

The Ashbeach Primary School

Ashbeach Drove, Ramsey St Mary's, Huntingdon, PE26 2TG

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Teaching has improved considerably and is now good. Pupils who have fallen behind are catching up rapidly.
- Pupils are very positive about writing. Older pupils are enjoying showing off their skills. This is in stark contrast to the recent past.
- Pupils throughout the school are making good progress, with some groups making exceptional progress as they try to catch up.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils enjoy school and teachers work hard to meet pupils' academic and social needs.
- Behaviour is good and leaders are forthright in dealing with issues head on. Pupils are safe in school.
- Leaders, including governors, are driving improvements with tireless enthusiasm and clarity of purpose. They have the commitment of teachers, who are all working hard to drive up standards.
- Leaders responsible for subjects and other particular aspects of the school know exactly what they need to do and have demonstrated their ability to drive improvements in their areas.
- The curriculum is exciting and well designed so it teaches pupils important knowledge and skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Many of the improvements seen are new and not yet embedded.
- Some more-able children in Key Stage 1 are not challenged enough in mathematics lessons.
- Despite very good recent progress, some pupils, particularly in Year 6, have not caught up completely, particularly in writing.
- Children who join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding below the levels expected for their age are not always helped to catch up with their peers before entering Key Stage 1.
- Leaders do not know enough about the progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector spent much of his time observing teaching and learning. He observed teaching in seven lessons, two of which were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised information on pupils' progress and looked at work in pupils' books. The inspector considered information about behaviour management, safeguarding and the monitoring of teaching.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning.
- The school council met formally with the inspector and other pupils shared their views informally during lessons and on the playground.
- Meetings were held with leaders, members of school staff, representatives from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke informally with a number of parents during the inspection and took into account 21 responses submitted to the Parent View website.
- The inspector took into account his findings from his previous four visits to this school.

Inspection team

Michael Sheridan HMI, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- No pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from service families, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average.
- The school received its last full inspection in June 2012 when it was judged to require special measures. This inspection took place during Her Majesty's Inspector's fifth monitoring visit.
- In 2013 the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. This is primarily because the pupils' achievement in writing was particularly poor.
- A new headteacher and temporary deputy headteacher were appointed at the beginning of this academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure children who start in the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age are well prepared for Key Stage 1 by:
 - using data more effectively to analyse progress of individuals and groups
 - teaching children the skills they need so they catch up with their peers.
- Provide ample opportunities for more able mathematicians to work at higher levels in Key Stage 1, so that more achieve higher levels at the end of Year 2, by:
 - providing them with more challenging work that demands they rely on known facts and makes them think more deeply
 - making sure they are clear about the links between different mathematical operations, such as the link between multiplication and division, and have the opportunity to use this knowledge to solve mathematical problems.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils are making at least good progress throughout the school. The quality and quantity of writing throughout the school are improving so that pupils are much more competent and capable writers than in the past.
- Where pupils have fallen behind, they are catching up rapidly. Some older pupils have recently been making outstanding progress from low starting points. Some of these children are some way still from achieving the levels that they are capable of, but they are on track to be much closer and, most importantly, their attitude to writing and their ability to see themselves as writers are transformed. More able writers are developing depth and style in their writing, understanding how their vocabulary and structural choices affect the reader.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well and younger pupils use their understanding of phonics to work out unfamiliar words. Progress in reading is good throughout the school.
- Most pupils make good progress in mathematics and previous gaps are closing rapidly. Pupils are much more able to solve mathematical problems than in the past and more able pupils in Key Stage 2 are often stretched so they have to think hard.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils develop a good grasp of the mathematical basics so they have a solid foundation to build on. However, too few more able pupils reach the higher levels and they are not always given the opportunity to complete tasks that stretch them.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy their learning and adults plan carefully to make sure they have opportunities to develop a wide range of skills ready for Key Stage 1. The large majority of children are on track to reach the expected good level of development at the end of Reception. This is a big improvement on previous years. However a few children, who enter the school below the expected level for their age, do not fully catch up.
- The small number of pupils eligible for free school meals make good progress. The school is tracking these pupils much more closely than in the past. Last year, these pupils left about a year behind their peers in writing but broadly in line with their peers in reading and mathematics. Evidence in school shows that pupils eligible for the additional funding are making at least good progress and gaps in writing are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress as a result of good teaching. Extra help is often provided in class and this is having a positive impact on the progress these pupils make.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved considerably. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and pupils are making good progress throughout the school. As a result, pupils are much more engaged in their work.
- Teachers have high expectations, especially in English, and this is having a very positive impact on what pupils believe they are capable of. Pupils throughout the school are striving to meet

teachers' high expectations. Pupils are excited about their writing and enjoy showing it off.

