

# Ash Grove Junior and Infant School

Ash Grove, South Elmsall, Pontefract, WF9 2TF

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

**This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:**

- Improvements to teaching have not yet had time to raise standards for the older pupils where there have been gaps in their learning.
- Pupils do not use a wide enough range of words to talk about and describe what they think and understand.
- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels in their work because they do not write imaginatively or solve mathematical problems speedily enough.
- A few children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not have enough access to outdoor activities.
- The monitoring of teaching is not rigorous enough in identifying shortcomings and raising the overall quality of teaching.
- The monitoring role of subject leaders and governors is not robust enough to ensure they are really clear about the precise steps needed for further improvement.

**The school has the following strengths**

- Pupils behave well in lessons and at play. They know how to keep safe and have positive attitudes to their learning.
- There are examples of good teaching across the school which enables a growing number of pupils to make good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress as do disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teamwork including governors has improved and all school leaders and staff are moving in the same direction.
- Training for staff is proving effective in raising attainment.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons taken by teachers and teaching assistants, plus several guided reading activities. Groups of pupils also read individually to inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 19 parents and carers through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and had brief discussions with several parents at the start and end of the school day.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the leadership team, subject leaders, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, the special educational needs coordinator and the learning mentor, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on recent and current progress; samples of pupils' work; planning and monitoring information; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Jones	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Barnes	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a school that is a little larger than the average-sized primary school.
- An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- An above average proportion of pupils are identified at school action.
- The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Their different needs include moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- Approximately 97% of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number is at the early stages of learning English.
- In 2011, the most recent year for which results are confirmed, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching across the school is consistently good and better by:
  - making full use of assessment information to plan activities that offer the best level of challenge to pupils of different abilities
  - ensuring that all lessons go at a brisk pace.
- Raise standards and progress, especially in speaking, writing and mathematics, by:
  - planning more opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with others so that they become more confident in using a wider range of words
  - providing activities that interest and stimulate pupils and raise their enthusiasm for writing
  - ensuring that all pupils, and particularly the girls, develop the confidence to solve mathematical problems speedily.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching is rigorous enough to identify shortcomings and resolve them
  - extending the role of subject leaders and the governing body in monitoring standards
  - checking that in the Early Years Foundation Stage all children have enough opportunities to learn outdoors.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are variable but generally below the expectations for their age. Many have a limited vocabulary and lack confidence in explaining what they are doing. This affects their learning throughout the school.
- Assessment data clearly indicate that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage now make good overall progress which gives them a secure base for their future learning.
- In recent years, standards by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics have been variable and often below national averages. Standards fell further in 2011 which galvanised the school into taking action to raise attainment. In 2012, there was considerable improvement and standards were close to national averages.
- While there are still gaps in the knowledge of some older pupils, the school has provided much additional support for them that is having a positive impact on achievement. As a result, the rise in attainment is continuing and pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach levels close to those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Year 6 many read competently and this aids learning in other lessons.
- Pupils in Year 2 are starting to make better use of their letters and sounds to work out more difficult words. Overall, pupils' reading skills are close to the expectations for their age.
- Pupils' limited speaking skills affect the quality of their writing. While many acquire the skills of writing accurately in different styles, few develop the ability to write imaginatively, at length and in depth.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of numbers by the end of Key Stage 1. Overall progress is not yet fast enough to ensure all, especially some older girls, have the confidence they need to explain their calculations and use what they already know to solve mathematical problems speedily.
- Lesson observations and samples of pupils' work confirm that progress for all groups of pupils requires improvement but the gap between what pupils achieve at Ash Grove and those nationally is narrowing. Many pupils are now making the expected progress for their age and with a growing proportion making more than expected progress.
- Data show that recently girls have not done as well as boys. The school now monitors progress for all groups of pupils much more carefully and most make similar progress, although a few older girls are very quiet in lessons which limit the depth of their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with communication difficulties, speech and language difficulties and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, receive additional support including that funded by the pupil premium. The quality of individual and small group support is consistently good and enables many of these pupils to make good progress towards their individual targets. The small number at the early stages of learning English make similar progress to their classmates.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching over time requires improvement because there is still some inconsistency between classes and not enough is good and better.
- Where teaching requires improvement the pace and challenge are missing and teachers do not use assessment successfully to meet the needs of all pupils. In mathematics, the focus on mental calculation is not strong enough to ensure pupils gain confidence in handling numbers. In literacy lessons, activities are not always sufficiently stimulating to raise pupils' enthusiasm for writing.
- Although teaching is not consistently good, there are examples of effective teaching in all key stages. In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is predominantly good and the children

enjoy playing the role of pirates and crocodiles in imaginative activities. However, not all children have easy access to outdoors to extend their learning.

