

# Ashby Fields Primary School

Wimborne Place, Ashby Fields, Daventry, NN11 0YP

**Inspection dates** 9–10 May 2013

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Good                        | 2        |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| 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

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils have not made enough progress over time in mathematics.
- The pace of learning in mathematics, although improving, is not raising standards fast enough.
- Older pupils have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and a minority lack confidence with their calculations.
- Gaps between groups of pupils are not closing rapidly enough, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- Not all teachers plan their lessons to make sure that all pupils are given work that gets the best out of them.
- A minority of teaching is not good enough to make sure all pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- Marking is not used consistently to improve pupils' work. Underachieving pupils are not identified quickly enough and provided with appropriate support to secure good progress.
- Leaders, including governors, have not improved achievement in mathematics quickly enough.
- Monitoring of teaching has not always been rigorous enough to ensure all teaching is consistently good or better.
- Some middle leaders are new to their posts and are not yet clear about their role in monitoring pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and school improvements.

### The school has the following strengths

- Attendance is well above average.
- Pupils feel safe and have good attitudes to learning. They are very proud of their school.
- Behaviour is good, overall, with examples of exemplary conduct around the school.
- The school's vision and values are shared by everyone associated with the school and provide a calm and supportive environment for learning.
- Pupils have many memorable and vibrant learning opportunities, including a wide variety of visits and visitors to the school. There are many opportunities to perform and to sing, which contribute very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is especially supportive of those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons involving 15 teachers, which included three joint observations with school leaders, and saw two assemblies.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 79 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with them at the start of the school day

## Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Hazel Pulley

Additional Inspector

Margaret Jones

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils; in this school those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Reception classes.
- The governing body manages before- and after-school care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- In order to raise standards in mathematics throughout the school make sure that all teaching is at least good and an increasing proportion is outstanding by ensuring that;
  - teachers make good use of assessment information to plan tasks which are set at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities so that learning moves at a rapid pace
  - activities in lessons help pupils to improve their basic skills and confidence with number, particularly in eliminating gaps in the knowledge and skills of older pupils, and especially in calculations
  - pupils have more opportunities to apply their basic numeracy skills in a range of subjects
  - all pupils understand how to improve their work and have time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - plans for raising achievement are fully implemented and rigorously monitored
  - prompt action is taken to identify pupils who are underachieving and measures put into place to secure good progress
  - leaders use the pupil premium funding more effectively in mathematics so that gaps in the performance of eligible pupils and their classmates are closed quickly
  - middle leaders, especially those new in post, are fully involved in monitoring teaching, learning and analysing data on pupils' progress
  - leaders use accurate assessment data to measure the impact of additional support on pupils' performance.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because a minority of pupils, including some who are eligible for the pupil premium, and some disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, do not make enough progress in mathematics to reach the standards they are capable of.
- Progress across Key Stage 2 is inconsistent. As a result, the proportion of pupils making the progress they should is below average in English and mathematics. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection.
- Basic mathematical skills, including those of calculation, have not been reinforced sufficiently over time. A few older pupils have gaps in their mathematical knowledge and many lack confidence with their calculations. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects.
- In national assessments in 2012, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who attained Level 4 in both English and mathematics decreased to average levels. Too few pupils reach the higher Level 5 in mathematics compared to pupils nationally.
- Children enter the school with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, literacy and language. Most make good progress across all areas of learning and develop good levels of independence, although a minority start Year 1 still below the levels expected.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent in words). Results in 2012 national phonic screening show that Year 1 pupils achieved higher than national figures.
- Reading is successfully promoted throughout the school with regular use of the library, and visits from authors. Although there are regular lessons which teach reading skills and ensure that there is a meaningful link between reading and other subjects, activities are not always planned to move learning on at pace for all pupils.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional teaching assistants, a parent support worker and curriculum enrichment opportunities. The overall attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2012 was the equivalent of two terms behind their classmates in English and four terms behind in mathematics. The school's current information shows that the gaps between their performance and that of other pupils are not closing rapidly enough.
- Carefully planned and individualised support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures that these groups make similar progress over time to their peers.
- The vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors or responded to Parent View believed that their children were making good progress. While inspectors agree that in a few classes progress is improving, they find that it requires improvement overall.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to ensure all pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics, and therefore requires improvement.
- Expectations have not been high enough. Sometimes the work is too easy or does not precisely meet pupils' needs so that learning slows.
- Although marking is encouraging, the quality is inconsistent across the school and between subjects. It does not provide guidance that is precise enough to help all pupils improve their work. Often, pupils do not have sufficient time to act on teachers' advice.
- Teaching is inconsistent and adults miss opportunities to secure and extend learning during activities children choose for themselves. Language development and social skills are promoted well.
- Reading is taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants are successfully promoting the pupils' phonic knowledge. Music is also taught well. Pupils have many opportunities to perform and to develop their musical skills.
- In the good lessons, teachers plan tasks that rapidly build on what the pupils are already able to do. All groups of pupils are fully engaged throughout and make rapid progress. Teachers use questioning effectively to find out what pupils know and build on this well. They use a wide range of imaginative activities to capture pupils' interests, including allowing pupils to choose topics for themselves. This was seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson on fractions.
- A greater focus on mental skills during the morning 'skills sessions' has started to raise pupils' attainment and confidence in mathematics. However, examples of pupils' work and teachers' demonstration of calculation strategies are not used consistently across the school.
- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants, who provide valuable support both in and out of the classroom. The extra help for pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is well managed in English. However, their progress across the school is inconsistent, particularly in mathematics.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are polite and well-mannered. The good relationships between all pupils and adults contribute to the positive values and sense of belonging in the school. Pupils are proud of their school and keenly take on responsibilities, for example as school councillors, buddies and monitors.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because a few pupils, very occasionally, find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. These pupils are supported well and school behaviour records show improvement over time.
- Pupils are keen to learn. They told inspectors that, 'It is fun at our school because we do loads of different activities. We sing and play a lot of instruments.' They like the rewards they get for good behaviour and work.
- Parents have great confidence in the care that the school provides and pupils agree that they feel happy and safe in school. A parent described Ashby Fields as 'a pupil and family-friendly

