

Ashbrow School

Ash Meadow Close, Sheepridge, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD2 1EX

Inspection dates 17–18 December 2013

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | 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 | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching is not good enough across the school. Teachers do not always adjust their teaching to help pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Progress is uneven across the school and in some classes, pupils do not make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Achievement in writing lags behind that in reading and mathematics. Pupils do not have enough chance to use their writing skills well enough in other subjects.
- Teachers have yet to make an impact on improving standards in writing and secure consistently good or better teaching in all year groups.
- Work does not always challenge all pupils and they have few chances to use their initiative and work things out for themselves.
- Teaching assistants are not always directed well enough to support learning in the classrooms.
- The marking of pupils' work is not always effective in helping them understand what they might do to improve further.

The school has the following strengths

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team has been able to improve the quality of teaching across the school from a low baseline.
- Pupils behave well and say they feel safe. Pupils are enthusiastic about activities such as gardening, bee-keeping and looking after hens.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Unit gives children a good start to their education.
- The governing body through good guidance from the Chair challenges the senior leaders of the school and has good impact on the strategic direction of the school.
- Leaders foster good relationships with the local community.
- Parents are generally very positive about the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher and senior leaders. In addition inspectors made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, six members of the governing body, staff and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View). They also spoke with a large number of parents during the inspection, taking account of their views.
- Inspectors took into account the 53 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documents, including the school's own records of pupils' progress and attainment, monitoring documents, arrangements to check the performance of staff and those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- The school's website was looked at.
- The work undertaken by the school's Specialist Provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs was observed.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Michael Wintle, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Jan Lomas | Additional Inspector |
| Fiona McNally | Additional Inspector |
| John Ashley | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and heritages.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average. This provides funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of service personnel.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above the average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school fails to meet the current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than the Early Years Foundation Stage is well above average.
- The school has specialist provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- The school became a 3-11 primary school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement so that it becomes consistently good with more that is outstanding by:
 - eliminating the small amount of teaching that requires improvement
 - providing written comments that tell individual pupils exactly what to do next to improve their work, and ensuring that pupils respond
 - making sure teaching assistants are fully deployed and used well in all classes
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves
 - developing teachers' confidence and abilities to react quickly to adapt teaching to emerging needs during lessons.
- Accelerate rates of progress across the school and especially in writing by:
 - checking that activities are always challenging for all pupils and also for the most able
 - extending still further opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. Standards in writing and mathematics have been below average in Key Stages 1 and 2 in recent years because pupils' progress is not as good as it should be. This has an adverse effect on pupils' opportunities to achieve and be prepared well for the next stage of their education. Leaders have worked hard on raising standards and this has been successful for reading.
- Children start school with skills well below those typically expected for their age and especially in personal and social development and communication and language. They settle very quickly into the nursery and make a good start to their learning. Progress is good across the Early Years Foundation Stage and especially in their personal and social education because children feel safe and valued and clearly enjoy being at school. However, by the time they enter Year 1, most are still below the levels expected for their age in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils continue to make expected progress through the school in reading. Pupils' progress is not better because teaching is not consistently good. The large numbers of pupils who join or leave school at other than the usual times and who are new to speaking English have a negative impact on these results, even though they settle into school life quickly and soon begin to make good progress from their own individual starting points.
- At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average, although increasing numbers of pupils in all classes are making expected progress in reading and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, increasing numbers of pupils are attaining the levels expected for their age, but the proportion is still below national averages. Current pupils' attainment across the school shows good improvement in all subjects and especially in reading.
- From a low baseline, progress for the most able pupils is also an improving picture but there are still too few of them in the school.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils eligible for free school meals achieve broadly the same as their classmates in all subjects except writing where their progress is half a term behind. At the end of Key Stage 2, there are bigger gaps. In 2013 pupils not eligible for free school meals outperformed these pupils by two terms' progress. Current progress of pupils, however, shows that this is narrowing. In reading the pupils eligible for free school meals outperformed their classmates by over half a term's progress. Progress of current pupils would suggest gaps in attainment in writing and mathematics are narrowing but remain significant.
- The achievement of pupils attending the specialist provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs is good because teaching is good and lessons are well resourced. In one Key Stage 2 movement group, pupils made good progress because all adults were providing high quality teaching to promote better physical skills. Excellent collaboration was seen and all pupils made good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with educational needs make progress at the same rate as that of other pupils. Although teaching is not yet good enough, the special programmes to help individuals or small groups, for example with their reading, are often taught well to ensure that pupils keep up with their peers.
- Older pupils say they enjoy reading and talk eagerly about their books. In the most recent national check on pupils' ability to link letters and sounds they make (phonics), which is carried out at the end of Year 1, pupils performed below levels typically seen nationally, although the performance of girls was stronger than that of boys. Progress in 2013 was also better than the previous year. Assessment data by the school confirm that pupils who have been at the school for a long period of time make better progress in all areas of learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not been good enough over time to lift standards

and progress. Nevertheless, inspection evidence indicates that teaching is improving and in some parts of the school at a rapid rate. Much is now good and there are examples of outstanding practice, which is starting to accelerate progress, and narrow the gaps in performance among different groups. This is clearly evident in reading and less so, but increasingly the case, in writing and mathematics.