- Where teaching is most effective in Key Stages 1 and 2, there is a good balance between adults giving information and pupils finding things out for themselves. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils worked on different tasks using a number line to subtract two digit numbers from 100 relevant to their abilities. Those of higher ability had challenging questions using words and money and had to explain their methods to an adult.
- In the majority of lessons teachers and support staff have warm and supportive working relationships with the pupils. They use praise effectively to build self-confidence. Targets for improvement are shown in pupils' books and many know what they have to do to improve their writing.
- Most teachers try to make lessons interesting. For example, those in Year 2 enjoyed learning more about how to keep their mouth and teeth healthy by using a tablet to show how well they had brushed their teeth. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 enjoyed solving a murder mystery by putting a series of numbers and fractions in order as forensic clues. However, this innovative approach was not followed up in subsequent lessons and is lacking in other classes leading to pupils' concentration declining.
- Across the school, teachers ask a good range of questions to check pupils' understanding but they do not always ensure that all pupils join in discussions. For example, staff, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use new words and share their ideas with others to extend their vocabulary.
- The support for pupils with additional needs is good. Staff are well briefed about what the pupils need to learn and do. They work enthusiastically with the pupils to raise their self-esteem by providing work that challenges them but is achievable.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The typical behaviour of pupils is good. A strength of the school is how all pupils are welcomed for who they are. Most get on well together, with many saying they like school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and their friends safe. When moving around the school, including in quite cramped areas, they behave well. At break times most play happily and safely with their friends.
- Those pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties are well integrated into lessons. With good management by a skilled team of support staff, any behavioural concerns are addressed so that misbehaviour rarely affects the learning of others.
- Pupils are able to explain what bullying is. They recognise concerns regarding internet safety and the issues connected with social networking. They are confident that there are numerous adults to talk to if they have any worries.
- The attitudes to learning of the majority of pupils are good. Many try hard with their work, which is often neatly presented. However, some older girls are very passive in lessons and sit quietly, rarely offering their ideas which limits the development of their spoken language and social skills.
- Most parents spoken to during the inspection and through responses to the online questionnaire indicated they believe that behaviour is good. They think their children are kept safe and several speak with pleasure about how their children's additional needs are well supported. Following a whole-school focus, attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- The headteacher and senior leaders share a determination that the school will continue to improve. Following the marked dip in standards, the school started to work closely with the local authority and developed a plan with the specific aim of raising achievement. This has

been central to guiding the considerable improvement in the last year. This support from the local authority has been effective and changes are starting to raise attainment demonstrating a secure capacity to improve.

- Self-evaluation has led senior leaders to accurately recognise that the school requires further improvement. Tracking of pupils' progress is improving so that staff have a clearer understanding of where help is needed to raise attainment. Funding, especially the pupil premium funds, to support pupils who need extra help is used effectively to provide this through one-to-one support and small group booster activities.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough, although at times slightly generous in identifying outstanding features of lessons when these are, in fact, rare. This leads to some shortcomings not being sufficiently identified or resolved. Subject leaders have few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in subjects for which they hold responsibility.
- The checks of how well staff are performing have been used effectively to identify strengths and areas for further improvement. This is well linked to training for all staff and has resulted in notable improvements in some teaching.
- Parents are pleased with the quality of care and education provided for their children. The school supports pupils with additional needs well ensuring they have equality of opportunity. Many pupils across the school have limited aspirations for their future and staff are working with some success to raise pupils' self-esteem, although some older girls do not always fully commit themselves to learning.
- The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils adequately, although there is not always enough focus on developing pupils' speaking skills further. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively in assemblies, lessons and a focus on developing pupils' self-esteem. Pupils' efforts are clearly valued and there are many opportunities for pupils to work together.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is increasing its effectiveness in holding the school to account for the standards achieved.
  - Governors are not yet fully involved in monitoring the effectiveness of initiatives to ensure these are becoming firmly embedded.
  - The governing body ensures that the safeguarding of pupils meets current requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130858
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	402424

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	286
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Hirst
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Davis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 723385
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