

Ashdene Primary School

Thoresway Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 6LJ

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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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.

- The headteacher, with the support of the senior leadership team, provides the school with strong and focused leadership. As a result, the school has improved and is set to improve even further.
- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes.
- Teaching is good overall with some teaching outstanding.
- The pupils are a delight to talk with and are very polite. They have a good understanding of personal safety.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. It provides a good level of support and challenge to the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make rapid progress across all subjects because not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Marking is not always effective in showing pupils how to improve their own work.
- Achievement in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.
- The role of middle leaders in leading improvements in subjects other than English and mathematics is not well developed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons. Additional short visits to lessons were carried out to look at issues such as how well pupils get on with their classmates and their overall behaviour.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random, members of the governing body, and with senior staff. A telephone call was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about the types of books they enjoy.
- Pupils' current work and assessments were scrutinised, including available work which showed the achievement of pupils in English and mathematics from the previous year.
- Inspectors reviewed 117 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). An inspector also spoke to some parents in the playground.
- Inspectors reviewed the inspection questionnaires completed and returned by staff.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jeremy Barnes

Additional Inspector

Peter McKay

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be supported by pupil premium funding is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has achieved many external awards, including the National Healthy Schools' award.
- At the time of the inspection a major building project was taking place.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more pupils make excellent progress by:
 - ensuring that marking enables pupils to have the information they need to improve their own work
 - ensuring that in all lessons the work set for pupils to do is not too easy or too hard
 - ensuring that middle leaders provide more help to teachers in subjects other than in English and mathematics so that pupils make at least good progress in those subject areas.
- Continue to improve the progress pupils make in writing by:
 - building on the good start made so that pupils have the key skills required to write more effectively
 - ensuring that they are given plenty of challenging opportunities to use and apply their writing skills in subjects such as history and science
 - making sure there is a consistently good standard in the way work is presented.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When asked what they liked best about school, most pupils said they liked the work they did in class, although one young child said he/she liked the toast you could buy at playtime best!
- Standards in English and mathematics are above average at the end of both key stages both at the expected levels and at the higher levels and have been for a number of years. Inspection evidence shows that this is still the case.
- Children start school with skills that are typical for their age but speaking skills and personal skills are above those typical.
- Progress is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage because activities are planned carefully to develop the skills children need. Staff are good at picking up on the things children are interested in with areas such as a doctor's surgery and planetarium really capturing the children's imagination. Children want to learn and express their views well. One child politely asked an inspector when the lead inspector would be coming into their classroom!
- The results of the national screening check on how well pupils know the sounds that letters make (phonics) in Year 1 last year were above average. Nevertheless, the school is still looking for ways to improve provision, emphasising the importance the leadership team places on continuing improvement.
- Pupils start in Year 1 with skills above those expected for their age. Good progress continues across the rest of the school in mathematics and reading but progress in writing is not consistently good, especially for the most-able pupils. However, the emphasis given to improving writing means that pupils now have a better understanding of correct spelling, accurate punctuation and of the importance of using interesting words in their writing.
- The work completed in pupils' exercise books in subjects other than English and mathematics does not always show the same level of progress.
- In all age groups the good use made of information about the progress of the most-able pupils means that they have work set for them to do that really challenges them to do well. For example, most-able pupils in Year 5 can identify and talk about sensibly what the key components of an advert should be to try and persuade people to take notice.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make good progress. The attainment of pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 was in line with that of other pupils in the school in English and mathematics. The school's records show that this continues to be the case.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Evidence from pupils' work books and the school's data about pupils' attainment and progress show that teaching over time is effective. Inspectors saw teaching that was good overall, with some examples of outstanding teaching.
- The high level of respect and very good relationships between pupils and their teachers, along with the challenging work pupils are asked to do make sure that learning is enjoyable as well as successful.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are encouraged to develop their skills to work by themselves in addition to the adult support they receive. Resources both inside and outside are used to extend children's skills. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's speaking and listening skills. For example, in one lesson, children were encouraged to talk about the differences between different dinosaurs.
- In the rest of the school the main reason for pupils achieving well and making good progress in

mathematics is that teachers make sure that pupils are given an abundance of opportunities to apply the basic mathematical skills they have been taught.

