

# Ash Grove Primary and Nursery School

Belgrave Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 7TF

**Inspection dates** 12–13 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Children make exceptional progress in Nursery and Reception.
- Teachers throughout the school continue to build on this excellent start. The quality of teaching and, consequently, pupils' achievement are outstanding.
- The curriculum is exciting for pupils and makes them want to learn.
- While pupils who are eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium do as well as other pupils in the school in reading, some do not reach the same standards as others in their writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have made enormous improvements to all areas of the school's work since the previous inspection.
- The governing body is a major influence in driving the school forward and bringing success.
- Pupils' attendance is above average. They feel safe and are very proud of what they achieve. Their excellent behaviour, politeness and good manners are a credit to both them and the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons and parts of lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff members the school's consultant improvement partner and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspector also took into account 13 responses via the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as some letters from parents expressing their views about the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation including national assessment data and the school's own assessments, the school's evaluation of its work, reports written about the school, minutes from governing body meetings, curriculum and safeguarding information.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized school in which almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to funding through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average. Pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is supported through school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils during term time.
- A children's centre shares the school site. This is inspected separately and the latest report is available on the Ofsted website.
- The school meets current floor standards which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

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

- Ensure that all pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and who, therefore, receive pupil premium funding, achieve the same standards in mathematics and writing as others in the school by:
  - continuously checking their progress and providing the specific individual help that they need.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- When children start in the Nursery, their skills are very low compared to those typically expected for their age. They rely very much on adults to do things for them and their ability to talk to others and express ideas clearly is at a very early stage. Excellent teaching from all Nursery and Reception staff means that children make outstanding progress. Personal skills, especially their independence, are nurtured exceptionally well. By the time children leave Reception, they think for themselves in order to find their way around problems, talk to each other, tackle reading and writing confidently and work securely within the expectations typically for their age in all of their activities.
- Teachers work very closely with the children's centre staff. This helps them to prepare better for children starting school. It also provides a valuable point of contact with parents who are increasingly contributing to their children's learning once they start school.
- There is no slackening of pace in Years 1 and 2. Teachers' high ambition for their pupils continues to raise standards. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average, having risen year on year since the previous inspection.
- The picture is the same in Years 3 to 6. Attainment in English and mathematics was above average in 2012 at the end of Year 6 and is on track to be, at very least, average in the current year. All in all, that represents outstanding achievement when taking into account the number of pupils with special educational needs and those who started the school half way through the key stage.
- Progress for all pupils is rapid. Excellent systems for checking progress regularly and setting targets not only keep teachers 'on their toes' but mean that pupils themselves are very much involved and always know what is expected of them. There are no excuses made. Expectations across the school are consistently high and pupils consistently rise to them.
- Pupils do particularly well in reading. Outstanding teaching of letters and sounds as soon as children start school stands them in good stead when they are older. Where pupils need an extra boost, one-to-one teaching of the 'reading recovery' scheme is highly successful. Pupils in Year 2 are really keen to read and use what they know about sounding out letters to make sense of their reading. By the end of Year 6, pupils read accurately and with good expression to show that they understand what they read. They read at home for pleasure and have clear ideas about the authors and kinds of stories they like.
- Pupils funded through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve much better than that group nationally in all subjects. Nevertheless, while they did as well as others in the school in reading, some did not reach the same standards in their writing and mathematics. The school recognises that this is something to improve.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make exceptional progress. Pupils' needs are identified at the earliest stage. What each pupil needs to learn and how this is to be done is very carefully planned and involves many of the school staff as well as outside agencies. Progress is checked and recorded daily to make sure that targets are reached and next steps planned.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Most of the teaching in lessons is outstanding and it is never less than good. Teachers set the highest expectations and this is reflected in the quality of the work that pupils do across all subjects.
- Teachers expect pupils to think and solve problems for themselves. They give pupils lots of opportunities to test their ideas out on each other. This talk helps pupils clarify ideas and find answers. In one literacy lesson, pupils discussed unfamiliar words such as possession, omission and contraction, and worked out their meanings correctly. They were then much clearer about

what they were learning and all became better at using apostrophes by the end of the lesson than they were when it started.

