

Ashingdon School

Fambridge Road, Ashingdon, Rochford, SS4 3LN

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school. Select

- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some groups of pupils, primarily girls, often make outstanding progress.
- The methods to check and develop the quality of teaching are being used well by leaders to improve all teachers' practice.
- Teaching is mostly good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan interesting activities which often enthuse pupils.
- Behaviour is excellent. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They co-operate exceptionally well together. Pupils feel safe and their parents agree that the school looks after them very well.
- Teamwork is a strength. Leaders are focused on the right priorities and determined to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching still further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In the less successful lessons, teachers do not check and adapt learning in response to pupils' understanding. Learning is not always moved on quickly enough.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their problem-solving skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Not all teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to assess their own work or to respond to marking.
- Leaders do not use all the information available to them to improve achievement further, for example by always checking the progress that all different groups of learners make and measuring this against national figures.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed seven teachers teach 13 lessons or parts of lessons. Several of these were undertaken with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, teaching staff and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors met with several pupils formally. They met some pupils at break times and had informal discussions with them about their work and school life.
- A meeting was held with the Director of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), the academy's parent body.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the academy, including the academy improvement plan, the analysis of pupils' progress, the headteacher's report to governors and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspection took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Questionnaires from 14 members of staff were also analysed.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graham Marshall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashingdon Primary Academy is smaller than the average primary school.
- Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for children in local authority care and for pupils with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- No pupils are currently educated in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school became a sponsored academy in September 2011. It is part of a federation of academies, the Academy Enterprise Trust (AET). The AET is sponsored by the Greensward Charitable Trust. When its predecessor school, Ashingdon Primary School, was last inspected in 2007, it was judged to be good overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that most teaching is outstanding and never less than consistently good in order to secure rapid progress for all groups of learners by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and investigative situations across a range of subjects
 - build on the existing good practice so that all pupils are given the opportunity to assess their own learning within lessons
 - develop a consistent approach to marking and provide time for pupils to respond to it.
- Ensure that all leaders, including governors, have a clear view of how to drive the school forward by:
 - measuring more regularly the impact of the support provided for pupils who find learning difficult
 - making greater use of progress information for different groups of learners so that leaders are able to assess how well the school is performing in relation to others.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the Reception class is broadly average. Children are confident and enthusiastic about their learning. They make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. This year, children are already making good progress in their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) to read and write simple sentences.
- The school has worked hard to close the attainment gap between boys and girls. Current school information shows that, in most year groups, more pupils are doing well, although there are a small minority of pupils who are still not doing well enough. Nevertheless, by the time pupils leave school in Year 6, their attainment is well above average in English and above in mathematics.
- Concerted efforts by leaders have resulted in significant improvements in writing. Leaders have ensured that themes and activities provide all pupils, including boys, with relevant and exciting situations to write about. Pupils are encouraged to write at length in their 'wow' writing books where they apply and extend their writing skills.
- Year 1 pupils achieved above expected levels in the national phonics screening in 2012. Pupils of all ages read fluently and widely. A Year 2 pupil confidently sounded out complex words such as 'blueberries' without hesitation. Pupils' love of reading is nurtured at every opportunity; for example, older pupils enjoy reading to younger children on a regular basis.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs now make good progress. Teachers have improved pupils' individual education plans and write clear targets for improvement. Nonetheless, the impact of the additional support provided for these pupils is not checked regularly enough to ensure that it is sharply focused to ensure that their achievement is rapid. Leaders do not check how well these pupils are doing in relation to similar pupils nationally.
- The very small numbers of pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress. All achieved well last year. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was approximately a term ahead of other pupils in Year 6. The additional funding is used effectively, for example in additional phonics resources and computer programs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. Only a few lessons require improvement and some are outstanding. Work in pupils' books shows that, although this range of teaching is typical over time, teaching is improving and resulting in more pupils making faster progress.
- Teachers have high expectations. They have good subject knowledge and they plan their lessons well to build on what pupils already know. Activities are usually well matched to the different ability levels in each class.
- Teachers carefully plan how to develop pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils learnt about historical facts in an art lesson, where they observed the painting *Bathers at Asnières*. They explored historical facts and used their communication and writing skills effectively. Opportunities to apply and extend mathematical problem-solving skills are less well developed in other subjects. This hinders some pupils from making outstanding progress,

particularly those pupils who find learning easy.

- Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to enhance pupils' learning. Throughout the school, pupils use laptops and tablet computers to find information, create comic strips and make animations.
- In the best lessons, teachers make sure that pupils are actively involved in their learning. They are sensitive to the needs of pupils because they carefully observe and assess pupils' current levels of understanding. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils were encouraged to work together, to talk about their ideas and to learn from each other. The teacher systematically checked pupils' understanding and, at timely intervals, highlighted key aspects so that their learning moved on at a brisk pace. This resulted in all pupils successfully writing an alternative story ending. In this lesson, pupils were given time to assess their own and each other's work.
- Work in pupils' books show that there is some exemplary marking, especially in their 'wow' writing books. However, there are too many inconsistencies across the school. Pupils are not always provided with sufficient time to respond to teachers' marking in order to practise or extend their skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' exemplary attitudes to their work are a key factor in their learning. There are very strong relationships, with a high degree of trust and respect. Pupils' behaviour is almost always excellent both inside and outside the classroom.
- Children in the Reception class are exceptionally thoughtful, co-operative and eager to learn. They are able to work for sustained periods of time and become totally immersed in their work.
- Pupils' mature attitudes have been fostered still further by the school's recent focus on developing greater responsibility for learning. For example, pupils have started to identify and review their long-term targets with teachers.
- Bullying is rare. Inspection evidence, through the school's records and discussion with pupils, confirms this. Pupils feel safe at school and the vast majority of parents and carers agree with this view. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- Parents and staff are extremely positive about pupils' behaviour and safety. All staff have a consistent approach to promoting and sustaining excellent behaviour. Pupils greatly appreciate that their efforts to behave responsibly and to work hard are recognised at every opportunity. They enjoy being rewarded as literacy and mathematics stars, and by their work being attractively displayed.
- Pupils have great pride in their school. They enjoy everything that the school offers, and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. The school has worked hard to ensure that previously only average attendance rates have improved over the last three years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has created a unified team of staff who share her belief that everyone can succeed. She is very well supported by the two assistant headteachers. Together, they have

secured the support of all staff and governors so that all work hard towards excellence.

- Senior leaders and subject leaders are clear about what the school needs to do to improve further. Their priorities are the right ones. This is the result of regular checks on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. Most of this information is accurate. However, leaders and governors do not always compare all groups of learners' progress against national figures. This means they are not always able to assess precisely whether the progress different groups of pupils make is at least good. This is particularly the case in respect of those pupils who find learning difficult.
- The headteacher has ensured that all staff have individual targets set in order to improve their work. Along with governors, she considers requests for increases in salary only where a teacher's classroom performance and contribution to whole-school improvement warrant it.
- Leaders use their observations of teaching, work in pupils' books and data well to provide tailored training for staff. They make excellent use of the existing outstanding practice to support and show colleagues what the best teaching and learning looks like, in order to improve their teaching practice and subject knowledge further. This team approach contributes well to high staff morale.
- The school's values are strongly promoted through assemblies, lessons, visits and after-school clubs. The broad range of activities strongly promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' social and moral development are outstanding, and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The senior leadership team have introduced a more creative approach to teaching skills, knowledge and understanding by developing links between different subjects. Pupils learn through exciting and relevant themes. These ignite pupils' imagination and enthusiasm. Literacy skills are promoted well in other subjects. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to problem solve and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- The school engages well with parents. It uses a wide range of strategies to involve parents in their children's learning. The recently introduced planners provide both pupils and parents with regular and clear information on how well pupils are doing. Parents who talked to inspectors were overwhelmingly positive about the dedication and approachability of staff.
- Good support from the Academy Enterprise Trust (AET) has helped the school to become more successful. Staff have received literacy and mathematics training, and some leadership support. A representative from the Trust also visits the school regularly to discuss and evaluate how well the school is doing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body increasingly holds leaders to account for the school's performance. It has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governors receive a detailed overview of pupils' achievement. However, this primarily focuses on attainment and there is insufficient detail on the progress different groups of pupils make and how this information compares with national averages. They check that the pupil premium funding has resulted in those pupils it supports making good progress. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and have a good overview of how the outcome of teachers' performance reviews relates directly to their pay.

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	137378
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	403699

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

Type of school	Academy sponsor-led
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Whitehead
Headteacher	Ann Stewart
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01702 202857
Fax number	01702 205826
Email address	admin@ashingdonprimaryacademy.org

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