

Ashley Junior School

Norman's Road, New Milton, Hampshire, BH25 5FN

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- The standards reached at the end of Year 6 recovered slightly in 2012 but remained below average, particularly in writing and mathematics. The progress of pupils requires improvement.
- Not enough teaching is good or better. Best practice has not yet been shared effectively; not all teachers know how to ensure pupils make good progress in each lesson.
- Teachers do not always plan work which is at the right level of difficulty. This is particularly for the more-able pupils, who are sometimes expected to complete too much easy work before doing extension tasks.
- In too many lessons pupils work at a leisurely pace. In a few lessons pupils misbehave and distract others. Targets are not used to focus what they are doing.
- In some classes pupils seldom respond to the comments teachers make in their books.
- Too often teachers talk for too long and do not give pupils enough time to do their work, and progress slows.
- Pupils rely too much on the adults telling them what they need to do and show too little determination to grapple with difficult work.
- Senior leaders check on how well the school is doing. However, they are too optimistic because their activities to keep track of the performance of teachers has not been focused closely enough on how well pupils learn.
- Senior leaders' feedback to teachers has not always been focused sharply enough on exactly what each teacher needs to improve and has not been followed up quickly enough to check these changes happen consistently.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching of reading is effective; pupils enjoy reading a great deal and make good progress. The progress of current pupils in writing and mathematics is improving.
- The work of the learning support unit is particularly effective in helping the pupils attending this resource. As a result, they make good progress in their personal development and in their learning.
- There are good relationships between teachers and pupils; pupils like being at school and their attendance has improved to above average. They feel safe at school.
- Recent appointments have strengthened the senior leadership, and strategies to raise standards are beginning to have an impact.
- Governors have a good understanding of what data show about the performance of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons taught by nine teachers; some of these were done together with senior leaders from the school.
- Inspectors also observed teaching assistants working with small groups of pupils to support those with special educational needs and with pupils who are part of the learning support unit.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence about the work of the school, including: the school's own analysis of how well pupils are doing; records of monitoring of teaching; planning for lessons; and a range of policies and procedures, particularly about keeping pupils safe.
- Groups of pupils and staff with responsibilities in leading subjects met with inspectors; the views of pupils were also gathered through informal discussions during the school day. Inspectors spoke to some parents and carers informally at the start and end of the day. The 28 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were also considered.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Laura Dickson	Additional inspector
Robert Arnold	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- Most pupils are White British. There are a few pupils from a range of other heritages. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the additional pupil premium funding is above average, particularly in some year groups. This funding provides extra opportunities for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special education needs is above average, particularly in some cohorts. There are ten pupils with statements of special educational needs who attend the learning support unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Some of these pupils come from outside the catchment area of the school.
- Since the previous inspection there have been changes to the leadership team.
- There is a privately run nursery on the site. This was not part of this inspection. The latest inspection report can be viewed on the Ofsted website.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- In 2011 the school met the government's floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the best practice seen in the school to improve teaching so that a much higher proportion is good or better, by:
 - giving teachers more opportunities to see how the best teachers use the agreed strategies, and checking that all teachers know what key features are expected in every lesson
 - using the information they have to plan work which is at the right level, particularly for the more able, in each lesson
 - keeping explanations short and giving pupils more time to do the tasks set for them, and checking that pupils are not wasting time.
- Increase the pace of progress and raise attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring there is a sense of urgency during lessons so that pupils complete more work
 - teachers referring to the targets that have been set for pupils in order to improve each piece of work they do, particularly in their writing across all their subjects
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own work and ensuring they try hard with tasks that make them think
 - making sure all pupils respond to the comments adults make in their books.
- Improve the accuracy and effectiveness of the school's checks on how well it is doing by:
 - receiving training from the local authority and other partners to understand how the work of the school compares with other schools
 - ensuring that all monitoring is focused closely on the progress all groups of pupils are making
 - ensuring teachers are given feedback which helps them to know exactly what they need to do to improve their practice, including on managing the behaviour of pupils
 - ensuring that where the need for improvement in teaching is identified this is followed up quickly.

