

# Ashley Infant School

Lower Ashley Road, Ashley, New Milton, Hampshire, BH25 5AA

**Inspection dates** 24–25 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since the appointment of the current headteacher in 2012, the school has improved at a good pace and the weaknesses identified at that time have been almost wholly eradicated.
- Almost all pupils make good progress in learning to read, write and use mathematics. By Year 2, most read independently and with confidence. They achieve well.
- The improvement of teaching is a high priority for school leaders. As a result, it is consistently good. Teaching of letters and their sounds is very effective, leading to rapid progress in reading. Good teaching of handwriting enables pupils to write with fluency.
- Pupils behave well. In Reception, they learn quickly what is expected so they respond quickly to teachers' instructions, and work and play well together. Behaviour in the dining hall is especially impressive.
- Pupils and their parents agree that they are kept safe in school. Play is supervised well and there is little bullying or other inappropriate behaviour. Formal arrangements to keep children safe meet all requirements.
- School leaders know the school well and are working successfully to eradicate any remaining weaknesses. Middle leadership is a growing strength of the school.
- Governors have an increasingly good understanding of their role. They are effective in holding school leaders to account.
- Children make very good progress in the Reception classes, where highly effective new leadership is bringing about rapid improvement.
- The additional provision for pupils with profound special educational needs is good as all children make good progress.
- The breakfast club provides safe and stimulating childcare.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Year 2, some of the most-able pupils have not made the progress of which they are capable in writing and, especially, mathematics. This is due mainly to weaknesses in the teaching they have received in the past.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 16 lessons. In addition, they paid visits to activities involving more than one class, such as when children in the early years provision were learning outdoors. The majority of these observations, and some other inspection activities, were carried out jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' written and other work in order to analyse their achievement over a period of time and the quality of teachers' marking. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors reviewed school documents, including those relating to pupils' attainment and progress, their behaviour and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 24 parents who completed the Ofsted online Parent View questionnaire were analysed. A few parents submitted letters giving their views of the school. All these views were taken into account. In addition, inspectors considered the views of the 38 staff who completed the inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Paul Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The infant school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves a suburban area between The New Forest and the south coast.
- The school has additional provision for pupils with profound special educational needs arising from conditions such as Down's syndrome, autistic spectrum disorders and global developmental delay. The 16 places in this provision are allocated by the local authority, which provides additional funding to meet their needs.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the school as a whole is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is average. This provides funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of boys on the school's roll is well above average.
- The governors provide a breakfast club that offers childcare. The provision is open to children attending local pre-schools and pupils from the partner junior school.
- The early years provision within the school's Reception classes is full time.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the most-able pupils in Year 2 make the best possible progress by:
  - increasing opportunities for them to use higher order mathematical skills such as multiplication and division, especially when applied to solving problems
  - developing pupils' ability and confidence when making mental mathematical calculations
  - enabling pupils to develop more advanced writing skills such as the use of paragraphs and the sophisticated use of punctuation.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- When new leaders were appointed to the school in 2012, it was identified that the previously high achievement of pupils at the school had slipped. With the support of the governing body and local authority, the new headteacher quickly put in place a plan to correct the weaknesses that had arisen.
- Rightly, the plan placed a very high priority on improving teaching through a range of approaches. Research and professional development are used to identify methods that best meet the needs of pupils. The plan has been successful in creating a climate in which good teaching and behaviour can flourish, and hence, pupils now make good progress and achieve well.
- The management of teachers' performance is rigorous and effective. Staff justifiably have a high degree of confidence in the school's leadership. Their morale is high; they like working at the school.
- The quality of middle leadership has improved considerably. Leadership of the early years provision is very effective, as is that of provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. This is the case with both the additional resource and within the school as a whole.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used well to narrow gaps in their achievement when compared with other pupils. The appointment of a leader for this work has led to rapid progress by these pupils. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made very rapid gains in their reading following one-to-one tuition, and have caught up with other pupils.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Early years provision is of good quality. Pupils learn to read, write and use basic mathematics quickly. Excursions and related work broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- The school's values of confidence, achievement, motivation, respect and happiness are used well to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These values reflect the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and promoting good relationships. They ensure there is no discrimination in the school's work, or among pupils.
- The curriculum is successful in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain as appropriate to their age. As well as developing literacy and mathematical skills, they understand fairness and tolerance, and listen to the opinions of others.
- The school has been very successful in adopting recent changes to both the National Curriculum and the curriculum for early years. It has also developed a useful approach to checking and reporting pupils' progress.
- The primary sports grant has been used well to widen pupils' participation in sport and to develop their understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Staff have been trained to use the new outdoor soft playing surface, for example to develop ball skills.
- The school has good relationships with parents and pre-schools from which children transfer. All parents responding to the Parent View survey would recommend the school to others. Pupils are prepared well for transfer to junior school and say they have no concerns about the move.
- The breakfast club is well managed. Children have a good choice of healthy food and are encouraged to clean their teeth after eating as each is provided with a toothbrush.
- All requirements to keep children safe are met, and are effective. The necessary checks are made on all adults and staff are well trained in child protection procedures. There are good links with external agencies such as social services.
- The local authority has provided good-quality support. When the headteacher was first appointed, this was at an intensive level but has been reduced as the school has improved. Support is now provided at school leaders' request, such as to improve the skills of middle leaders.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding as the improvements that have taken place have not as yet raised the achievement of all of the most-able pupils in Year 2.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good understanding of how pupils' achievements compare with those of pupils of similar age in other schools. They understand that achievement dipped in the past and have supported the headteacher in making improvements, for example by the effective use of resources to improve teaching.
  - Governors challenge school leaders to make further improvements, for example to the provision for early years. They also know about the quality of teaching and how good performance is rewarded. School leaders have been supported in tackling poor teaching. These aspects have developed in the recent past due to effective training.

