

Ashbrook Junior School

Victoria Avenue, Borrowash, Derby, DE72 3HF

Inspection dates 4–5 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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 overall rate of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics from Year 3 to Year 6 is less than that in most other schools.
- The quality of teaching varies and is not yet consistently good in all years.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not improving as rapidly as it is in mathematics and reading throughout the school.
- Some pupils make too many mistakes when spelling common words and don't always use punctuation correctly in their writing.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their literacy skills and numeracy skills in different subjects.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations of pupils' writing when they do use these skills in other subjects.
- Some teachers do not make sure that pupils take note of and learn from the comments they make when marking pupils' work. As a result, pupils keep on making the same mistakes.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and governors, provides strong leadership and has begun to improve teaching and learning.
- Pupils behave well. They are courteous and polite to each other and adults.
- Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety are good. Pupils say they feel safe and enjoy school. This is reflected in the improvements in attendance.
- Governance has been strengthened and the governing body is now more effective in holding the school to account for its performance.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons. Five observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and a group of pupils. The inspector met with six members of the governing body. She also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents relating to safeguarding, the arrangements for checking how well staff perform, the tracking and assessment of pupils' achievement, records on attendance, the school's self-evaluation, records of behaviour and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspector took note of the 29 views of parents registered on Ofsted's online questionnaire 'Parent View' and spoke to parents informally in the playground. She also scrutinised 17 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Sue Vasey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashbrook Junior School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all of its pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of those supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding provided, in this school, for children known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection, significant staffing changes have taken place; two new teachers and a new subject leader for mathematics have been appointed, and the literacy leader has very recently been promoted to deputy headteacher in the school. One of the two headteachers has retired and the remaining headteacher was appointed as the substantive headteacher in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and enable pupils to make quicker progress and reach higher standards by:
 - sharing the best practice in teaching so that pupils are taught effectively in all classes
 - making sure that pupils' written work in subjects other than English reflects teachers' expectations of writing in literacy lessons
 - extending the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mental mathematics and calculation skills across a wider range of subjects
 - checking pupils make the necessary improvement in their work following written feedback.
- Raise achievement in writing by consistently ensuring that pupils:
 - spell and use punctuation accurately and construct sentences well
 - regularly practise specific writing skills in subjects other than English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress is not consistently good in all year groups and for all subjects. Progress in writing is not improving at the same rate as it is in reading and mathematics across all year groups. The school has recognised this and is taking appropriate action to resolve these issues. However, the school's actions have not yet had sufficient impact to raise standards.
- Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with standards that are above the national average, but leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are below average. In 2013, the proportion of pupils making expected progress from Year 3 to Year 6 in mathematics was below the national average, and the proportions making more than expected progress were below average in reading, mathematics and, particularly, in writing.
- In some classes in Years 3 to 6, pupils do not always make enough progress in writing because teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills. In one lesson, for instance, the teacher emphasised the importance of expressing language in a poem while working with pupils, but did not correct errors in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.
- Raising standards in mathematics has been a focus for the school. The work of the numeracy coordinator has had a particularly positive impact in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 are now taught effectively to use their knowledge of number to solve mathematical problems. This is not always the case in some other years and, as a result, pupils in Year 6 make faster progress in mathematics than those in Years 3 to 5.
- Pupils enjoy reading and many regularly read at home. Pupils and parents told the inspector that the school does a lot to help pupils with their reading. Those who struggle with their reading are given timely and effective extra help to make better progress and, as a result, more pupils are now making good progress with their reading.
- Currently, the school's own data show that progress is accelerating through the school, particularly in Year 4 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and the school assesses them to be on track to achieve higher standards in reading and mathematics than in 2013.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding benefit from one-to-one and group support in literacy and numeracy. In 2013, these pupils in Year 6 made similar progress to other pupils. Their attainment was also similar in writing and reading but was about two terms behind that of others in mathematics. The school's data show that some of these pupils make good or outstanding progress. However, this is not the case in all year groups and for all subjects and, therefore, their progress requires improvement.
- The most able pupils are currently achieving well. In Year 6 they are making good progress and working within the higher National Curriculum levels. The school's own data suggests a considerable increase in the proportion on course to make expected or better-than-expected progress.
- As a result of the good support they receive for their learning, most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The use of the new primary sports funding has enabled greater pupil participation in a wider range of physical activities. After-school clubs contribute to pupils' enjoyment and physical well-being.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across the school. Inspection evidence, including school records and other monitoring reports, show that the quality has significantly improved since the previous inspection. However, these improvements have not yet resulted in improved attainment in national tests.
- The teaching of writing is improving. However, the pupils' books and assessments show that the focus on pupils' spelling and use of grammar is not as sharp as it should be in all classes. There are not always high expectations of pupils when they write in other subjects and not enough regular opportunities for them to practise their skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving, particularly in Year 6, and this is evident in the growing accuracy of pupils' calculations skills and mental mathematics although not all pupils get regular chances to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects
- Marking is regular and teachers commonly provide helpful written feedback to pupils. However, teachers do not always check that pupils respond to and act on these points for improvement and repeat mistakes in their subsequent work.
- Many teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and consider how to excite and engage pupils in their learning. Technology is regularly used to help pupils develop their knowledge and research skills. Pupils appreciate this; one pupil for example, told the inspector, 'Teachers make lessons fun'.
- Teachers ask challenging questions, such as 'Why?' and 'How do you know?' and 'Can you prove that?' which mean that pupils have to explain their answers and opinions in detail, and this results in better learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3, both the teacher and teaching assistant asked probing questions to help pupils rapidly improve their understanding of how to apply their knowledge of multiplication facts to solve a range of problems.
- Knowledgeable and skilfully trained teaching assistants provide valuable additional support, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or for those who are supported by the pupil premium. They further explain and adapt work as and when necessary so that pupils can get on and keep up with their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, courteous, well-mannered and very proud of their school. During the inspection, when a very wet break meant pupils had to stay inside, they moved around the school sensibly and showed respect for their school environment.
- Attitudes to learning are positive and contribute to pupils' improving achievement. Most written work shows they take pride in their presentation. They work and play well together and value the rewards which they can earn.
- Some pupils and parents have reservations about the behaviour of some individual pupils. These

