

Ashmole Primary School

Ashmole Street, London, SW8 1NT

Inspection dates

22–23 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders, managers and governors have not maintained the school's good overall effectiveness since the previous inspection.
- Achievement requires improvement because too few pupils make good progress. Attainment in mathematics in particular has dropped.
- Teaching is not consistent across all year groups and does not lead to pupils' good progress.
- Pupils do not achieve well when teachers set work that is too easy, particularly for the more able pupils, or when pupils do tasks that are not well chosen to help them move on quickly in their learning.
- The early years provision requires improvement because not enough children have the skills they need by the time they move to Year 1.
- Teachers in charge of subjects are not sufficiently involved in driving improvements to help the school improve quickly.
- Leaders and managers do not always use information about pupils' progress rigorously enough to measure the quality of teaching and the school's effectiveness. As a result, evaluations of some aspects of the school's work are over generous.
- Governors have not sufficiently held school leaders to account for the achievement of pupils or the quality of teaching.
- Development planning does not identify sharply enough the most significant actions needed to secure rapid and lasting improvements.
- The curriculum is not always sufficiently focused on making sure pupils make swift progress in their academic achievement, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders have not made sure that the pupil premium funding is used to close gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the others'.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have successfully improved the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in Key Stage 1 so that more pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check than nationally.
- Pupils often make better progress in writing as a result of improvements to the way writing is taught, and through regular practise of key skills. Standards in writing at the end of Year 6 have risen.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and enjoy school. Their attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is consistently above average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively through a wide range of activities organised by the school. These include learning to play the violin in Key Stages 1 and 2, charity fundraising and gardening.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed in all year groups across a range of subjects. Inspectors conducted 12 observations, all jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They looked at work in pupils' books and reviewed the school's information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school, including action plans and the school's own checks on its performance and the quality of teaching. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- There were 50 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View). Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of each day and considered the school's own survey of parents' views. The inspection considered 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Madeleine Gerard, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Roger Easthope

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding to give extra support to those known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are in care) is above average.
- In 2013 the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school provides part-time early years provision for children in Nursery and full-time provision for children in Reception.
- The school provides a daily breakfast and after-school club.
- There have been a high number of changes in teaching staff over recent years largely because of promotion and maternity leave.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better in order to accelerate pupils' progress by making sure that:
 - work is always challenging enough, particularly for the more able pupils
 - tasks are well chosen to help all groups of pupils to learn effectively
 - those eligible for additional funding make the same progress as other pupils
 - pupils develop a secure knowledge of mathematical skills.
- Improve children's progress in the early years by making sure they make rapid gains in their literacy and number skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, by making sure that:
 - information about pupils' achievement is used to measure the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, and the overall effectiveness of the school
 - development plans identify precisely the actions that need to be taken in order to secure swift improvements
 - teachers in charge of subjects play a full part in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility
 - the governing body develops its skills further to support and hold the school's leaders fully to account for the impact of its work.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and governors have not ensured that the quality of teaching is good. As a result, there is variability between classes and subjects in the progress pupils make. By the end of Year 6, pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Leaders have not used information about pupils' progress to drive improvement. Leaders have been slow in addressing some underachievement, particularly in mathematics. Their views of the school's performance have been too positive.
- Since the previous inspection, they have not made sure all groups of pupils achieve well, or checked whether best use is made of additional funding such as the pupil premium. As a result, development plans have not always identified the most appropriate actions to secure rapid improvements. This is why the school's work to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination has not always been fully effective.
- The curriculum in mathematics has not made sure that pupils develop basic skills in mathematics. Recent changes, for example to make sure that all pupils build up their knowledge of multiplication tables and confidence in using them for calculations, have not had time to show their impact on raising attainment.
- Many subject leaders are newly appointed and at an early stage of developing their roles. They are not yet sufficiently involved in taking responsibility for driving improvements to help the school improve quickly.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been used to make sure eligible pupils catch up consistently well each year. Gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils at the school and nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have not narrowed steadily.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted through learning about a wide range of religious festivals in assemblies, welcoming visitors to the school and working with artists and musicians. Pupils in the gardening club take responsibility for the school's vegetable beds. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to play the violin. In Key Stage 2, they all have the choice to continue to play the violin as well as developing wider musical interests.
- Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds get along well together because the school works hard to foster good relations. Leaders have been successful in maintaining pupils' good behaviour since the previous inspection. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding and respect for cultures and faiths other than their own, and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Enrichment activities, including outings to local places of interest, themed events and residential visits for pupils in Key Stage 2, help pupils to enjoy their learning. At the breakfast and after-school clubs pupils are happy and enjoy the wide range of activities from which they can choose.
- The school uses the primary sports funding successfully to extend pupils' physical education skills and their awareness of healthy lifestyles. A specialist sports coach teaches physical education alongside the class teachers. Extra-curricular sports clubs are popular and achievement in sporting competitions helps pupils' self-confidence to grow. Pupils also take part in multi-sports activities through close links with a local international sports ground. All pupils enjoy healthy vegetable snacks at break time.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are regularly checked. Leaders have created a safe and calm environment. In the survey, parents were confident that the school keeps their children safe.
- Support from the local authority has not been effective in helping the school maintain its good overall effectiveness since the previous inspection.

