

Ashburnham Primary School

17 Blantyre Street, London, SW10 0DT

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in English by the end of Year 6. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve in line with their classmates.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is significantly below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils do not make enough progress in writing across the school.
- Teaching is inconsistent across the school and requires improvement. Although there are a few good and outstanding lessons, many require improvement.
- Too many teachers do not understand the levels at which pupils are working and do not plan work that meets their learning needs.
- While behaviour is usually good, many lessons do not capture pupils' interest. This is because the curriculum is occasionally uninspiring and lacks imagination. Pupils then become fidgety and talk among themselves when they should be listening to the teacher.
- Targets for improvement in some subject action plans do not always correspond to the most important things that need to be improved.
- Some middle leaders are new to their roles and have not yet developed the necessary skills to monitor robustly the work of other teachers. Consequently leadership and management require improvement.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils enjoy school and they feel safe because they know that adults care for them.
- Pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics is broadly average. The outcome of the Year 1 phonics (letters and sounds) check was above average.
- The school has made good use of opportunities by developing good working relations with a partner school, demonstrating that it can improve further.
- Governors have worked in close cooperation with the local authority to ensure the smooth running of the school in the absence of a permanent headteacher.
- The executive headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have successfully put into place actions to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons, including several that were observed jointly with senior leaders. They listened to pupils read and they looked at work in their books.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, governors, pupils and an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at school development plans, pupils' assessment and tracking information, minutes from governing body meetings and other documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The views of parents and carers were taken into account through the analysis of 11 responses to the online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sarah Conway

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than usual. This is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils who are looked after by the local authority and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is higher than the national average, as is the proportion of those pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are higher than the national average.
- In 2012, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There has been significant disruption to school leadership since the previous inspection and the school is currently led by an executive headteacher under a 'soft' federation with another local primary school. Under this arrangement, staff from both schools work together to share expertise and resources to improve the education for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching across the school so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers fully understand the levels at which pupils are working and use this knowledge to plan lessons that are well matched to the learning needs of all pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' marking by correcting and improving their work
 - ensuring that pupils in all lessons clearly understand the purpose of the lesson and what they are expected to learn.
- Raise pupils' achievement across the school, particularly in writing, by:
 - teaching basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation so that pupils develop fluency in writing by the end of Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that lessons build on previous learning so that pupils develop their skills systematically and progressively
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills when learning other subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they take a more active role in checking the work of other teachers
 - making the curriculum more imaginative by creating more practical and interesting learning experiences that capture pupils' interest and engagement in learning
 - making better use of the outcomes of self-evaluation to create subject action plans with more sharply focused points for improvement.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics has been broadly average for several years. However, in 2012, standards and progress in writing were significantly below average and this depressed the overall level for English. Scrutiny of pupils' current work shows that actions taken by school leaders are leading to improvements in pupils' writing, although it varies across the school.
- Many pupils lack the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation to allow them to write fluently and at length. Lessons do not always build on previous learning and so pupils do not build on and consolidate their skills. Although some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise their writing when learning other subjects, this good practice varies between classes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Although they benefit from additional programmes of work to help them to overcome their difficulties, their progress is not always checked regularly and it is not as rapid as it should be.
- Pupils entitled to the pupil premium achieve at a similar level to their peers in mathematics and writing. Their performance in the most recent national assessments is slightly better than that of their peers. This is because funding has been used to pay for additional staff and resources to meet their needs. This demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language achieve well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage start school with skills at below the expected levels for their age. They make satisfactory progress so that, by the time they enter Year 1, their skills are broadly as expected. They develop their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) to sound out words so that they read simple sentences. They count accurately to 10 and sometimes beyond. Children work and play happily together showing good social development.
- Most pupils enjoy reading and they make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6, they read fluently both for pleasure and to find information. They make inferences from texts, predict what may happen next and use evidence from books to support their opinions about what they have read. Occasionally, books are not always matched well enough to pupils' levels and they lose interest in reading.
- Pupils make broadly average and occasionally good progress in mathematics. This is because they have an adequate grasp of basic number skills which they use to carry out calculations and to solve problems. They enjoy mathematics lessons which are usually lively and briskly paced.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved but there is still not enough that is good or better. This is because a few teachers are unsure about the levels at which pupils are working and so lessons do not meet their learning needs. Consequently the level of work in some lessons is too easy while in others it is too hard. Teaching of mathematics and reading is better than it is in writing.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults plan a variety of activities to encourage children to learn through play and through more formal learning experiences. There are occasions when adults skilfully intervene by asking focused questions that help to develop children's knowledge and skills. However, there are too many occasions when children spend too long with little interaction with adults and opportunities for learning are missed.
- Although teachers set objectives for each lesson, these mostly relate to the activity that pupils are to do rather than what they are to learn. Consequently pupils are not sure what they are meant to be learning and are unclear about what progress they are making. This is particularly