pupils are well known to the school, and are being supported effectively to improve their social skills and approach. The school's detailed records show that they have made improvements in their behaviour and attitudes.

- Pupils say they enjoy taking on extra responsibility in school; pupils in Year 6 help with the technical support during assembly time, and 'Mini-Leaders' from Year 5 are trained to lead activities at lunchtime. The school parliament organises fundraising for a number of charities.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good, and current requirements for safeguarding are met. Consequently, pupils know and understand how to keep each other safe, and they are clear about internet safety. Discussions with pupils show they know about the implications of bullying; they say bullying happens sometimes but, if it does occur, it is always dealt with quickly by staff. School records support this.
- The school has done much to work with families to improve attendance, with positive results. Attendance has improved over the past year and is now in line with the national average. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school. One pupil explained why, saying, 'Something always happens to make me happy'.
- The majority of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire had positive views about the school and would recommend it to others. Those spoken to during the inspection were very positive. 'Teachers are helpful,' and 'Children are very happy here,' were typical views.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has played a key role in the rapid improvement the school has made since the last inspection. By improving the stability in staffing and the establishment of a new senior leadership team, she has made sure staff work seamlessly together and the school motto of 'Together Everyone Achieves More at Ashbrook Junior School' is becoming a reality. She has given relentless attention to improving the quality of the teaching and achievement.
- Judgements about the quality of teaching over time are accurate and based on the impact the teaching is having on learning. The right points for improvement are identified, and teaching has improved well since the last inspection. The impact of this has been to accelerate pupils' progress, so that much is now good. However, it is too soon to see this feeding through into improved test results.
- Leaders' analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses is detailed and is based on frequent monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress. The development plan is focused on the right areas for improvement. However, due to the rate of improvements, the school's self-evaluation is out of date. Consequently, while leaders can talk knowledgeably about the rapid improvements being made by individuals, there is less precision in measuring the impact on the achievement of groups of pupils.
- The leaders of English, mathematics and special educational needs have been effective in making sure that there have been improvements in their areas of responsibility by providing support and training for teachers when necessary. Changes to the way key subjects are taught, and to the way pupils are grouped, mean that teachers are more confident in meeting their needs.
- The school is well prepared for the new National Curriculum which is due to start in September

2014. Whole-school themes, such as 'The Commonwealth Games', and residential visits add to the enjoyment of school. The study of different faiths and trips to places of worship give pupils an understanding of other cultures and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The local authority has provided good-quality support and challenge to the school. Training for leaders, teachers and governors has contributed well to the school's improvements, including by checking that teachers are assessing pupils' work accurately. Local authority advisers have also provided regular reviews of the school's work which have supported leaders and governors to identify next steps for improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Following a review of governance, the governing body has become regularly involved in improvement planning and, therefore, more effective. Governors clearly know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including the quality of teaching. They provide a good level of support and challenge to senior leaders through gaining an independent view of the school through visits to the school and links with staff. There are effective systems to manage teachers' performance and to hold the headteacher to account so that increases in teachers' salaries are justified. The governing body have a good understanding of what the pupil premium funding and primary sport funding are being used for and what difference they are making. Governors also undertake regular training on topics such as school data to ensure they carry out their roles effectively.

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	112602
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	441867

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marcia O'Sullivan
Headteacher	Mell Julian
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2013
Telephone number	01332 673785
Fax number	01332 673785
Email address	info@ashbrook-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk

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