

Ashley Primary School

Temple Park Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 0QA

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 make good progress and standards have risen to above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Achievement in Key Stage 2 is improving and is now good. Standards are moving to above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics.
- Pupils develop good speaking and listening skills because they have many opportunities to practise them in class. This in turn helps pupils to write well.
- The quality of teaching is good. Activities spark pupils' curiosity so that they want to learn. Homework is used well to support learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They thrive in an atmosphere where adults are extremely positive and always put the needs of pupils first. As a result, parents say their children love coming to school. There have been no exclusions for a number of years.
- The pupils' safety is central to the school. As a result, pupils enjoy working in a happy, safe environment.
- The headteacher is justifiably held in high regard by staff, parents and governors alike. She is supported by an enthusiastic team of senior and middle leaders. Together they regularly check the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making. As a result, they have arrested the decline in standards in Key Stage 2 and teaching and achievement have improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes work is not hard enough for the most able or it is too difficult for the least able. Pupils are not always given opportunities to correct their work, particularly in mathematics.
- Achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in English in Key Stage 2. Some pupils struggle to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems. Leaders do not check carefully that changes made to the teaching of mathematics are effective.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons taught by 18 teachers, as well as making shorter visits to look at pupils' work. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils at break and dinner times, and heard others in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- The views of 38 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as the views of parents gained informally at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The school's improvement plan and records of pupils' achievement, records of the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and safeguarding were examined.
- Forty-four staff submitted their views via a questionnaire and inspectors took these into account.

Inspection team

Christine Cottam, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Timothy Nelson

Additional Inspector

Colin Scott

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashley Primary is much larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than that found nationally.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for Early Years Foundation Stage children from across the borough. This provides part-time and short stay education for 12 children so that their higher than average special educational needs or disabilities can be carefully assessed before placement in a school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school has a range of awards, including the International School Award and the silver 'Eco-School'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' progress by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to correct or improve their work as a result of marking and feedback, particularly in mathematics
 - making sure activities are always challenging enough for the most able and easy enough for those who are struggling to understand.
- Improve achievement in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
 - enabling pupils to apply their mathematics knowledge more successfully to solve problems
 - ensuring leaders both check the impact of changes to the teaching of mathematics and to check that these changes are consistently applied.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching is good and pupils enjoy learning.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities below those typically found. They get off to a good start in the Nursery class and make rapid progress so that they achieve the skills they need to make a good start in Year 1.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is good and standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 have improved over the last three years and are now above average.
- Standards in Year 6 dipped from above average to average in reading and writing and to below average in mathematics in 2013. This dip in standards was partly due to a much higher than usual number of potentially vulnerable pupils in that year group. Inspection evidence shows that this decline has been arrested and that the current progress of pupils is now good. Standards in reading and writing are now much closer to above average, and in mathematics are average.
- This general dip in standards in Key Stage 2 last year was compounded by some weaker teaching in mathematics so that pupils' achievement was lower than it was in English. Achievement in mathematics is improving but some pupils are still experiencing difficulty applying their numeracy skills in real-life situations to solve problems.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading at school and at home. They quickly gain the skills they need so that by the time they leave Year 6, virtually all pupils have reached average standards and a good proportion has exceeded them.
- Pupils develop good speaking and listening skills because they are given daily opportunities to discuss their learning with each other. This approach helps pupils to develop their writing skills because they articulate their ideas and plan their work carefully. Pupils' writing is interesting, neat and well organised, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because the school tracks their progress carefully and makes sure they are well supported and this helps to overcome the occasions when work is too difficult for them.
- Children who attend the Early Years Foundation Stage assessment provision make good progress from very low starting points because adults provide good individual support.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar progress to others in the school. This group includes those known to be eligible for free school meals. The dip in this groups' overall attainment last year indicated these pupils were about a year behind other pupils in the school in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2013. The school has put effective support into place for this group of pupils. As a result, pupils within this group and who are currently in Year 6 are making good progress and their attainment is higher than their peers in mathematics. The gap in this group's attainment in reading and writing has closed considerably in reading and writing. This improvement shows the school is using additional funding well in order to promote equality of opportunity.
- Although at times the work set for the most able is not hard enough, by the time they leave Year 6 they successfully extend their knowledge and understanding to make good progress overall. This is enhanced by extra support. For example, the most able Year 6 mathematicians attend lessons with a teacher from their local secondary school and have booster mathematics sessions in school, which has contributed to their good achievement in the subject.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations. Interesting activities are provided for pupils and there is a good rapport with pupils. As a result, pupils are interested and work hard.
- Homework is used well to support learning at school. During a Year 2 literacy activity, pupils researched nocturnal animals in preparation for a writing activity at school. Pupils were animated, knowledgeable and wrote lively, high quality descriptions. Two pupils could even

describe the meaning of 'echolocation' when discussing the movement of bats!

