

Ashford Church of England Primary School

School Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 2BW

Inspection dates 24–25 January 2013

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not enough Year 6 pupils reach the expected standards in writing. Mathematics standards for more able pupils are not high enough.
- Some lower-attaining pupils' progress in reading is hindered because they lack confidence in applying phonics (the links between letters and sounds).
- Pupils' spelling is not always good enough and they are not given sufficient opportunities for imaginative writing.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Lessons do not always build well on pupils' previous attainment, including in mathematics.
- A few pupils attend too irregularly.
- Checks on teachers have not yet resulted in consistently good teaching. Not all subject leaders observe their colleagues teach.
- Although getting better, the governing body do not have enough understanding of data relating to pupils' progress. Consequently, they do not hold the school rigorously to account.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has galvanised the staff's enthusiasm to improve their teaching and to strive to become a good school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have taken effective action, including the introduction of teacher performance measures, so that the quality of teaching has improved.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start.
- Pupils behave well and have respectful attitudes. This contributes to the positive learning atmosphere.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons and part lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the headteacher, and they heard a sample of pupils read from most year groups.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors, local authority and diocese representatives, senior leaders and staff.
- Inspectors talked with pupils, looked at a wide range of their work and examined the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 64 responses to the online Parent View survey, discussions with parents, the few parents' and carers' letters to inspectors and staff's responses to questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a broad selection of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance as well as records of school leaders' evaluations of teaching in lessons.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Deidre Crutchley	Additional Inspector
Ken Bryan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a large primary school close to Heathrow airport on the outskirts of London.
- Most pupils are White British and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is similar to the national average. The range of nationalities is wide. Few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. These pupils' needs mainly relate to language, literacy and numeracy difficulties, and also to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding (additional funding in this school provided for looked-after children and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The previous deputy headteacher acted as headteacher for two years prior to the headteacher's arrival in September 2011.
- There have been significant staff changes in the last year. The deputy headteacher left last term and a replacement deputy headteacher has yet to be appointed. A new Chair of Governors took up post in September 2012.
- The daily before- and after-school club is privately managed and was not part of this inspection. The latest report is available on the Ofsted website.
- There is no alternative provision off-site that is attended by pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good by:
 - strengthening the teaching of literacy by enabling pupils to consistently apply their phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) when reading and writing
 - ensuring teachers set work in mathematics at the right level of difficulty for more-able and lower-attaining pupils so they make consistently good progress
 - implementing whole-school tracking for phonics and ensuring reading records show parents their children's reading targets, including in phonics, where appropriate.
- Raise achievement and quicken pupils' progress by:
 - improving pupils' spelling, increasing opportunities for them to write creatively and for writing longer pieces
 - improving lower-attaining pupils' ability to apply phonics and ensuring they are heard to read very regularly in school
 - raising the attainment of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium
 - improving the attendance of those pupils with irregular attendance by working more closely with parents to ensure they understand the importance of coming to school regularly.
- Improve the management of the school by leaders and the governing body by:

- effectively monitoring the impact of initiatives for raising achievement and improving teaching, including for guided reading and for those in receipt of pupil premium funding
 - developing subject leaders’ skills in monitoring teaching and learning so they have a full impact on helping to raise achievement
 - increasing the governing body’s understanding of data for pupils’ attainment and progress so they can effectively challenge the school’s impact on raising achievement and attendance.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Having entered Reception with knowledge and skills which are typical of those expected for their age, pupils make improving but uneven progress across the school. Over time, Year 6 pupils' attainment has been broadly average and recovered last year from a large dip. Scrutiny of work, lesson observations, hearing pupils read and the school's own data show the current Year 6 pupils' attainment is above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics.
- Attainment in reading is rising for Year 6 pupils because of good teaching in this year group and the extra help given to lower-attaining pupils. However, too few Year 6 pupils are on track to reach the levels expected in writing and, in mathematics, to reach the higher levels they should.
- In recent years children's attainment in Reception has risen. It is now above average, including in literacy and numeracy. Progress is good. Children thrive in their learning because of the stimulating range of activities when they learn through purposeful play and when adults teach the basic skills.
- Attainment in Year 2 has recovered from a dip in 2011. Attainment is now a little above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. School data, confirmed by lesson observations, shows that new Reception and Key Stage 1 arrangements for teaching phonics in ability groups are improving pupils' skills.
- For example, in a Reception phonics lesson, pupils made excellent progress in learning their sounds and, during a child-led learning session, children applied their understanding extremely well when writing.
- Most pupils are fluent readers by Year 6 but progress is not consistently good for the lower-attaining pupils in other years. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, lower-attaining pupils do not consistently apply their knowledge of sounds sufficiently well when reading.
- Spelling weaknesses impair the quality of writing for some middle- and lower-attaining pupils because teachers do not consistently enable pupils to apply phonics. By Year 6, most write competently for different purposes but do not have enough opportunities for imaginative writing or to write longer pieces of work.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress slows in mathematics when activities do not consistently build on previously learned skills, especially for the more able and lower-attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups make progress similar to their peers. Small-group teaching speeds up progress, including that of the few with English as an additional language, but their progress is uneven across the school.
- The few pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding make similar progress to their peers. Although improving, their attainment remains lower than their national counterparts and, at times, other pupils in school, as shown by their lower average point scores.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Currently, there is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress in all classes. There is now some good teaching in most year groups but it is most consistently so in Reception and Years 3 and 6. The secure core of good teaching means that the school is well placed to share good practice.
- Teachers plan in year group teams to provide similar experiences for pupils but do not use assessment data sufficiently well to ensure pupils' learning always builds on previous skills. For example, in mathematics lessons in Years 4 and 5, activities were too hard or too easy on occasions, particularly for more-able or lower-attaining pupils. Pupils are now provided with opportunities for using mathematics in meaningful contexts but activities are not always fully