- Governors' checks on the school's performance are effective. They meet requirements, for example to ensure the premises are safe.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Children in Reception learn quickly how they are expected to behave and learn routines such as taking turns and sharing equipment. By Year 1, they respond well to teachers' questions and listen carefully to each other's contributions. Lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Around the school and when playing, pupils also behave well. They enjoy playground games organised by adults or older pupils. Inspectors were impressed especially by behaviour in the dining hall, where almost all have a hot school lunch. Pupils have good manners and converse happily with each other. Older pupils help younger children to cut food using the plastic cutlery.
- Pupils have an understanding of bullying that is appropriate for their age. They know not to be unkind to others and say this rarely happens. The school's records confirm that this has been the case over a long period. Parents express no concerns about bullying or behaviour.
- Staff are well trained in the management of behaviour. Occasionally, such as in the additional resource base, pupils express frustration. Staff are adept at calming these situations, for instance through the use of a sensory room in the provision.
- On rare occasions, pupils become restless if they are kept waiting. This was observed as they waited for the next part of an assembly to begin.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Adult supervision of outdoor play is a particular strength. Adults allow pupils to explore and try new physical skills while ensuring that they stay safe.
- Outdoor equipment, including that provided for children in the early years and pupils in the additional resource, has good safety features such as soft surfaces and rounded corners. These features reduce the risks of accidental injury.
- The many excursions are carefully assessed for risk. Pupils from the additional resource were observed wearing high-visibility jackets as the expectations of their behaviour on a visit to the nearby seashore were explained carefully.
- As with bullying, pupils have been introduced to the concept of e-safety at a level appropriate to their age. Year 2 pupils were asked how to stay safe when using a computer. They replied, 'Don't talk to strangers on the internet.'
- Attendance is average and there is some persistent absence. The school works with parents and, where necessary, external agencies in order to improve attendance. This work has been successful over time.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers check pupils' progress accurately and use the findings to plan work that meets the needs of each group of pupils in their class. In the case of the additional resource, where there are more adults and smaller classes, work is planned to meet pupils' individual needs. As a result, almost all pupils throughout the school make good progress.
- Teachers are effective in helping pupils to understand how to improve their work. They use both discussion and written comments. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of written marking, and of how they can use it to improve.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Starting in Reception, pupils learn quickly the letters and their sounds. Support from additional adults for those who struggle at first means that all pupils make good progress, so that by the end of Year 1 most can read without much adult help.
- The teaching of writing is also effective. Pupils are taught to write with fluency and at length using a neat cursive style. In Year 2, the most-able pupils do not get enough opportunity to practise techniques such as paragraphing and the use of speech in their writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving rapidly. Pupils in Year 1 were set demanding tasks involving multiplication, at which all, including those with learning difficulties, were successful. In Year 2, the most-able mathematicians are not given enough opportunities to use their mental skills or to solve problems involving multiplication or division.

