

Ashford Park Primary School

Station Crescent, Ashford, TW15 3HN

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
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

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has historically been too low, especially in mathematics.
- Writing of younger pupils does not match the better achievement seen in reading.
- The quality of advice which pupils receive about how to improve their writing is too variable.
- The curriculum does not consistently support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well enough in a range of subjects.
- Systems to check on the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not complete so there are gaps in the information about how well they are learning.
- Leaders are not always clear enough about the starting points for areas of the school's work in need of improvement; consequently, this makes it difficult to measure the impact of improvements accurately.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, managers and governors have begun to increase rates of progress, pupil attendance and pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Teaching has also improved and is now typically good.
- Pupils behave well and they feel safe. Pupils show care and respect for one another and have an evident love for learning.
- The provision for those with disabilities or special educational needs is excellent in the Acorn Unit and the school uses this expertise effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 21 lessons and small group activities. Some of the lesson observations were with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils read and observed the teaching of reading. They visited a lunchtime club and observed pupils at playtime and during a fire alarm.
- Inspectors visited the Acorn Unit and gave attention to finding out how well the school provides for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.
- The school’s development plan, self-evaluation, curriculum planning, evidence of pupils’ progress, records for the management of teachers’ performance, local authority reports, the arrangements to keep pupils safe and governors’ minutes were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took account of the 63 responses on the Parent View website and spoke to parents collecting their children at the end of the school day.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, middle leaders, a group of additional adults, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Christine Fogg, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sandra Teacher	Additional Inspector
Roger Thurlbeck	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashford Park is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British heritage.
- The school has an additional resource base on site for 18 pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra funding provided to support pupils eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, for English and combined English and mathematics which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a confederation of twenty local primary and 5 local secondary schools.
- The school provides a breakfast club. An after-school club is provided by an external company and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement to good by:
 - developing problem solving in mathematics in every class so that pupils have the skills to choose the best way to find a solution
 - providing more opportunities for Key Stage 1 pupils to write at length using their own words and without relying on worksheets.
- Ensure that the marking of writing in all subjects matches the best practice already seen in some English lessons.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers on how well pupils achieve by:
 - ensuring that all leaders set clear starting points for areas in need of improvement so that measurable changes over time can be tracked
 - experienced leaders work with others to improve the gathering and use of assessment information, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that gaps in learning can be more easily identified
 - ensuring that the curriculum enables pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because attainment by the end of Year 6 is consistently below the national average, especially in mathematics. Although now beginning to narrow, there has been too great a gap between attainment in English and in mathematics.
- In English, in 2012, pupils in Year 6 made similar progress to other pupils of their age and middle ability pupils did even better. Pupils did not do as well in mathematics. Pupils across the school have too few opportunities to use their basic mathematical skills to solve problems.
- Good, and improving, teaching and careful intervention mean that most pupils currently in the school are making faster progress than was the case in the past and are catching up quickly in English and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics. This is especially the case in Years 3 to 6.
- Children join the school in Reception with skills and understanding that are low compared with expectations for their age. They make steady, but improving, progress through Reception, but by the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is below the national average. Writing is weaker than reading, being below what is expected for pupils at the end of Year 2. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise writing at length using their own words, rather than worksheets.
- The school supports pupils with special educational needs well. In both the unit and in the main school they make good or better progress than expected.
- Pupil premium has funded a range of strategies in extra staffing and resources to help pupils eligible for free school meals to make faster progress, and gaps between other pupils in the school and similar pupils in other schools are being closed. In 2012, progress for pupils entitled to free school meals was slightly better than similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers plan lessons that are interesting. Pupils enjoyed a lesson where they had to work out how much a Christmas lunch would cost them. In the best lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were given tasks that were just right for them so that they were interested and had to think carefully. There is clear evidence in the improving progress rates teaching that is now typically good.
- Some elements of teaching and planning in the special unit are outstanding. Pupils are questioned carefully so that they can make decisions for themselves and apply their skills to new experiences. All adults support the pupils well so that there is a clear sense of achievement and enthusiasm for learning and trying out new things. As a result, pupils make good progress against the targets of their individual education plans.
- Typically, teachers plan how to use additional adults well so that they do not do too much for the pupils.
- Teachers plan different ways to help pupils of all abilities to catch up with other pupils of their age. Sometimes this support helps pupils make very fast progress, for example a pupil who could not speak English was given a picture timetable and bilingual books so that she rapidly caught up with the other pupils.
- Teachers use good subject knowledge to teach reading and make sure that pupils learn how to use letters and sounds to feel confident as readers. Pupils develop a love of reading and enjoy choosing from a range of reading resources. Additional adults give good support to small groups and individuals when they listen to them read. Pupils' work indicates that this is proving successful.
- Marking in general is thorough and useful, but teacher feedback on writing skills specifically is not always detailed enough in lessons, other than on some occasions in English.
- Good teaching helps to develop personal, social and emotional skills. In the best lessons work is