- Ensure that governors use their good knowledge of what the data show about the performance of pupils across the school to keep track of how well chosen strategies are working to improve performance, and follow up where these are not making enough difference.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The standards reached by most pupils at the end of Year 6 rose slightly in 2012 but remain below average, particularly in writing and mathematics. Considering the starting points of different groups of these pupils, this means that their progress is too slow and requires improvement.
- Work in lessons and in the books of pupils seen during the inspection show that some groups of pupils make good progress, particularly in reading, but that there are other groups of pupils whose progress is slower and requires improvement, particularly in writing and mathematics. This includes pupils supported at school action plus and pupils in the current Year 6 and Year 4.
- The school has devised ways to improve writing. As a result pupils in some classes are doing better. However, not all teachers are using these methods well which means standards are not rising as rapidly as they should.
- Mathematics has rightly been the focus of plans to raise standards. Good strategies are helping to improve pupils' confidence with their times tables and mental calculations. In lessons, progress slows too often when work is not hard enough and pupils wait to be told what to do next.
- The 'personal profile' booklets help pupils to know what their targets are and usefully include an award scheme to recognise work pupils do at home. This particularly supports their development of skills and confidence in mental mathematics. However, teachers do not refer to these or keep them up to date as frequently as they should.
- Progress is hampered in some lessons because pupils appear busy but do too little work, wasting time on unimportant activities.
- Pupils who attend the learning support unit are helped to overcome the issues they face and become more confident learners. From their starting points and taking account of the particular needs of these pupils, they make good progress so that they are catching up with other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported in the small groups they attend, but their work in regular lessons is not always as well matched to their abilities, and their progress requires improvement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Too much teaching still requires improvement, and there is not yet enough good or outstanding teaching.
- There are typically good relationships between pupils and adults. In the best lessons, teachers make lessons interesting, make sure no time is wasted and that the work makes pupils think. Consequently, there is a sense of urgency and pupils enjoy the challenge of having to work quickly. However, this does not happen often enough and too frequently pupils do not complete as much work as they should.
- Teachers and teaching assistants usually work well with small groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, asking good questions to check the understanding of these pupils. However, while the adults are focusing their attention on a particular group, other pupils do not always maintain their pace of work as well as they should. Teachers do not always pick up on this and do not set high enough expectations about how much work pupils should complete during each lesson.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge that helps them to be confident in preparing lessons and explaining difficult concepts to pupils. In particular, teachers promote reading skills well and reading is a strength of the school. Teaching assistants are well informed about the needs of the particular pupils they support, where they have special educational needs.
- During staff meetings, teachers have discussed the need to let pupils get on with the tasks prepared for them as quickly as possible, but this does not always happen. There are still too

many lessons where teachers spend too long explaining and this limits the amount of time pupils have to get on with their work.

- The work that is planned for pupils is not always accurately matched to their abilities. In particular, more-able pupils are too often expected to do work that is very similar to that of other pupils before getting onto the 'extension' tasks. At times they are also expected to sit through explanations they do not need, when they already know what they need to do.
- There are some good opportunities for more-able pupils, particularly in mathematics, where they work at much more advanced levels during 'Super-maths' lessons. This is not matched by the work they do in regular lessons.
- A new approach to setting targets has been introduced recently, to make better use of the information teachers have about how well pupils are doing. While these targets are now seen in most pupils' books, in too many lessons they are not yet used effectively to help pupils focus on what they, personally, need to do to improve.
- Recently the school has reviewed its policy about marking of pupils' work and this is now being used more consistently. Most pupils' books include encouraging comments as well as comments showing them what they need to do next, although this is stronger in English than in mathematics. Pupils do not respond to these helpful hints often enough. This means they miss opportunities to make sure they have grasped the skill they were supposed to.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- While most pupils behave well most of the time, there are occasions when the behaviour of a few pupils disrupts learning. Overall, pupils do not show enough determination to work as hard as they can. At times pupils need too many reminders not to disrupt other pupils by chatting or doing tasks that are not important to their learning.
- Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average. Parents' and carers' views confirmed this, although some parents and carers indicated that they did not agree that behaviour is good.
- In the best lessons, pupils help each other to keep working hard and to know what they need to do next, by sharing ideas, checking each other's work and giving each other feedback. However, there is occasional low-level disruption and distractions which mean keen pupils have to ignore what is going on around them to get on with their work.
- Pupils say that they usually get along very well, and inspectors could see that they are very friendly and kind to each other during their free time. They are polite towards adults. When they occasionally fall out with each other, they say that they are encouraged to talk about it to sort it out, but that adults will help them if they need it. Older pupils acting as 'friend monitors' help as well.
- The work of the nurture group is particularly effective in helping some pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties to feel calm and to help them develop skills to deal with how they may be feeling. As a result, their behaviour improves considerably and they are able to participate more positively during lessons.
- The very occasional incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and followed up with work to understand how to prevent it in future. However, younger pupils' understanding of cyber-bullying is not yet well developed.
- Pupils said that they feel very safe at school and know what they can do to help keep themselves safe, for example on the roads and when using the internet.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Senior leaders do not always taken sufficient account of the slow progress of some groups when judging how well the school is doing. Consequently they have been too optimistic at times. They have focused more on describing what is happening in lessons or in books rather than how well pupils learn.