- Pupils' successful learning is built up step by step because of the way teachers involve pupils in assessing their own progress. Teachers continually check, during lessons, whether pupils are confident with targets or if they need more help. On that basis, they are given choices about how to learn, either independently or with help from teachers or each other.
- Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught exceptionally well. Pupils have ample opportunities to develop writing, mathematics and computer skills in different ways to improve their learning across subjects.
- Teachers are very skilful with electronic whiteboards and use them very effectively to help pupils focus on their learning. A variety of practical activities motivates and interests pupils resulting in their comment, 'teachers make lessons fun and not boring.'
- Excellent relationships are fostered and pupils' personal development is nurtured by every member of staff. Pupils know how much they are valued, not least by the care teachers take when marking their work. Pupils learn confidently and, because they know that they can learn from mistakes, they are always willing to 'have a go'.
- Teaching assistants contribute immensely to pupils' excellent learning and achievement. They know the pupils and are very sensitive to their individual needs and circumstances. They plan with teachers so that their work with groups and individual pupils is exactly matched to varying needs. They provide excellent support in the classroom to ensure that best progress is made in lessons.

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

- The school is a calm and exciting place for pupils to learn because they are always courteous and mindful of one another. Teachers and teaching assistants manage pupils exceptionally well and pupils fully live up to the expectation that they will be cooperative and work hard alongside others. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying and that incidents of name-calling are rare. They know the different forms that bullying can take, including misuse of the internet and mobile telephones.
- In a recent school survey, all of the pupils stated that they feel safe. This view is fully shared by parents.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and to school generally. Attendance is above average and continues to improve because of the school's positive work with parents and families. Punctuality is very good, helped by the breakfast club that attracts 50 to 60 pupils daily.
- The school goes the extra mile to broaden pupils' personal horizons. Residential visits to Barcelona and Paris have opened up pupils' understanding of different cultures and strong links with local schools and industries prepare pupils very well for the future.
- Pupils make an excellent contribution to the everyday life of the school. All have a say, through the school council, about how things might be improved. The friendly and welcoming atmosphere of the school owes a great deal to the way pupils feel proud to be there and of what they achieve.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher and senior leaders have tackled key issues 'head on' over the past three years. With unfailing support from staff and the governing body, they have successfully taken the school from the brink of closure to the outstanding school and the beacon for the community that it now is.
- The vision for excellence is clear and all staff members focus relentlessly on achieving that ambition, whatever their roles and responsibilities.

- School leaders check teaching, attainment and pupils' progress rigorously. They are single-minded in their view that only the best is good enough for the pupils. They have an accurate view of how well the school is doing and are fully capable of maintaining its high performance.
- The management of teaching performance is first class. This has been the most significant success in the school's improvement. The headteacher has dealt with inadequate teaching unflinchingly. He and the governing body worked effectively to recruit and select new teachers that now bring outstanding quality to teaching and learning. The monitoring of teachers' work is on-going and is the basis for continuous training and support to keep teachers' skills and expertise up to the mark. Teachers are aware of the expectations set out in the 'teachers' standards' and of how their performance is linked to pay progression.
- An exciting curriculum underpins pupils' outstanding achievement. Pupils are equally as proud of their science, art, music, physical education and topic work as they are of their standards in English and mathematics. It is very well planned and enriched by clubs and other exciting events outside of the classroom that pupils enjoy.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is highly skilled and highly effective. Its drive and ambition for the school has recently been recognised in the award of Governor Mark. It challenges the school vigorously not only regarding standards shown in national test data, but on all aspects of the curriculum. It equally supports the school in its drive to continue to improve provision for pupils. Necessary training is undertaken by all governors and they carry out their important duties very effectively. Governors have excellent understanding of the school's work, particularly how this is linked to finances and teaching performance. They know how the pupil premium is used to increase teaching staff and give one-to-one tuition. Governors check results of spending to make sure that there is equality of opportunity for every pupil. They are also aware that pupils eligible for pupil premium funding could benefit more with regard to their writing and mathematics. Safeguarding policies and procedures are well established and meet all of the government's 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>	111017
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	401164

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>	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue Bowen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Simpson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01625 383075
<b>Fax number</b>	01625 503512
<b>Email address</b>	head@ashgrove.cheshire.sch.uk



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