- Since the previous inspection pupils have continued to make good progress in reading because they are given plenty of opportunities to read and because teachers make sure that books are well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils say they enjoy reading and like both fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Where occasionally pupils do not make good progress in lessons it is because the work set is too easy or too hard. For example, younger pupils who already have a good understanding of letters and sounds are not always challenged by what they are asked to do.
- The leadership team has been successful in improving pupils' progress in developing their writing skills. However, there is still work to be done. Pupils respond well to teachers emphasising the need to use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar in their written work but work is not always presented well.
- There are some good opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in the work they do in other subjects, but this is not consistent across the school.
- The school has improved the way that marking is used in helping pupils make even better progress. As a result, pupils in many classes have a clearer idea as to what it is they need to do to improve their own work. However, marking is not consistently good across the school. In one class, after reading a comment the teacher had made a child commented, 'I don't know what you mean.'
- The good work of support staff is important in helping pupils with special educational needs and disabled pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school. Parents who completed the school's own questionnaire and those who completed the on-line questionnaire agree with this. Pupils' attendance is above average.
- Pupils are very interested in what they are asked to do in lessons because the work is enjoyable, but nevertheless challenging and it motivates them to try their very best. For example, in one lesson a pupil beamed with delight when he/she accurately carried out a three-column addition calculation in mathematics.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Behaviour in and around the school out of lessons is also good. Part of the school is a building site with rooms being added and rooms being re-modelled. Contractors commented favourably on how sensible pupils are in the way they adapt to temporary disruptions inside and outside the buildings.
- A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection show that behaviour over time is good. Isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are very confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. They recognise dangers when using the Internet and know how to avoid these problems. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying.
- Pupils are keen to learn and are happy to share their learning with their classmates. Staff are adept at tapping into this enthusiasm in allowing pupils to work out their own ideas.
- There are many opportunities provided in the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils raise money for a range of good causes and have positive views on the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves. As one child commented, 'We are fortunate in Wilmslow and we should help those who are not as fortunate as we are.'
- Pupils are very polite and friendly. Pupils taking part in, for example, a ukulele music-making session or those working out solutions to mathematical problems are proud of what they achieve.

- Pupils respond extremely well to the many opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities. These include being a 'mini manager' (a member of the school council) or being a bully beater. Mini managers are pleased that their ideas have been acted on, for example, with regard to rewards for good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear understanding of what the school is doing well and how it needs to improve. As such, the school's own checks on how well it is doing are accurate. Robust checking on the school's work by senior leaders, with a well planned programme of staff development, is firmly in place.
- Strong leadership of teaching has led to staff changes. Close checking on teaching performance has raised the quality of teaching with only minor variations between classes. Teachers are set targets to improve their work and meetings are held to check on pupils' progress in their classes. As a result, both teaching and progress are good. Staff pay awards and performance management targets are closely linked to pupils' achievements.
- The monitoring of teaching and of the performance of teachers is of a very good quality, involving senior leaders.
- While middle leaders carry out their duties well, they do not all have a clear understanding of how skills relating to their subject areas are developed as pupils move through the school.
- This is not the case in English and mathematics where there is a clear and effective system to track pupils' progress. As a result, the school is able to identify quickly where progress is less than good and do something about it.
- Parents and staff who completed the questionnaires are mostly positive about the school. Issues raised by parents were discussed with the school and the views of parents in the playground were also taken.
- The curriculum is matched to pupils' needs. However, more still needs to be done to improve pupils' writing. Pupils say how much they enjoy lessons including music making when they use a range of tuned instruments. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the curriculum.
- Additional funding for physical education is used effectively to improve pupils' physical well-being. For example, during the inspection a visiting specialist involved older pupils effectively in developing some of the key skills required in learning to play golf.
- Leaders ensure that no pupils, regardless of background or need, are denied access to anything the school has to offer. As such equal opportunities are a strong feature of the school. Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that all requirements are met and that the building is a safe environment.
- The local authority sees this school as a good school and as such provides 'light touch' support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know their school very well. The LIP committee, (learning, inclusion and progress) provides them with a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governing body discharges its legal responsibilities well. Governors keep a close check on the school's budget and make sure that pupil premium money and sports funding money is used to good effect for the purposes intended. The safeguarding of pupils is a high priority and governors ensure that the implementation of all policies is robust. Individual governors are linked to specific areas. Governors have a good understanding of how performance management is carried out. They seek assurance that salary levels are closely linked to performance.

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	111227
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	439545

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Gerrard
Headteacher	Julie Brookes
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2009
Telephone number	01625 383232
Fax number	-
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