planned to make sure that every minute is well used so that pupils think carefully, discuss their learning with one another and practise what they have learned before.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they are polite, caring and enthusiastic. Parents responding to Parent View and school surveys say that behaviour is good and the school is rightly proud of the behaviour of the pupils. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and this is now average and improving.
- Pupils are eager to learn; they arrive in classrooms with anticipation and settle quickly to their work. When groups change activity or move to another room there is minimal fuss and little time is wasted. Additional adults facilitate this well.
- The school has worked hard to help pupils feel valued and confident and this is evident in the way that pupils behave sensibly and supportively with each other and with adults. Even the youngest pupils have the confidence to talk to a new adult.
- Leaders of the school and the unit work closely with a range of professionals to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are looked after safely.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to be safe, including e-safety. They understand about types of bullying, such as racist and cyber bullying, and know what to do if they have concerns.
- The school prefects, head boy and head girl help pupils to develop a sense of belonging and pupils say that these roles are important. The younger pupils say that they feel special when the head boy and head girl visit them because they are caring and humorous.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers are beginning to make an impact on pupils' achievement by increasing rates of progress. The time and energy invested in improving the quality of teaching and ethos of the school are showing in the improved progress of pupils. However, some changes have been too slow in moving pupils' achievement to the good level.
- Self-evaluation information is broadly accurate, but is not always presented clearly enough in planning documents to show how well the school is doing for each priority. Sometimes, leaders have not established a clear starting point when they begin improvement activities and this means that it is not easy to explain the difference later on. Sometimes, information has to be gathered from a wide range of documents and this makes summarising the good work of the school a difficult task.
- The curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects.
- Pupils know how to care for one another and this shows in the way they play together and work in classrooms. The school makes sure that pupils meet a range of visitors, such as theatre groups and a representative from Battersea Dogs Home. Trips include a visit to the Olympic rowing lake and the Albert Hall for the Junior Proms, giving pupils the opportunity to participate in world class venues. The school has recently established links with a school in Uganda.
- Senior leaders know what good and outstanding teaching looks like and have set up a strong performance management system for teachers to link the new teaching standards with school priorities. Promotion and pay rises are awarded when teachers merit them and they know what is expected from them to give good value for money. Strong leadership has improved the quality of teaching and the school expects this improvement to continue because it knows that this is essential to improve pupil attainment.
- Expertise from the unit is used well to extend the expertise throughout the school and this has led to improved assessment procedures in Key Stage 1, as well as improving teaching skills for

all adults. Adults keep pupils very safe and make sure that all pupils get the same opportunities as each other.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very supportive of the school. They ask challenging questions of the headteacher so that they have a growing understanding about the way resources are being used. Examples include how the home school link worker has helped to improve attendance, and other ways that pupil premium funding, for example in providing extra staffing and resources, are making a difference to attainment and helping pupils catch up. Governors see the links between finance and pupil achievement. They understand the school data and are beginning to make use of it to evaluate strengths and weaknesses. They are involved in decisions about teachers' promotion and pay awards and support the headteacher in ensuring improvements in teaching are on going. Governors know why teaching is good and can explain how it has been improved significantly over the past year. For example, they were determined to recruit the right people to the posts of headteacher and deputy headteacher, waiting for a second attempt before making an appointment. They are proactive in recruiting new governors with the right skills to add strength to the governing body. Governors are critical of their own effectiveness. They review how well they are doing and change committee structures to make sure that they know how good provision is. They use training opportunities such as the National College's Chairs of Governors' Leadership Programme and local authority training for all governors. Governors ensure that all statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding are effectively met.
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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	125113
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	402311

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Darren Buttigieg
Headteacher	Sarah Tarrant
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 November 2008
Telephone number	01784 250305
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