

# Ashburton Primary School

Whistley Hill, Ashburton, Devon, TQ13 7DW

**Inspection dates** 21–22 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Ashburton has improved rapidly since it became an academy school, particularly over the last year, and is exceptionally well placed to improve further.
- From their below average attainment on entry, pupils' good progress ensures attainment is rising well. Their achievement in reading is outstanding where attainment is above average by the time pupils leave.
- Special programmes in place for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those receiving pupil premium funding support them exceptionally well.
- Very strong and consistent behaviour management systems ensure that most pupils behave well, get on well with each other and work hard. They enjoy school very much.
- Teaching is good. Lesson activities are effectively targeted at pupils' different ability levels and help them to do well.
- Very regular and comprehensive checks made on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching ensure staff can swiftly make effective adjustments to lessons when improvement is needed.
- The school benefits from an exceptionally strong leadership team which has gained the full confidence of staff and improved the quality of teaching well.
- Governors are very astute and committed, holding staff to account well for the quality of education. Governors are very supportive in working with staff to improve the quality further.
- The school benefits considerably from being part of the South Dartmoor Academy through, for example, opportunities for staff development and enriched experiences for pupils.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Although the proportion of pupils exceeding the levels expected for their age is rising, only in reading do the majority of pupils consistently exceed average levels.
- Not all teachers regularly adjust activities throughout lessons and raise the level of challenge, nor do they always check that pupils know how to correct the errors identified in written work. This limits pupils' progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 10 lessons, the majority of which were joint observations with the executive headteacher or the head of teaching and learning. In addition the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons and activities planned to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs or pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors heard a sample of pupils read and scrutinised samples of their written work.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and members of staff including senior and middle managers. Inspectors also spoke to members of the governing body, member of the academy trust and the academy's School Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own parental questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to a small number of parents and carers bringing their children to school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school's records on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to planning and monitoring and safeguarding were also looked at.

## Inspection team

Diane Wilkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steven Edwards

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Ashburton is a smaller than average-sized primary school. In April 2011 it became part of the South Dartmoor Academy Trust, which comprises a community college and three other primary schools. The school has its own governing body and has representatives on the academy's board of directors.
- At its previous inspection prior to becoming an academy school, Ashburton was judged to be good overall.
- Ashburton's executive headteacher is also the executive headteacher of one of the other academy primary schools. The head of teaching and learning leads Ashburton Primary School when the headteacher is working at another academy school.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported by school action is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is slightly above average.
- The school has met the current government's floor standards for English and mathematics, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Build on and extend the strategies to raise attainment, and increase the proportion of pupils exceeding the levels expected for their age in writing and mathematics through:
  - ensuring that pupils consistently write neatly, and spell and punctuate accurately from a younger age
  - extending the range of topics provided for writing in order to ensure that boys are fully committed to doing well
  - providing a greater number of mathematical activities that reflect real-life situations.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - regularly adjusting activities and raising the level of challenge throughout lessons so that all pupils can do their very best
  - consistently following up errors in pupils' work identified through marking to ensure that pupils are fully aware of how to correct them and do better in the future.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills on entry to Reception vary considerably but for the majority are below those expected for this age, especially in early literacy and numeracy skills. Children get off to a good start and the majority reach average levels by the time they move into Year 1.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own data clearly indicate that throughout the school pupils make good progress. Pupils and their parents and carers fully acknowledge that this is the case.
- Attainment is improving well, most notably in reading where pupils make outstanding progress and the large majority exceed expectations for their age. By the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment is above average in reading.
- Pupils' phonic skills (accurately reading the sounds letters make in words) and their understanding of texts are especially good. By Year 2, the higher-attaining pupils can identify a character's traits or predict what might happen in future really well and, by Year 6, virtually all pupils are skilled at doing this.
- Strengths in reading have helped disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to outperform their peers nationally and also ensure that pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well. Pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding have successfully closed the gap on their peers in English due to this. These strengths clearly demonstrate the school's determination to provide equality of opportunity.
- By the end of Year 6 attainment in writing and mathematics has been broadly average in the past few years, but has accelerated well over the past year. This is evident in the good progress made by Year 6 pupils who are attaining average levels in these subjects despite the majority having special educational needs or being in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- Pupils in the younger year groups are already exceeding the levels expected for their age so attainment is very well placed to rise further.
- Pupils' calculation skills are good so that, by Year 2, most pupils work confidently with 10s and units and Year 6 pupils apply their skills well when working with measures or data.
- More pupils than when the school started as an academy exceed the levels expected for their age in writing and mathematics, although fewer than in reading. Writing lags behind reading mainly because of the reluctance of some boys to write at length and the weaker presentation of work in the younger classes. The lack of regular opportunities for mathematics activities related to real-life situations limits attainment, including that of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding which, although improved, was about two terms behind that of their peers at the end of Year 6. In English, their attainment is similar to that of their peers.
- Addressing areas the school has correctly identified as requiring improvement is a key priority and inspection evidence confirms that it is beginning to do so successfully.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Very good monitoring and support for teaching have improved the quality well over the last year. Weaker teaching has been eradicated and it is uniformly good, with the proportion of outstanding lessons rising well. The good quality teaching and learning is praised by pupils and their parents and carers.
- Good subject knowledge helps teachers and classroom assistants explain and demonstrate things clearly; for example when using a large container with dual scales to help pupils compare metric and imperial measures, or 'pirate treasure' that encourages reception children to count one more or one less than.
- Resources are very carefully chosen and used effectively to support learning, most notably in the quality of reading material which motivates pupils particularly well. This, together with excellent teaching of reading, helps pupils to achieve exceptionally well in this subject.
- Lessons are well planned so that pupils working at different levels are provided with activities that help them to do well. Skilled teaching assistants often provide extra support for pupils who

require it. In the best lessons activities are highly challenging which, together with outstanding explanations and support, ensures pupils do really well. However, learning is not yet outstanding because this only happens on a minority of occasions.

