

Ash Grove Junior and Infant School

Ash Grove, South Elmsall, Pontefract, WF9 2TF

Inspection dates

10–11 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Pupils achieve well and, from their different starting points, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good and there are now examples of outstanding practice, for example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and a good understanding of the subjects they teach.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning, which is a key reason why they make good progress in their lessons.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding make very good progress and many have now caught up with others in their class.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils are well prepared for their lessons and rarely late for school. They feel safe and clearly enjoy all that this improving school has to offer.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have worked successfully to drive improvements in both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors are well informed, supporting and challenging leaders in equal measure.
- There is a very positive ethos that permeates through the school and a shared commitment to improve this good school still further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are not high enough to represent outstanding progress from pupils' starting points.
- While the majority of pupils make good progress, some of the most able pupils are not always provided with tasks that encourage them to think hard and achieve their best.
- Occasionally, teachers do not check pupils' understanding thoroughly enough during lessons. As a result, those who have understood a task and are capable of moving on in their work are held back.
- The quality of marking has improved, but could be better still, particularly in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or small group activities, of which two observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, school staff and a local authority adviser. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work in lessons, listened to pupils read and met with a group of pupils from Year 5 and Year 6.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the on-line survey (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents during the two days of the inspection and took account of a number of letters from parents.
- Inspectors also took account of the 33 questionnaires returned by members of the school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at progress data, work in pupils' books, performance management information, records relating to behaviour and safety, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jim Alexander, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Juliet Demster

Additional Inspector

Susan Twaits

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for children who are looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- Since the time of the last inspection, school leaders have been receiving support from local authority advisers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate improvements to raising standards by the end of Key Stage 2, by:
 - providing work that causes the most able pupils to think hard and achieve well
 - making sure that teachers check more carefully on pupils' progress during lessons so that those who understand the work can move on quickly to more challenging work
 - improving the consistency of the quality of marking, so all pupils receive clear guidance about what they need to do to make their work even better, particularly in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. They are helped to settle quickly into the Nursery class and soon make good progress. They achieve exceptionally well in the Reception class and the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is now above average. As a result, they are very well prepared to start Year 1.
- By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who can read as well as expected is average and improving every year. Those pupils in Year 1 who needed more help to catch up have responded positively and most now read well for their age. Indeed, pupils across the school enjoy reading and are making increasingly good progress in this subject.
- In 2013, standards at the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics, which represented good progress from these pupils' starting points. This year, pupils are doing better still and standards are set to rise further.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 in 2013 were well below average. However, this did represent good progress from these pupils' much lower starting points at the beginning of the key stage. Again, standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are set to rise this year.
- School data, lessons observed and the work seen in pupils' books show that most pupils are making good progress. However, while the majority of the most able pupils are making much better progress than previously, too few are making the rapid gains of which they are capable.
- The school has effectively focused on improving writing. Opportunities, such as the Journalist Club, are providing pupils with a good reason to improve their work. Teachers are successful in helping pupils to improve their grammar, punctuation and spelling, although a few simple errors are still not always picked up quickly enough.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, because they now have a firm grasp of the basics and can use what they know to solve problems.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. For some, their progress is excellent. As a result, pupils are now only a few months behind others in their class and many have caught up completely.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs are also supported well. As a result, they also make securely good progress in their reading and writing, and increasingly good progress in their mathematics. This is one example of the school's commitment to tackle discrimination and provide equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Since the time of the last inspection, teaching has improved significantly and is now good. Some is outstanding.
- Children in the Nursery class benefit from a supportive and nurturing classroom area. The outdoor provision has improved and children are happy to play and learn together.
- The quality of teaching children receive in the Reception class is outstanding. This is because children's needs and interests are clearly recognised and activities planned to ensure that they make rapid progress in their learning. Support staff make an effective contribution to children's learning because they know how to make learning fun and understand what is to be achieved in a given time.
- Teachers have placed a great emphasis on pupils presenting their written work to a high standard and pupils are obviously very proud of what they achieve.
- In mathematics, teachers make sure that pupils develop a secure range of calculation skills and then provide tasks that test and challenge their understanding well.
- Well-trained and effective support staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They

use a good range of questions to consolidate and extend pupils' thinking. This additional help is also very effective at helping to build pupils' self-confidence and create a 'can do' atmosphere in school.