■ The governance of the school:

Governors do not make sufficient use of data on the school's performance to challenge the school to do better and tackle underperformance. They have an over-positive view of the quality of teaching. Governors have not made sure that evaluations of teaching closely measure its impact on raising pupils' achievement. This limits their knowledge of performance management and of the links between salary and teaching quality. They know that pupils' attainment in mathematics requires improvement, but they have not checked carefully enough that action planning is accurately focused on securing rapid improvement. Members of the governing body know how the pupil premium is spent but have not checked how well disadvantaged pupils attain compared with other pupils at the school and nationally. Governors understand how the school uses the additional sports funding and are aware that this is effective in encouraging pupils' positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning and to school are positive. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn, even when work is not suitably challenging. They listen carefully in lessons and start work quickly when they are given tasks to do so that time is not wasted.
- Occasionally pupils lose concentration, for example when teachers give them too much time to complete an activity.
- Pupils are polite and helpful around the school. Older pupils show caring attitudes towards the younger ones and enjoy shared reading activities with the younger pupils. Trained pupil mediators contribute to making sure that break times run smoothly by helping to solve problems that may arise.
- Pupils take good care of the school's resources. The site is well maintained and there is no litter. Pupils use sporting equipment sensibly at break time and are readily responsible for tidying it away after use. Children in the early years provision enjoy caring for the school guinea pigs and hamster.
- Attendance has risen since the previous inspection and is consistently above the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Through workshops and sessions with visitors, pupils develop a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe from harm.
- Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe when using computers and how to avoid risks. Cycling proficiency sessions, road safety guidance and learning to swim develop their good safety awareness. Talks for older pupils on a wide range of topics, including substance misuse, make sure pupils are well informed.
- Pupils are sure that bullying is rare, as the school's records show. Advice and guidance during anti-bullying weeks help make sure pupils are confident to discuss any problems. They know that staff will help them should problems occur, such as name calling or arguments during football games.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to enable all groups of pupils to make rapid progress over a sustained period. Pupils do not achieve well when tasks are not difficult enough in English and mathematics, particularly for the more able pupils.
- In mathematics, teachers do not challenge pupils' thinking sufficiently to enable them to develop a secure knowledge of mathematical skills. Gaps in pupils' knowledge prevent them from doing as well as they should.
- Pupils' progress is slowed when the tasks they are given are not well chosen to help them to understand new learning quickly.
- In the early years provision, teaching has not made sure that children are prepared thoroughly for the start of Year 1. Activities are not always selected well enough to make sure children's literacy and number skills develop strongly. Children are encouraged to move between the Nursery and Reception classrooms to choose activities for themselves or take part in activities supported by adults. This helps children develop self-confidence, and strong personal and social skills.
- Training for staff has helped improve the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 and develop an effective approach to marking pupils' work and giving feedback. However, the high number of changes in teaching staff has limited the impact of some other initiatives to improve the consistency of teaching quality.
- Teachers mark work regularly and make clear to pupils what they might do to improve their work further. Pupils are encouraged to respond to teachers' feedback. Pupils also look at one another's work and give ideas to help improve it. They take this role seriously and appreciate the suggestions they receive from their peers.
- Well-trained additional adults work closely with teaching staff to support selected pupils' learning effectively.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress made by all groups of pupils, including pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those speaking English as an additional language, has been too slow to allow them to achieve their potential. The achievement of all groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is variable between classes because the quality of teaching requires improvement.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average overall but fluctuates from one year to the next. Attainment in writing is rising as a result of an increased emphasis on helping pupils develop their understanding of what they need to do to write well. Standards in mathematics have fallen since the previous inspection. Changes to the way mathematics is taught have not been as successful in driving up pupils' attainment.