- The special programmes for pupils who need extra help are taught particularly well so that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those in receipt of pupil premium funding not only achieve well, but are successfully closing the gap on their peers.
- Staff lead good discussions to help pupils clarify their learning and capitalise well on pupils' good relationships with each other by encouraging them to test out ideas or evaluate each other's work. Pupils are fully involved in helping to judge their success in each lesson and setting targets to help them improve. Pupils value this process saying it provides them with a very good idea of how they can achieve well.
- Staff are good at checking how well pupils are doing throughout lessons, correcting errors or misconceptions well, but only in the outstanding lessons do teachers constantly adjust activities when pupils are learning quickly to extend their learning even further.
- Most marking of recorded work clearly indicates what has been achieved and how to improve, but too often teachers do not check that pupils are aware of how to correct their mistakes which then sometimes reoccur, limiting their progress.
- Management of behaviour is very good so that, despite a small minority of pupils finding good behaviour difficult, lessons are rarely interrupted and consistently proceed at a good pace.

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

- Pupils' good behaviour is a testament to the strong procedures in place to encourage them to behave well. The few pupils who find it difficult to consistently behave well receive very effective support, ensuring their behaviour improves well over time.
- Pupils are thoughtful, polite and helpful and get on well together reporting that bullying in any form is rare and always dealt with speedily and successfully. Consequently they feel very safe and happy in school, a strength acknowledged by parents and carers.
- Pupils are well aware of how they can deal with different forms of bullying and hazards they may encounter, including when using the internet.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to school are fostered through very effective relationships with staff and the way in which pupils are involved in checking on and being consulted about their own learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, with pupils developing a strong sense of local culture, for example through their participation in the Ashburton Court Leet ceremony. The school's strong determination to prevent discrimination ensures pupils develop empathy for others and that pupils from minority groups are very well included.
- The school works hard to encourage good attendance, using pupil premium funding well and liaising effectively with different agencies to support this. As a result, incidences of poor attendance and the rate of exclusions are decreasing well and attendance levels are broadly average.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The executive headteacher and other senior leaders have been very successful in creating a strong staff team who are well focused on, and determined to bring about, improvement.
- Subject leaders benefit considerably from joint activities with staff from other academy schools. In particular these links have helped to bring about curriculum developments that provide a coherent approach to learning for academy pupils from four to 19 years and ensure that Ashburton's Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their future education.
- Regular and informative checks on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress at Ashburton

involving staff from other academy schools provide an objective dimension and a range of good advice from outstanding practitioners. As a result effective strategies are in place to tackle weaknesses. Staff are very clear as to what still needs to be done to improve aspects of writing and mathematics and are beginning to tackle them.

- Other academy schools also draw on the strengths of Ashburton staff, for example in senior leadership, in developing teaching and learning and in the support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
  - Effective monitoring and support of teaching, including through the academy's performance management procedures which provide challenging targets based on improving achievement and teachers' effectiveness, have raised teaching quality especially well at Ashburton this year. Ashburton governors are very clear that salary increases are only awarded where success in improving achievement is evident.
  - The well-designed curriculum promotes pupils' progress and engages their interest well although the full effect of recent strategies to improve writing and mathematics is not yet evident in national tests. Reception children do well because the curriculum effectively targets the needs of this age. Specially designed programmes to help pupils at risk of falling behind are particularly effective. Pupils' learning is enriched by activities they take part in with other academy schools, those being provided by the community college staff to support gifted and talented pupils being very effective.
  - The school fully complies with all safeguarding arrangements including in the vetting of staff and child protection procedures.
  - Pupils and their parents and carers are very positive about the school, with pupils saying they would not want to change anything. The school provides good advice which helps parents and carers support their children's homework well, especially in reading.
  - Membership of the South Dartmoor Academy has benefited Ashburton in many ways. The academy's school improvement partner effectively challenges staff as well as providing good support to help Ashburton achieve its goals. Joint planning and monitoring activities and agreed policies and procedures, for example with regard to performance management, have helped raise the quality of provision. Academy-wide training, covering areas such as modern foreign languages, provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and problem solving in mathematics, have helped improve the quality of learning at Ashburton. Pupils have many opportunities to learn from skilled teachers, for example through the dance activities run by community college staff. Services commissioned for all academy schools and joint purchasing of resources help to provide good value for money at Ashburton.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Ashburton governors are well represented on the academy board and help to play an important role in its development as well as benefiting from the wider range of expertise and support this provides. Involvement at this level also helps to ensure that financial management is very thorough and effective. Governors have high aspirations for Ashburton, being very committed to increasing their expertise through training, not least in interpreting data so they can compare the school's performance well with other schools through the regular updates they receive. The careful check governors keep on teaching quality helps them monitor performance management effectively. There is also a strong determination to support staff in driving forward improvement. The use of pupil premium funding allocated to training and providing extra staff for group activities to promote learning or social and emotional needs is exceptionally well monitored so governors are well aware of the way it is helping to improve achievement.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136561
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	413154

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>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	197
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Dunball
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Rachel Shaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01364 652343
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