matched to pupils' abilities.

- Guided-reading sessions are of variable quality. Without exception, pupils working with the class teacher have a positive learning experience which develops their reading skills. However, activities set for the rest of the class are not always focused on improving reading skills.
- There are other inconsistencies. Teachers do not always encourage pupils to use phonics when reading and writing, while reading records show that some lower-attaining pupils do not read often enough in school or at home. Teachers' marking is developing well, but, at times teachers' written comments do not help pupils to fully understand what they need to do to improve, for example in spelling.
- Parents expressed concern about the consistency of homework and information given about pupils' progress. The school is now addressing the consistency of teachers setting homework. However, there is insufficient information in pupils' reading records, including for phonics, to enable parents to fully support their reading.
- Pupils make good progress where teachers' subject knowledge is good and activities well planned. The new setting arrangements for mathematics in Year 6 enable teachers to set pupils' work more closely to all their abilities. For example, pupils in all the Year 6 sets were observed to make good progress.
- The impact of teaching assistants is also variable. Consistently good support is provided in Reception and Year 3 because teaching assistants are well briefed. On occasions teaching assistants do not give good-quality support for lower-attaining pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Almost all pupils are courteous and polite to each other and adults in the school and work hard.
- Most parents are pleased with pupils' behaviour at school and feel their children are kept safe. Inspectors agree. Behaviour is often good in lessons and around the school but, occasionally, pupils lose concentration when work is either too easy or too hard.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are very responsive and concentrate and behave extremely well during both adult-led learning and purposeful play.
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties are supported sensitively and improve their social skills so that disruption to learning is rare.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have little concern about bullying and any behaviour that is driven by prejudice. Pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They know what action to take should bullying occur. School records indicate that bullying is rare, and there are clear procedures to deal with issues should they arise.
- Attendance is in line with national averages. There has been a marked improvement because the school has introduced more stringent procedures. However, a few families still take too many holidays in term time. This restricts pupils' progress.
- There is more work to do to strengthen communication with parents to ensure all parents realise the importance of regular attendance for their children's future. The school has recently appointed a home-school liaison officer and has much closer links with the Education Welfare Officer.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The school is improving as a result of the high expectations and the decisive and resilient leadership of the headteacher. The new senior team support the headteacher well.
- Subject leaders are developing a clear understanding of their roles but some are still receiving training for monitoring lessons. This means they are not contributing as much as they could to raising pupils' achievement. A phonics coordinator has been recently appointed but there is still no thorough tracking of pupils' phonics standards.

- Pupils make uneven progress as they move through the school, and initiatives such as guided reading have yet to be fully monitored. However, the right priorities for improving pupils' achievement have been identified. Pupils' improving attainment in Year 6 in reading, and children's better attainment in Reception, demonstrate the school is well placed to secure further improvements.
- The school has responded very positively to the guidance provided by the diocese and the local authority. The school used the funding provided by the local authority wisely to work with teaching consultants tailored to teachers' individual needs.
- The extra funding for the pupils in receipt of pupil premium has been used to help to fund a learning mentor and to train staff to teach catch-up programmes in English and mathematics. However, the impact of this spending on raising pupils' achievement has yet to be fully evaluated.
- Leaders have set teachers challenging targets in order to hold them to account. Performance management of staff is now closely linked to pupils' progress, teachers' professional development needs and pay progression. The headteacher has robustly addressed an element of weak teaching and developed thorough management systems to ensure the focus on improving the quality of teaching continues.
- The school ethos is inclusive in seeking to promote equality, and discrimination is not tolerated. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of Governors is very experienced and is having a strong impact on streamlining and the improving the skills of the governing body. The governing body now has a clearer understanding about performance management and makes checks on the performance of staff which influence their decisions about any increases in teachers' salaries. However, most are not yet able to challenge the school because they do not understand pupils' assessment data well enough. They understand the way in which the budget is spent, especially pupil premium funding. They do not have enough methods to evaluate the effect of initiatives for improving achievement and for improving attendance, including for pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding. Safeguarding policies and practices are robust and the governing body ensures that they fully meet 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

Unique reference number	125228
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	402320

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Ann Roycroft
Headteacher	Caroline Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2009
Telephone number	01784 253310
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