

Ashwood Park Primary School

Bells Lane, Wordsley, Stourbridge, DY8 5DJ

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils' achievement is good and improving throughout the school in English and mathematics, and they are well prepared for secondary school.
- Good teaching provides pupils with work that is both interesting and relevant to their future. Relationships in lessons are always positive.
- Pupils are very happy and feel very safe in school. Their behaviour in class and around the school is good. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy taking responsibility.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are frequent and usually rigorous. Plans to improve the school and the training given to staff have been successful, and it is well placed to improve further.
- The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support to the headteacher and staff. It makes sure that the school meets all legal requirements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers occasionally give pupils work that is either too easy or too hard, and do not always check closely to see when pupils are ready to move on to the next piece of work.
- Progress in writing is not as quick as in reading. Pupils' use of vocabulary to express their ideas clearly is a relative weakness.
- The effectiveness of teaching and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including pupils who are deaf, are not checked rigorously. Although most of these pupils make good progress, some do not.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the teaching in all classes, sometimes accompanied by a sign language interpreter. They visited 26 lessons taught by 12 teachers as well as sessions for small groups of pupils led by teaching assistants. The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined them for two of these visits.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, other teachers and six governors. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard some pupils read and looked at a range of evidence, including records of pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, records of behaviour and the results of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the work in pupils' books. The views of 24 parents, analysed through the Parent View website, were considered. The inspectors also took account of the views of 20 parents with whom they talked at the school gate and the views of several parents who wrote letters to them.

Inspection team

Gerald Griffin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Barnfield

Additional Inspector

Michael Onyon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashwood Park is an above-average-sized primary school.
- Over three quarters of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remainder come from a wide variety of minority ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those in care and those with a parent in the armed forces) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 18 pupils who have special educational needs. This provision is for pupils who are deaf. It is managed by the local authority. All the pupils are on the school's roll and as a consequence their achievement was evaluated on this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding by making sure that:
 - pupils are not given work that is too easy or too hard
 - teachers keep a close check on learning so they know when pupils are ready to move on to the next task
 - teachers improve pupils' use of vocabulary so they can express their ideas more clearly and accurately, particularly when writing.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - teaching and the impact of support for pupils who have additional needs, including those pupils who are deaf, are monitored as rigorously as other aspects of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are low compared to those expected for their age. This is especially evident in reading, writing and mathematics. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and start Year 1 with attainment that is still below average in most areas of learning. Progress is especially good in physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, where they reach higher standards.
- Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics rose overall in 2013 after a dip in 2012, and in Year 6 they were closer to average. Pupils currently in Years 1 to 6 are making good progress in English and mathematics. Standards in the current Year 6 are above those of 2013, and pupils are achieving well from low attainment on entry to the school.
- In 2013, the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for the pupil premium and their classmates at the end of Year 6 last year was three terms in reading and writing but five terms in mathematics. However, nearly half of these pupils had significant learning difficulties, a far higher proportion than in the previous year, and were working at much lower levels. The gap was narrower in Year 2. School data show that eligible pupils are now making good progress in all years, which means the school uses its extra funding effectively. It pays for extra support, including for deaf pupils who have missed work in the past. It is also used to boost pupils' self-esteem, which is making them better learners.
- Pupils who are deaf are mostly taught with their peers. This means they can take a full part in school life. However, their needs are also met through sessions with specialist teachers of the deaf and teaching assistants. Most make good progress, often from very low starting points, in English and mathematics and particularly in their communication skills. However, like other pupils who have additional learning needs, a few do not make such good progress. Their learning sometimes slows when adults do not keep a careful check to make sure they fully understand their work and are ready to move on. Their progress and the effectiveness of teaching and support are not as rigorously checked on.
- Pupils enjoy reading and do so regularly. Pupils' skills in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) are well developed. This was evident in the results of the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2013, which were above the national average and higher than in 2012.
- Progress in mathematics has improved this year because pupils are now much better at solving mathematical problems, especially younger ones who are more able.
- Pupils' spelling and punctuation are generally accurate. Their skills in using a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas clearly are a weakness in their writing. This means that attainment and the rate of progress in writing are a little below those in reading. However, there are signs that writing is improving.
- The more-able pupils make good progress throughout the school. For example, more-able children in Reception proudly showed an inspector well-constructed sentences they had recently written in their diary. However, there are times when more-able pupils are not fully stretched. For example, occasionally, pupils repeat calculations that they can easily solve.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is nearly always good, and in some lessons it is outstanding. Teachers show that they have high expectations. They plan and set work, including homework, that is challenging and deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers' questions make pupils think deeply and demand answers of more than a few words.
- Work that teachers plan is relevant and engaging and, as a result, relationships are always positive. Pupils enjoy lessons and work hard.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children benefit from a good range of activities that cover all the areas of learning. Children mostly have clear and challenging targets for their work. They work well, both on their own and also cooperatively with other children. In lessons seen during the inspection, children worked hard both inside the classroom and outdoors. Teaching prepares children well for more formal learning in Year 1.
- Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes make good use of regular and accurate assessments of each child's skills to plan challenging next steps for them to take in their learning. The accuracy of their assessments of the standards on entry and those attained at the end of the year have recently been confirmed by the local authority.
- Teachers provide many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, older pupils have reflected maturely about the rights and wrongs of social media.
- Marking provides pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their work. Where the marking is at its most effective, pupils show the teacher they have understood their comments by correcting errors.
- Teaching assistants give valuable support, especially to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those eligible for the pupil premium. For example, they know pupils very well and keep notes on pupils' progress. This information is used by the teacher for future planning of learning.
- Teachers usually provide challenging work that stretches all pupils to learn well. This means that pupils are mostly making at least good progress. Occasionally, however, adults do not check pupils' knowledge and understanding carefully enough to know when they are ready to start a task or to move on to more difficult work, or if revision is needed to reinforce their learning. As a result, some struggle and others find the work too easy, without achieving what they should.
- In writing lessons, teachers provide appropriate time for pupils to practise and improve the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation. They do not give the same attention to improving pupils' use of vocabulary in their written work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. Inspectors' views were confirmed by those of parents, pupils and the school's records of behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and improving. They need little or no supervision when