school at the heart of the community'. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke to inspectors judged behaviour to be good.

- Discussions with pupils showed they understand about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They said that, although squabbles may sometimes arise, there is no bullying in school and that, if it were to occur, staff would deal with it immediately. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- Through a well-planned range of activities, pupils are helped to develop strategies so that they are able to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with the internet, fire and roads.
- The school has close working relationships with a number of outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Attendance is consistently high when compared to the national average.
- Pupils and parents greatly appreciate the well-run before- and after-school club, which provides a calm and sociable start and end to the school day.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and to raise achievement since the previous inspection, particularly in mathematics, have not been rigorous enough or timely. Expectations have not been high enough.
- Until recently, systems for checking how well pupils were doing and how effective additional support was, were not robust enough. Pupils who were underachieving were not identified quickly enough. As a result, actions to close gaps in attainment between groups of pupils, especially those known to be eligible for pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have not had enough effect. Equal opportunities for all to succeed are not yet sufficiently well promoted.
- Self-evaluation is now thorough, detailed, and provides a realistic appraisal of where further improvements are needed. The school improvement plan is focused clearly on gaining and sustaining good achievement throughout the school. Members of the governing body frequently visit the school to check on how the improvement plan is being implemented.
- The improvements to progress and teaching, since September 2012, show that leaders have the capacity to improve the school further. However, the roles of middle leaders are not yet sufficiently developed to help them check on the quality of teaching or to assess the affect of additional support on pupils' progress.
- Revised procedures for checking how well pupils are doing now enable leaders to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. Decisions about the salary that each teacher receives are now based on the progress made by the pupils in their care.
- Leaders, including governors, have been highly successful in creating a vision that all staff share. Morale is high. However, this focus has not yet resulted in good achievement for all pupils.
- Topics bring together different subjects in a way that the pupils describe as 'interesting and fun'. The range of subjects and activities contribute very strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Lessons are enhanced extremely well through a wide range of enrichment

days, after-school activities, opportunities for pupils to learn a foreign language, and music taught by specialist teachers. Visits, including residential visits, school productions and opportunities to develop sporting and artistic skills add further enrichment

- The local authority provides regular support for school leaders and teachers, helping them to evaluate the school's performance.

- **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is now good. Governors have a clear understanding of how the school compares with other schools nationally. However, they have not always used this knowledge robustly to require leaders to account for pupils' performance across Key Stage 2. They have a clear strategy to improve the school further. Governors support the headteacher in setting exacting targets for teachers in their annual performance appraisals. They understand the link between pay and performance and reward better teachers accordingly. Governors attend suitable training as well as managing their own training, as they know it will equip them with the skills they need to discharge their duties effectively. They manage the school's finances and the support for the pupil premium well particularly in English, although they have yet to close gaps between groups in mathematics. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed and 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

|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 131671           |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Northamptonshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 413078           |

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>                 | 4–11                              |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                             |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 417                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Angela Ward                       |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Neil Balliston                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 12 February 2009                  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01327 310068                      |
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