- The most able pupils are not helped to make rapid progress when they complete similar tasks to other pupils that are not difficult enough. Assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 show that fewer pupils than nationally reach above-average standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Additional sessions in mathematics at a local secondary school for the most able pupils helped a few of them to attain highly in mathematics assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- Not enough children are ready for the next stage in their learning when they leave the early years provision. Children's achievement requires improvement because too few have the early reading, writing and mathematics skills they need in Year 1. They make better progress in language and communication, and in personal, social and emotional development.
- A systematic approach to teaching phonics in Year 1 has helped to increase pupils' enjoyment of reading and raise the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Daily reading in all classes and fun activities, including a lunchtime library club and pupil reading buddies, foster pupils' positive attitudes to reading. The school makes effective use of partnerships so that selected pupils benefit from reading to adult volunteers each week.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently good progress. Their progress is typically similar to that of other pupils at the school and other pupils nationally from their starting points. However, success in closing the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils at the school and nationally is not fast enough.
- In 2013, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were half a term behind other pupils at the school in mathematics, two terms ahead in writing and three terms ahead in reading. Compared with other pupils nationally, their attainment was lower: disadvantaged pupils at the school were three terms behind in mathematics, a term behind in writing and half a term behind in reading. Provisional results in assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2014 suggest that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils improved slightly in writing and mathematics but dropped in reading.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also variable between classes through the school and requires improvement. Additional adults and extra sessions for selected pupils support them in making swift progress. Their learning slows when tasks are not well selected to help them practise key reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Leaders have introduced improvements to teaching writing throughout the school that have helped to develop pupils' writing skills. Pupils have fluent handwriting generally because the school encourages them to write neatly. Regular practice helps pupils to build up their knowledge of the features of quality writing, including punctuation and spelling.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- Children join the school displaying the knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age, but their literacy is weaker.
- Leaders and managers have not made sure that children are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Checks on the quality of teaching have not taken sufficient account of how effectively it ensures children learn and make good progress in the early years.
- Fewer children than nationally acquire the early reading, writing and mathematics skills they need at the start of Key Stage 1. In 2013, only two fifths of children were well prepared for the move to Year 1. This rose to just over half in 2014, but nearly half of children did not have the reading, writing and number skills they need when they go on to the next stage in their education. Similar proportions to national averages reach the early learning goals in communication and language, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development by the end of Reception.
- Children do not achieve well enough because activities do not make sure that children build quickly on what they know and can do already, particularly in literacy and when using numbers. Children's learning is held back because adults do not always notice and correct inaccuracies in children's work, for example in handwriting.
- Children are happy in the early years and behave well. Children in Nursery and Reception work and play well together. Relationships between children and adults are warm and friendly. Leaders have developed the use of the outdoor spaces effectively since the previous inspection. Children confidently choose what they want to do from a wide range of fun activities in the inside and outside spaces. For example, children riding tricycles learned how to keep safe and enjoyed practising stopping and starting at red and green toy traffic lights.

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	100556
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	448189

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	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Higgins
Headteacher	Jane Wood-Chambers
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2010
Telephone number	020 7735 2419
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