they work in classrooms, and most older pupils check their own work and progress carefully.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is very effective. Leaders make certain that the school premises are secure and staff are rigorously checked for their suitability. Pupils feel very safe in school. Their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe is very well developed. For example, older pupils precisely know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Bullying is very rare, and pupils are confident that staff would resolve any incidents effectively. Older pupils understand its different forms, such as cyber-bullying, and how to respond to them. Pupils feel very well looked after and supported by adults.
- Pupils are keen to accept responsibilities in school. In the Reception classes, children take responsibility for collecting the resources they need for their chosen activities. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility, too, for example as members of the school council, house captains and assembly monitors.
- Attendance is above average this term, as it was last year. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The dynamic headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well. They have set challenging performance targets which are being met this year.
- Subject and other leaders below senior level are effective in checking standards of teaching and progress in their areas of responsibility. The leader of the Reception class has successfully trained teaching assistants in the skills of accurately assessing children's capabilities and planning work in all areas of learning. The teaching and progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including deaf pupils, is not checked as rigorously as other aspects of the school's work, including the effectiveness of specific support provided.
- Teaching is improving because leaders make rigorous checks on its effectiveness and the quality of learning. The follow-up actions from these observations successfully tackle any weaknesses and improve teachers' skills. For example, successful training has improved the teaching of phonics and problem solving in mathematics.
- Leaders have made good use of helpful support from the local authority and consultants, especially in confirming standards across the school.
- The way subjects are taught strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. For example, the school provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on right and wrong, their feelings and respect for others. The school provides a good range of sports and other clubs and educational visits to broaden pupils' experiences and raise ambition.
- Pupils have two lessons of physical education a week that they thoroughly enjoy. These make an important contribution to their healthy physical development. Leaders are spending the new primary school sports funding appropriately. For example, it is used to improve the teaching of physical education, pay for coaches to broaden the range of after-school sports clubs and increase pupils' participation in school games.
- Nearly all parents expressed positive views about their children's progress, and the quality of

teaching and leadership. The school provides popular courses for parents so they can support their children's education at home.

- Leaders have a very clear commitment to combating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. This is shown in the good progress made by all groups of pupils from all backgrounds. The school fosters close links with the staff of the resource base for pupils who are deaf, outside agencies and other schools to improve pupils' life chances even more.
- Leaders at all levels think ahead to make the school even better. For example, they have already introduced plans to provide more time for pupils to improve the use of vocabulary. There are clear signs that this is improving progress and attainment in the subject. This was seen in a Year 3 and 4 class where pupils were talking about and then writing a good range of interesting sentences to vividly describe how they thought King Henry VIII might have looked and acted.
- Child protection training for staff is thorough, and leaders implement child protection policies rigorously. The school meets all national safeguarding requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has an accurate picture of how well the school is doing compared with other schools. Governors make regular visits to see the school at work and have a clear understanding of data on pupils' progress. They use this information well to ask leaders searching questions about the school's performance. For example, they are taking a keen interest in progress in writing and the success of the plans to improve it. The governing body has a strong focus on staff training and is keen to improve its own skills. Governors check that the management of teachers' performance is rigorous. Only those teachers who have met challenging targets, including those for pupils' progress, are considered for pay increases and promotion. Governors make sure that the school is spending the pupil premium funding on those eligible for it, and that it brings benefits through higher achievement.

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	103818
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	431123

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	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Jones
Headteacher	Steve Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2012
Telephone number	01384 818545
Email address	info@ashwood.dudley.sch.uk

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