of pupils are from Romany or Gypsy heritage. The school meets the current government floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress. The school has a children's centre on site which is managed by the governing body. An interim executive board presently governs the school but a new governing body has been established and will take responsibility for the governance of the school in September 2012.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is now a satisfactory school as there have been improvements since the previous inspection, especially in leadership, teaching and the progress of some pupils. It is not a good school because progress in reading is inconsistent, particularly across Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and subject leaders and the incoming governing body have not embedded their roles in monitoring the work of the school. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics, although an increasing number are beginning to make good progress and close the gap between themselves and other pupils nationally. However, attainment by the end of Year 6 remains low, particularly in English.
- Teaching has improved and while it is generally satisfactory over time, there are occasions when teachers do not adjust their lessons sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils and not all activities are ‘hands on’ to aid their learning.
- There is now a consistent approach to promoting good behaviour and managing incidents of inappropriate behaviour. This has improved pupils’ attitudes to learning because it has significantly reduced low-level disruption in lessons.
- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has been effective in eliminating inadequate teaching and there are early signs that teaching is beginning to improve. The school’s capacity to improve further has been significantly strengthened by the headteacher developing senior leaders’ ability to judge the quality of teaching and assess pupils’ progress. The interim executive board has successfully mentored the new governing body so that it is able to provide challenge for senior leaders. However the new governing body has not had

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time to show impact on improving the work of the school, especially in raising pupils' achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase pupils' progress in reading across Key Stage 2 by:
 - embedding a systematic approach to teaching pupils to break down and blend sounds in order to read unfamiliar words
 - ensuring more rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress in reading to quickly identify and address any underperformance
 - providing more opportunities to extend pupils' written and spoken vocabulary.
- Improve the quality of teaching through the school by building on the effective practice already in place so that it is consistently good by:
 - ensuring teachers adjust their lessons when necessary to match pupils' needs, particularly in providing practical activities to engage pupils in their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Strengthen the role and increase the responsibility of subject leaders and the newly established governing body by:
 - embedding their role in providing challenge for the achievement of pupils
 - undertaking the monitoring and evaluation of any initiatives to help pupils who may be falling behind to ensure they are effective in increasing the rate at which pupils learn.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The school is now addressing pupils' underachievement more systematically. All groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress across the school with some making good progress. The school is beginning to close the achievement gap between different groups of pupils and pupils nationally. For example, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those on free school meals and pupils from Gypsy or Romany heritages are now making accelerated progress in reading, writing and mathematics due to the improvement in teaching. There are close links with the children's centre in developing children's early social and emotional skills; however, children enter the nursery with language, communication and mathematical skills that are at below normally expected levels. Progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is better than in Key Stage 2, especially in reading. While attainment is rising at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key

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Stage 2, over time, pupils leave with low attainment, especially in English. This is partly due to progress in reading being inconsistent across Key Stage 2. While pupils are heard read regularly, the school does not have an embedded systematic approach to teaching reading skills across Key Stage 2, especially in teaching pupils how to blend sounds to read unfamiliar words. Also, opportunities to constantly monitor pupils' progress in reading and extend pupils' vocabulary to support their understanding when reading are missed. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is lower than that normally expected for their age.

There is some good progress in lessons. For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children showed good concentration and independence in developing their basic writing skills through writing simple words describing creatures that were found under the sea. More-able older pupils made good progress in learning how to calculate the area of irregular shapes during a mathematics lesson. Progress in these lessons was good because pupils were being given the responsibility to learn for themselves through practical activities, although this is not consistent across the school.

Quality of teaching

Although teaching over time has improved to satisfactory levels, there are still some inconsistencies and weaknesses. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is often effective and there are increasing examples of good teaching across the rest of the school. For instance, pupils in a Key Stage 2 class were making good progress in learning how to find multiples of four through practical activities such as a 'snail trail'. However, the use of practical activities in lessons to involve pupils in their learning is inconsistent. Teaching is less effective when lessons are not adapted to meet the emotional and behavioural needs of pupils. For example, some low-level disruption was observed when teachers spent too much time talking to pupils and not engaging them quickly enough in activities that are stimulating and interesting. Teachers plan lessons to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are soundly supported in lessons by teaching assistants. More-able pupils benefit from activities more tailored to their needs. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class less-able pupils, supported by a teaching assistant, were playing a game using a dice and making good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills, with the activity also promoting their social development.

The school has simplified the system of marking and providing feedback to pupils on how to improve. Teachers are consistently following this simplified system and when asked, pupils said this was helping them with their work. Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop effectively children's early reading skills through activities such as storytelling and singing rhymes. This is built on in Key Stage 1 through the teaching of sounds and letters but progress slows in Key Stage 2 due to the inconsistency in the teaching of reading skills. School assessments show that attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is rising. However over time attainment in reading is low.