- There are times when teachers fail to give enough opportunities for pupils to work things out for themselves. This means that important learning is missed.
- Very well-planned activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good teaching ensure that children are learning effectively and have a good start to their education. This prepares them well for learning in Year 1.
- In good lessons time is used well and pupils of all abilities are challenged. In a mathematics lesson on addition and subtraction, pupils were working independently and the most able were moving clearly into using higher numbers and using electronic tablets to extend their thinking. Sharp and pertinent questioning by the teacher extended pupils' thinking.
- However, sometimes teachers do not step in quickly enough during lessons to help pupils who have difficulty with their work. This means that learning slows and pupils lose concentration.
- All teachers successfully establish good working relationships with their pupils and this was a strength in teaching seen during the inspection. As a result, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, often with skilled use of encouragement and praise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpin all that the school effectively promotes.
- Across the school, pupils are often confined to produce short phrases and sentences and are not encouraged to write at length. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their writing skills in different curriculum subjects. For example, although the eco-curriculum engages pupils in looking after bees and planting vegetables, and these activities excite pupils' thinking, there was very little evidence of pupils' writing that linked to these exciting learning opportunities.
- When they mark work, teachers' comments often do not tell pupils precisely how they can improve. Some books show the same comment repeated several times with no sign that the pupil has responded to the advice given.
- Teaching assistants do a good job in supporting pupils in small groups. However, in some lessons they are not as involved as they could be, particularly at the start and end of lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

good

- Pupils enjoy their learning and want to do well. They listen attentively and contribute in lessons. Occasionally, when lessons do not hold their interest, some pupils lose their enthusiasm for learning, become distracted and do not achieve as well as they could.
- Nevertheless, behaviour is almost always managed well. Pupils across the school know and understand the rules and routines. As a result, the school is a calm learning environment and attitudes to learning in most lessons are good.
- All pupils said that behaviour had improved since the establishment of the new primary school. Energetic teams of teachers and senior leaders have improved behaviour considerably. Trusting relationships have been established with staff and pupils know that if they have any worries or concerns staff will help them.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and almost all parents and staff agree. They have a good understanding of e-safety and are aware of the dangers the internet can pose. They fully understand, for example, the importance of having a secure password when using the internet.
- Pupils' conduct around school is good. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their attendance which has improved over time and is now just above average.
- Staff are extremely positive about pupils' good behaviour and their eagerness to learn and participate in all that the school organises. For example, pupils made good progress and talked excitedly about the dance routines they were learning in a physical education lesson given by a sports coach funded by the sports premium that was introduced this year.

The leadership and management**good**

- Leaders and managers at all levels work well as a team in the continuous drive to improve the school since its inception. Their self-evaluation is evaluative, accurate and honest.
- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the close collaboration of senior leaders have helped the school make huge improvements since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools. All leaders regularly check the quality of teaching, which has led to an increase in the quality of teaching across the school.
- The specially resourced provision is well led by a knowledgeable teacher in charge and her team. Progress is good. Pupils attending are happy and thrive because of the good quality teaching.
- Subject leaders have a growing understanding about their role in supporting school improvement. They are approachable and have benefited from local authority support on writing programmes, which they fully understand is a key priority.
- A comprehensive process to check the performance of staff is firmly established and regular meetings to check on pupils' progress enable leaders to hold teachers to account for achievement in each class. Information gathered from checks on teaching is used to decide school priorities and to organise training and support for teachers. In most cases, teachers' responsibilities reflect their salary.
- Curriculum enrichment is good and supports learning. For example pupils talk excitedly about tending the school garden so that they can grow vegetables for the school kitchen. Last year they grew sixty percent of all vegetables needed. Pupils also look after hens and bees as part of their eco-curriculum. This extends their experiences of the wider community and understanding their role within it. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have equal access to all the school provides and, through well-planned opportunities learn to respect diversity effectively.
- The physical education and sports grant helps to offer greater experiences for pupils through the appointment of sports coaches. This has allowed the school to experience increasing amounts of competitive sports such as gymnastics.
- The local authority provides the school with valuable staff training and effective support in evaluating the school's performance and identifying areas for development.
- Pupils' personal development is nurtured effectively and safeguarding is good.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They engage well with a number of its activities such as helping with the Year 5 gardening club. When asked about the school one parent commented, 'It's perfect.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed to the school and the community. The experienced chair leads the body effectively. Governors attend relevant training to meet current safeguarding requirements. They visit the school regularly and as a result they are aware of the school's strengths and weakness. For example, governors have a good understanding of how the pupil premium has funded the numerous activities to support pupils and the impact this has had. Governors understand the progress made by pupils and they ensure that where it is slow, strategies are put in place to improve the rates of progress. Governors are fully involved in the arrangements to check the staff's performance and ensure that staff meet their targets before they are eligible for movement through the pay scale.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 107628 |
| Local authority | Kirklees |
| Inspection number | 425679 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 325 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Dughall McCormick |
| Headteacher | Dora Plant |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 July 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01484 452128 |
| Fax number | N/A |
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