- Leaders have identified the key issues that have meant attainment has been below average at the end of Year 6 and have put in place plans to address this, which are starting to have an impact. However, improvements have been slow to take effect and so leadership requires improvement.
- Recent appointments to the senior leadership team have strengthened the leadership of the school. Strategies that have been introduced as a result are beginning to make a difference, for example increasing the accountability of teachers for the progress of each pupil each half term. However, this is too recent to have had a full impact on the data.
- Together with the governors, senior leaders have ensured that all appropriate policies, procedures and training are in place and kept up to date to keep pupils safe. For example, the school's approaches to managing behaviour are regularly reviewed and well understood by teachers and the pupils, although some pupils need too many reminders about this.
- The learning support unit is well led and is effective in helping the pupils allocated to it because it benefits from good resources and highly trained staff who work well as a team. The nurture group also benefits from a pleasant environment and very caring staff who ensure that pupils who may be stressed or facing difficulties are helped to understand what they are going through.
- The curriculum provides appropriate topics for pupils to learn new skills and knowledge and pupils generally like what they study. However, the school is currently reviewing how the teachers approach the different subjects, to give pupils more say in what they learn and to put learning into more interesting contexts. Reading is well used in other subjects, and opportunities for writing in lots of different contexts are increasing.
- Alongside the curriculum, assemblies and opportunities to think more deeply about the world around them help pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Together with governors, senior leaders look closely at how well teachers are performing when they make decisions about teachers' salaries.
- Training has been provided to help teachers become more confident, for example in developing mental mathematics strategies in lessons. However, plans to help teachers identify and share the very best practice in the school, and in other schools, are at an early stage.
- Leaders work hard to ensure all pupils have equality of opportunity and that there is no discrimination. They have carefully considered which pupils are eligible for the additional pupil premium funding, and use this money to ensure there is additional time from well-trained teaching assistants, a home-school link worker and also to help fund the nurture group. The funding is also used to help make sure that these pupils can participate in residential trips and other activities and clubs, including music lessons. As a result, the personal development of these pupils is well supported and their attendance and progress have improved. The progress of eligible pupils in the recent Year 6 group was good and they are closing the gap with other pupils. However, younger pupils are not closing the gap as effectively.
- The local authority has increased the level of its support and tracking of the performance of the school. Consequently the school has benefited from additional visits, for example to help clarify how well mathematics is taught and identify how to improve this.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have been aware of the decline in standards and have a good understanding of what the data indicate about the performance of different groups of pupils compared to similar schools both locally and further afield. They consider pupils' achievements when approving staff salary increases. The level of governors' challenge to the school has increased and they are following this up to check whether actions taken are bringing improvements. The school benefits from their considerable expertise, for example in ensuring that the environment is safe. All requirements for the safeguarding of the pupils are in place and reviewed regularly. Governors ensure that difficult choices over how funding is spent, for instance pupil premium, are carefully considered with the aim of providing the best possible resources and opportunities for all the pupils.

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

Unique reference number	116488
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	405653

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Rand
Headteacher	Ian Rix
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 October 2010
Telephone number	01425 616510
Fax number	01425 629130
Email address	adminoffice@ashley-jun.hants.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012