- Questioning is effective and encourages pupils to think and there is always a good show of hands to answer questions. Pupils discuss their responses with a partner and this sustains their interest.
- Pupils understand clearly what is expected of them and this makes the tasks more purposeful. Resources are used well to support learning. In Year 6, the effective use of technology helped pupils to measure and draw an angle accurately.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is accurate but the information is not always used effectively. Occasionally, pupils are set the same work regardless of their ability. This means that either the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged, or the work is too difficult for others.
- Teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils to make good progress. They often teach small groups or support individual pupils.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and accurately. There are some good examples of marking that helps pupils to improve their work, particularly in English. While pupils are sometimes provided with opportunities to correct or improve their work for themselves, this is not consistently the case, and it is less prevalent in mathematics than it is in English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Adults model the very highest standards of behaviour for pupils to follow. Enthusiasm, tolerance and respect are encouraged and rewarded.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They take pride in their work and always try to do their best. Pupils often display a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning which helps them to make very rapid progress. When tasks are not always at the correct level to challenge pupils or are too hard this attitude to learning wanes but pupils continue to behave well.
- Children in the Nursery class make outstanding progress in their personal development so that they quickly learn to cooperate and consider others. Constant praise and encouragement from adults, within a bright and stimulating environment, arouses children's curiosity so they are eager to learn.
- The outdoor play areas for all pupils are extensive and varied. There are opportunities for pupils to climb, play ball games, explore the garden or just talk to their friends. This, together with good supervision by adults, leads to civilised behaviour at break times.
- Attendance is improving and is now broadly average. This is because the school has closely monitored the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent and significantly reduced the number who fall into this category.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They are aware of different types of bullying and name calling and know how to keep themselves safe, for example, on the internet. The vast majority of parents are confident the school keeps their children safe. Those spoken with at the school gate said their children love coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads by excellent example. She has successfully shared her firm belief that all pupils can and will achieve well within an enthusiastic, positive and caring atmosphere. All who work in the school are proud to do so and share the high aspirations of leaders.
- There are new senior and middle leaders in place and they share the headteacher's enthusiasm, ambition and drive. This has had a significant impact on recent changes and increased the school's ability to continue to improve.
- Senior and middle leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This means that they have a very accurate knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school

and know how well individual teachers are performing. Teachers are given detailed feedback to help them improve. This information is used to further improve performance and make decisions about pay awards.

- Where teaching or pupils' achievement falls below the level expected action is taken to bring about improvements, as was the case in mathematics in Key Stage 2. In response to the dip in Key Stage 2, leaders made changes to the organisation of teaching groups and the time allocated to mathematics. They have not yet checked carefully enough whether these changes are benefiting all pupils, although standards are improving.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage resourced provision is good. Records and assessments are very detailed and help to ensure children make good progress because teaching meets their precise needs.
- The curriculum effectively interests pupils because it is broad and varied. For example, in the Nursery class there is a garden centre where children can buy plants and then look after them as they watch them grow. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn to take responsibility for the environment and through their study of rainforests and the preservation of tigers. In this way, the curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively to extend the range of sports offered. Almost all pupils now participate in a more diverse range of activities, such as karate and judo, as well as more traditional sports. The subject leader has also benefitted from increased training to strengthen her expertise.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to Parent View say they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The school is a caring, safe place where safeguarding practices meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides effective support through a school improvement professional who visits the school regularly and provides written reports for the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because the headteacher keeps them very well informed with open and honest communications.
 - Governors visit the school regularly and are extremely supportive. Many governors are new and are now beginning to challenge the school as they grow in confidence in their knowledge and use of performance data. They have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and use this information well to reward good teaching or withhold payment where targets have not been met.
 - Governors ensure resources, such as the pupil premium funding, are used effectively. They review data and have asked questions about any gaps in performance between different groups of pupils. They have ensured action has been taken to ensure that any gaps are now closing and equality of opportunity is fully promoted.

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	108685
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	443865

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	481
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Dawson
Headteacher	Denise Todd
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2010
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