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Relationships in lessons are generally good. Teachers now have much higher expectations of pupils in the quality and presentation of their work and in their standard of behaviour. Consequently, teaching is contributing more effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development and as a result, pupils are becoming far more eager to learn.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers who were asked felt that behaviour in the school had improved over the past year. Evidence from the inspection supported this view. Pupils said that behaviour was better now in class and on the playground and that they were able to concentrate on their work in lessons. They also said that everyone generally got on well together and were respectful to adults in the school. While pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming, there were some incidents of inappropriate behaviour but these were due to the emotional and social needs of individual pupils rather than consistent low-level disruption. These improvements are due to staff taking a more consistent approach to promoting better behaviour and managing incidents of inappropriate behaviour.

Pupils also said that there was little bullying of any kind. They were made aware of the meaning of bullying through assemblies and activities such as 'anti-bullying week' and were confident that teachers would quickly deal with any problems they had in school. However, pupils had little awareness or understanding about the possibility and impact of cyber-bullying.

Pupils feel safe in school, a view endorsed by parents and carers. They are helped to keep themselves safe by the school working closely with outside agencies, for example the local police who talk to pupils about 'stranger danger' and road safety. Attendance is slightly below the national average but has improved significantly over time. The school is very proactive in both promoting good attendance and applying sanctions to address persistent absence. For example, parents and carers are refused permission to take their children out of school during term time for holidays and fixed penalty notices have been enforced on parents and carers whose children are persistently absent without a legitimate reason.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, supported by the interim executive board, has been successful in establishing better staff morale through providing more secure leadership in addressing the difficulties faced by the school, especially in dealing with inappropriate behaviour by a minority of pupils. This has led to higher expectations of pupils from all staff and a better focus on learning in lessons. The headteacher has been effective in raising the quality of teaching to satisfactory and improving levels, through systematic monitoring and feedback. This has included mentoring and coaching senior leaders in accurately judging the quality of learning in lessons and monitoring pupils' progress. Consequently, other senior leaders monitor teaching and

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pupils' achievement more regularly which is identifying further areas for improvement. As a result, all groups of pupils are making at least satisfactory progress with an increasing number making good progress. While the headteacher has begun to develop the monitoring skills of subject leaders, they have not assessed the effectiveness of initiatives to help pupils keep up with their peers in English and mathematics. The school is working in partnership with other local schools to share good practice and provide professional training for staff. This is also helping to improve the quality of teaching.

The interim executive board is proactive in challenging as well as supporting the school. This is an important factor in the school's improvement over the past two years. It has been successfully mentoring and training a new governing body to take over the governance of the school. The initial meetings of the new governing body show that governors are also providing challenge for senior leaders. However, their role is not fully embedded, especially in monitoring and challenging the school about pupils' achievement, and particularly around those who may be falling behind.

The secure leadership of the headteacher, supported by senior leaders, in raising the quality of teaching, tackling inadequate achievement and producing well-developed plans for the new governing body to take over in September, has ensured the school has capacity to improve further.

The school works hard to engage parents and carers from all parts of the community through organising workshops and events. The commitment to promote equality and tackle discrimination is shown through the school's work with agencies that liaise with Gypsy or Romany families in order to ensure that they are fully involved in school life and in efforts to reduce gaps in pupils' attainment with those nationally.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and based around the interest and experiences of different groups of pupils. Special themed weeks promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development. A creative week based on dragons with an exhibition of the work by pupils for parents and carers promoted pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. While themes are linked together to engage pupils, opportunities are missed to allow pupils to practise their basic skills in other subjects.

Policies and procedures are appropriate to safeguard pupils. Roles and responsibilities for child protection are clear. Staff, the interim executive board and the newly established governing body have also undertaken child protection training. All staff are fully vetted before working in the school.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ash Grange Primary School, Aldershot GU12 6LX

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn in lessons. Your school now gives you a satisfactory education and no longer needs 'special measures' to help it improve. This is an improvement but staff and the governing body know there is still more to do for it to become a good school. You told us that you feel safe in school, that behaviour had improved and that your teachers would help you if there were any problems. Here are some of the things we found at your school.

- Teaching has improved to satisfactory levels and there is some good teaching in school. Sometimes lessons still do not help you learn as well as you could.
- You are now starting to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics, although progress in reading in Key Stage 2 is not as good as in Key Stage 1.
- Behaviour has improved in the school with almost all of you being polite and friendly and keen to learn in lessons.
- Your headteacher, helped by senior teachers, and other adults who look after your school have worked hard to help the school improve.

To help your school to improve further we have asked the adults in charge to:

- increase the progress you make in reading in Key Stage 2
- make sure that all lessons help you to learn by involving you in activities that are interesting and give you the chance to find things out for yourself
- make sure those teachers and other adults in charge check that you are making good progress and that help given to anybody who may be falling behind is successful in helping them to catch up.

You can help by being well behaved in school, listening to your teachers, working hard and helping one another.

Yours sincerely

James Henry
Lead inspector

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