- Teachers' specialist knowledge in subjects such as music, physical education and art is used well to enable pupils to make good progress. Pupils enjoy a range of clubs that is greater than is often provided for pupils of their age, where teachers make further use of their specialisms.
- Teaching of disadvantaged pupils, and those with disabilities or special educational needs, is effective because it enables these pupils to make rapid progress. This includes the teaching of those pupils in the additional resource.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are often less than those typically found in children of their age. They make rapid progress in Reception and, by the end of the year, most achieve the goals set for them.
- Pupils throughout the school make very good progress in learning to read, and hence, their attainment is above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils read with confidence, and by Year 1, they can use their knowledge of letters and their sounds to read unfamiliar words correctly. By the end of Year 2, they can read independently and choose their own books from the library. They can talk about books they have enjoyed and are beginning to understand the difference between works of fiction and non-fiction.
- Pupils' writing also develops well. Towards the end of Year 1, most are starting to write in a neat cursive style that enables them to write fluently. Strengths of the writing in Years 1 and 2 include its quantity, use of a wide vocabulary, and the accuracy of spelling. Pupils in Year 2 understand the term 'simile' and can give an example.
- Due to recent improvements in teaching, children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 are making rapid progress in learning mathematics. For example, in Year 1, pupils with special educational needs used an egg box to understand that  $3 \times 2 = 2 \times 3 = 6$ . In Year 2, most continue to make good progress.
- In 2014, the attainment in reading, writing and mathematics of disadvantaged pupils leaving Year 2 was lower than that of other pupils both within the school and nationally. However, school leaders can demonstrate that, because of their lower starting points, the progress made by these pupils equalled that of others.
- School leaders have used the additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress. For example, one-to-one support for reading has enabled several in Year 2 to make gains of more than one year in about three months. There is good evidence from pupils' work and the school's records of their progress that previous gaps in performance will be narrowed by current Year 2 pupils.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. Those in the additional resource make very good progress from their wide range of starting points. Some are successful in attaining nationally expected standards, in line with other pupils.
- The most-able pupils achieve well in Reception and in Year 1. However, in Year 2, some lack confidence in solving mathematical problems, especially if multiplication or division are involved. For example, while most can recite the sequence of the easier multiplication tables such as two or five times, few can give an immediate answer to a question such as, 'What is eight times five?' Some of these pupils also lack confidence in more challenging writing skills such as the use of paragraphs or punctuation for speech.
- The many boys and lesser number of girls make equally good progress because work is planned carefully to build on their interests.
- Pupils make good progress in learning about Britain and the world. They can recall details of events that happened some time ago, such as a visit to a nearby castle. This shows that they are able to retain what they have learned. They show interest in events such as the alpine air disaster that happened at the time of the inspection, and show empathy for the victims and their families.
- The primary school sports grant has enabled all pupils to develop a wider range of physical skills. The first football match against another school is planned to take place shortly. Pupils have a growing understanding of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. For example, at lunch, they could explain why a fruit yoghurt was healthier than a chocolate biscuit.

**The early years provision****is good**

- There have been good improvements to the early years provision over the last year. Teachers and other adults form a strong, well-led and enthusiastic team. Evidence from children's work and the detailed records kept show that all current children are making at least good progress in all aspects of their learning.
- Early in the school year, staff focus on developing children's social skills and emotional resilience. As a result, any behavioural difficulties are minimised and children are soon ready to learn in a range of situations. Good attention is given to children's safety.
- Pupils make very good progress in learning to read, write and use mathematics. At the time of the inspection, almost all knew the letters and most of their sounds. They could write a simple sentence and manipulate numbers up to 20, including by addition and subtraction. By the end of the year, children are well prepared for the move to Year 1.
- The curriculum offers children a wide range of experiences. The stimulating outdoor environment, built following a recommendation from the previous inspection, enables them to develop physical skills and explore the world, as when manoeuvring pieces of plastic guttering to make runways for a ball. Leaders are aware that the range of learning opportunities might be expanded still further.
- Teachers and other adults are highly effective as they know when to intervene and when to allow children to explore. For example, a student quietly observed a group, making notes about their achievements. She was aware that intervention might give a false impression of their abilities.
- Leaders and managers have been very successful in accelerating children's progress during the current school year. They are aware of adjustments that would improve provision still further and have the drive and ability to take the next steps.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115855
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	449273

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	213
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vicky Oliver
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Dibben
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2008
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