- While teachers have high expectations of the work produced in mathematics, sometimes work set in Key Stage 1 does not sufficiently challenge the most able pupils. At times, more able pupils are given questions that do not make them think hard. These pupils are not frequently enough expected to use facts they already know, such as multiplication tables or number bonds, when solving problems.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults provide a range of activities and, where children engage in these activities with adults, they make good progress. Basic skills are taught well so pupils develop a good understanding of the sounds letters make and the way numbers work. Routines are taught effectively so children know that there are times to sit and listen and times to play.
- Sometimes in the Early Years Foundation Stage children are given a lot of freedom over the activities they can engage in and, at these times, progress becomes more variable. Some children complete practical, self-selected tasks appropriately but others do not. When this is the case, adults are sometimes reluctant to interject and teach important lessons. Children who are not on track to reach the expected level of development sometimes avoid the very activities that would help them develop the skills they most need.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers have worked hard to build pupils' confidence so they are willing to work hard at tasks, even when they find them challenging. Success is celebrated and pupils are keen to improve their work and impress their teachers.
- Marking and verbal feedback are being used effectively to help pupils understand how to improve their work. In mathematics, marking is used to diagnose mistakes and teachers' comments are focused on improving pupils' understanding. More able pupils are challenged to improve already good work, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching assistants provide helpful guidance in class. They listen to pupils read and help small groups to understand the tasks they have to complete. When they take small groups out of the class, they have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve. Data show that these sessions contribute to pupils catching up.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are attentive and work hard in class. Around school they are polite and welcoming to guests and each other. Attitudes to class work have improved considerably in the last year.
- Pupils respond quickly when asked to do something by members of staff. They are keen to please, take pride in their school and are pleased with their achievements. Pupils understand why it is important to behave in class and the playground and most meet the school's high expectations without needing to be reminded.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average. One pupil told inspectors they don't want to be away because they might miss something exciting.
- Bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly. Leaders take a proactive approach in dealing with poor behaviours and attitudes. Their work with older boys on tackling homophobic language is commendable. By unpicking the issues, pupils are able to see the reasons why such language is

unacceptable and adapt their behaviour accordingly.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safety is taken seriously in school. The grounds are secure and procedures to keep pupils safe are robust and effective. Risk assessments are completed for a full range of activities and adults consider how to encourage pupils to manage risk when working outside and in the school's woodland. All safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are effective.
- Pupils learn about risk and, as a result, make sensible decisions. Pupils understand risks appropriate to their age, such as road safety, stranger danger and internet awareness. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe and keep others around them safe.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership has been strengthened considerably. There is little doubt that the leadership team is making the necessary difference so that pupils get the quality of education they deserve.
- The headteacher has quickly understood the most important areas for improvement and has been focused on driving forward the necessary changes. She brings a real sense of direction to school improvement plans and clarity about how each member of staff contributes to the improvements seen. Her approach is one of enthusiastic resolve.
- Middle leaders are effective in driving improvements. The English and mathematics leaders have a clear rationale for the improvements they have made. They are accurate in their self-evaluation and recognise the next steps to be taken to improve the school further. Other middle leaders, such as the special needs coordinator, are also much clearer that they have been in the past about how they measure the impact of what they are doing.
- Staff at all levels are well managed. Poor performance is tackled decisively and effective performance is rewarded. Leaders have been given good training so they are better able to support teachers and fulfil their roles effectively.
- Additional funding to support physical education has been spent effectively. Leaders have audited teachers' skills and employed coaches to work alongside them in sports where they have identified gaps in their skill or confidence. Coaches are providing additional after-school clubs which are very active and well attended. The coaching company has been tasked with improving opportunities for competitive sport, which will commence shortly. All of this further enhances pupils' already positive attitudes to fitness and health.
- The local authority has reduced its support considerably in recognition of the school's improved capacity. In the past, the local authority has provided a huge amount of support to ensure teaching continued to improve in the period where frailties in leadership remained. The success of the current leadership owes much to the groundwork put in by the local authority and the outstanding school that was tasked with providing support. Local authority advisers have helped teachers and middle leaders refocus on what is really important.
- There is little doubt that provision throughout the school has become more effective because of local authority support. However, some of the advice given in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been overly focused on doing things in a particular way rather than improving the effectiveness of teaching and leadership.
- Leaders effectively use information about pupils' progress to provide additional targeted support

and hold teachers to account. In Key Stage 1 and 2 data is comprehensively analysed so that leaders and teachers have a good understanding of the progress different groups of pupils make. The school has adopted the local authority's data collection system for the Early Years Foundation Stage and, while this allows teachers to record children's development, it does not lend itself to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, leaders are less informed about the impact of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage than they are for the rest of the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has made difficult decisions which have been pivotal in moving the school forwards. Throughout they have remained focused on improving outcomes for pupils in the school. They are not complacent. They are rightly proud of how the school has improved and they remain focused on making further improvements. Governors ask challenging questions and expect leaders to be able to talk convincingly about the impact they are having. They know about how pupil premium is being used and they understand how improvements in teaching are at the forefront of improved achievement for all. They are well versed in the use of performance management, including the use of pay as way of recognising excellence. They have managed poor performance effectively and continue to expect the best quality teaching and curriculum. They make sure the school fulfils its statutory duties, including those to keep pupils safe through safeguarding, health and safety systems and the safe recruitment of staff.

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	110685
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	432676

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Becky Stewart
Headteacher	Hayley Challinor
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2012
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