- Occasionally, the most able pupils are provided with the same starting point as others in lessons and are not given more appropriately challenging work until later in the lesson.
- Some teachers do not always keep a sharp enough eye on those pupils who have clearly understood a task and could be challenged at a higher level. This means that while pupils make good progress, they are not challenged highly enough to achieve outstandingly well.
- The quality of teachers' marking has improved but could be better still. All teachers offer praise and encouragement, recognising pupils' efforts. However, not all provide clear enough guidance for pupils to understand what steps are required to improve the quality of their work, particularly in mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They settle quickly in lessons and display positive attitudes to their work. This makes an important contribution to the good progress they are now making.
- Pupils are keen to live up to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and work. For example, in a mixed Year 5 and Year 6 writing lesson, pupils were working equally well with the teacher, the teaching assistants or by themselves. The teacher has developed positive relationships with pupils so that they are confident to express what they are finding difficult without fear. This enabled adults to respond quickly, ensuring the level of challenge was right for each pupil. As a result, pupils were able to understand the features of what made an interesting and informative diary from the First World War.
- Good behaviour was observed at playtime and during the lunch break. Pupils were keen to point out that this was typical. There is much for them to do, from children looking after the chicks in the Early Years Foundation Stage to older pupils growing vegetables to use in their cookery lessons.
- Pupils are well informed about all types of bullying and say that it rarely happens, but if it does 'our teachers are quick to help'.
- The number of pupils excluded has risen this year, however all correct procedures are followed to ensure that these pupils receive the help and support they require.
- Pupils enjoy coming to this improving school and attendance is now average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is also quickly falling, but remains above average. The majority of pupils take pride in their school, arrive on time and are smartly dressed.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example, when using the internet. Careful records are kept by the school regarding pupils' welfare. Child protection policies are clear and leaders respond quickly to any concern raised.
- The popular breakfast club provides a happy and safe start to the school day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has led the school with a relentless ambition since the time of the last inspection and is determined that this improving school becomes better still. She offers teachers, pupils and parents a clear plan for the future.
- The headteacher has built an effective senior leadership team. The deputy headteacher has overseen significant improvements to the support provided for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has an excellent understanding of what effective provision looks like and supports staff to give their very best.
- The headteacher has developed effective systems for managing staff performance. Lessons are checked regularly and feedback given, identifying where improvements are needed. Staff say

that they are very well supported and appreciate the training they receive.

- Systems to enable the school to judge how well it is doing are robust, accurate and inform school improvement plans, which focus on the correct broad priorities.
- Middle leaders have benefitted from ongoing training and have a good understanding of what is working well and what needs further improvement. The mathematics subject leader is new to post and appreciating the support offered by the deputy headteacher.
- The pupil premium funding is used well and leaders work effectively to ensure different groups have an equal chance to succeed.
- Leaders have ensured that the new primary school sports funding is used to increase opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions and after-school clubs, as well as to improve the quality of physical education lessons during the school day. However, procedures to measure the impact of these improvements on pupils' achievement are only at an early stage of development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. It means that they develop into thoughtful and considerate young people by the time they transfer to secondary school.
- School leaders have developed an effective partnership with the local authority, which offers effective support. This is appreciated by leaders at all levels.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed. It challenges school leaders and holds them to account for pupils' achievement. It compares how well the school is performing against others nationally. Governors are strong supporters of the school. They understand the headteacher's plans and value her commitment and leadership. They have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning because they visit school regularly, observe teaching, look at work in books and speak with pupils about how well they are learning. They oversee the performance management of staff and ensure that pay awards are only made when targets have been met. Governors check carefully on the use of additional funds, for example the pupil premium funding, and ensure good value for money. They also check that safeguarding arrangements are met.

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	130858
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	442310

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	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Hirst
Headteacher	Julie Davis
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2012
Telephone number	01977 723385
Fax number	01977 723386
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