true in writing where teachers miss opportunities to teach specific writing skills.

- In the better lessons, the pace is brisk and teachers present the lesson in a lively and engaging way which captures pupils' enthusiasm. They use interactive whiteboards to demonstrate and explain so that pupils understand what they are expected to do. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher showed pupils how number patterns could be used to predict the chances of combinations of pairs of numbers thrown using two dice.
- In some lessons, teachers skilfully ask questions that probe pupils' knowledge and extend their ideas. This allows them to see how well pupils understand and to adjust the lesson to meet their needs.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and they provide detailed comments about what they have done well and what they need to do to further improve their work. However, they do not always provide opportunities for pupils to correct and improve their work and this slows their progress as lessons do not always build on previous learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Although pupils usually behave well in lessons and around the school, they become fidgety and distracted when lessons do not meet their needs. They chat among themselves and do not always listen attentively to teachers.
- Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their attendance which has improved and is now good. They say that there is always someone they can go to if they have any concerns, although some adults deal with problems better than others.
- Pupils get on well together regardless of background. They show respect towards the beliefs and cultures of others. They are friendly, polite and courteous to adults and to each other, reflecting the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated and racial harmony is a strength of the school with pupils from all backgrounds working and playing together.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good awareness of different forms of bullying, including racism, name calling and cyber bullying but say few incidents of bullying occur. They say that adults are on hand to address any minor issues that very occasionally arise. School records show few reported incidents of poor behaviour and there have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe outside school. Staff ensure that they understand how to stay safe from traffic, railways and rivers and the dangers posed by the abuse of substances such as tobacco, drugs and alcohol.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The school has undergone a period of instability in which there have been several headteachers over a short time. This has led to a lack of consistency in the way that school priorities have been identified and implemented. School leaders have responded well to the high level of support offered to the school by the local authority.
- School governors, in close cooperation with the local authority, have taken swift action to reverse the decline and put the school on an even keel. The school has been federated with a neighbouring outstanding school and this has increased capacity in leadership at all levels. Staff and governors are ambitious and morale is high.
- Staff from both schools have worked closely together to identify strengths and weaknesses and

to establish appropriate priorities for improvement. However, some subject action plans have too many points for development which are not always the most important things they need to do to improve. Middle leaders check the work of other teachers but they do not always ensure that actions for improvement are put into place. School leaders have introduced new systems to record pupils' progress so that teachers can identify any groups of pupils who are at risk of underachieving. This has enabled them to ensure that all groups of pupils have the opportunity to achieve equally well.

- The executive headteacher has created a planned programme of professional development linked to identified priorities for improvement. All staff have performance targets linked to pupils' achievement, and progression on the pay scale is dependent on their performance. Previously inadequate teaching has been addressed and an increasing proportion is now good.
- The curriculum meets all statutory requirements but in many cases it lacks inspiration and fails to capture pupils' interest. There are opportunities for pupils to visit local places of interest, promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but there are too few occasions when pupils use the outdoor area or learn through practical approaches.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have taken decisive action to reverse the decline and to build leadership capacity within the school. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including how the school's performance compares with that of other schools. They know about the quality of teaching and that progression on the salary scale is dependent on teachers' performance. They work in close partnership with the executive headteacher, taking an active role in establishing the strategic direction of the school. They provide a high level of challenge to school leaders and have undertaken extensive training to help them to fulfil their roles effectively. Governors know how pupil premium funding is used to provide support for eligible pupils and how this is helping those pupils to achieve at least in line with others. They ensure that robust procedures for safeguarding pupils and staff are in place.
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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	100477
Local authority	Chelsea and Kensington
Inspection number	411805

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Heawood
Headteacher	Paul Cotter (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 June 2010
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