

Ashbury Meadow Primary School

Rylance Street, Beswick, Manchester, M11 3NA

Inspection dates 30 June–1 July 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher provides energetic and inspirational leadership for this outstanding school.
- Senior leaders set exceptionally high expectations for pupils and staff. They are excellent role models for everyone who learns and works in the school.
- Leaders at all levels have been highly effective in improving the quality of teaching so that it is now outstanding.
- All groups of pupils including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils, make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers are determined to provide the best education they can for all pupils who attend Ashbury Meadow.
- Leadership of early years is outstanding. Children achieve extremely well because of the wide range of high-quality and enjoyable learning experiences provided.
- Pupils who join the school at other than the usual time, including those who are new to the country and speak little or no English, are helped to settle well. They quickly make new friends and make the same excellent progress as other pupils.
- There is a strong sense of community in this harmonious and inclusive school. The school welcomes and celebrates the diversity of pupils.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and cared for well.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a real strength of the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and their safety are outstanding.
- Parents are very happy with the school's work. They appreciate the nurturing environment which helps their children thrive.
- The school works effectively with outside agencies to provide pupils with the best possible support for their academic and emotional development.
- Teaching assistants are highly effective in their work with individuals and small groups.
- Subject and middle leaders make a very strong contribution to improvements in pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- The governing body is highly effective in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Work is under way to further develop pupils' reasoning and thinking skills in mathematics and leaders know there is still more to do.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching over time. They observed learning in classes including some jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills. Inspectors talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading. Inspectors took note of displays around the school and the learning taking place outdoors.
- Inspectors talked with pupils informally as they played at break times and visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school. They met formally with three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met with five governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority, an external consultant working with the school and met with members of school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents at the start and end of the school day and took account of a letter from a parent. There were insufficient responses to Parent View, the online parent questionnaire, for the responses to register. Inspectors also took account of the school's most recent questionnaires issued to pupils and to parents and 33 returns to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, school improvement and external views of the school. Inspectors also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Frances Farnorth	Additional Inspector
Anthony Kingston	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools.
- There is a much higher than average proportion of boys in most year groups.
- The number on roll has risen significantly since the last inspection. The school is gradually moving towards two classes for each year group. A second Reception class opened in November 2013 and there are now two classes in Year 1 and one class in each of the other year groups.
- Nursery children join the school in the term of their third birthday and attend part time. Children attend the Reception classes full time.
- The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. At 65%, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is more than three times the national average. Some join the school soon after entering the country and many are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, is double that found in most other schools. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is high when compared to the national average.
- The school has experienced changes to staffing since the last inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2013.
- A building programme is underway to significantly increase the size of the school building.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governors provide breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils who attend the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their reasoning and thinking skills in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides extremely effective leadership. She is very ably supported by the deputy and assistant headteachers and together they have established a culture of high expectations for staff and pupils. A strong team has been created and staff say they are proud to work at Ashbury Meadow. The school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Excellent leadership of teaching and learning by senior and middle leaders means that checks on the performance of teachers are rigorous and challenging. Teachers are given clear and constructive guidance on how to improve their practice and they appreciate the opportunities they are given for training and development.
- Knowledgeable subject leaders, including those for English and mathematics, check regularly on aspects of teaching to identify priorities and put actions effectively into place to tackle any concerns. They spend time coaching and working alongside teachers in the classroom, sharing the most effective practice. Teachers new to the profession particularly benefit from this ongoing support.
- All leaders know the school's strengths and areas to develop very well. School plans clearly identify the correct priorities for improvement, for example, the development of pupils' thinking and reasoning skills in mathematics is a key focus. Regular and thorough analysis of pupils' attainment and progress has ensured that achievement for all pupils has improved over time. The needs of pupils who join the school during the year, including those who are newly arrived in the country and speak little or no English are quickly identified. Consistently high quality teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is particularly effective in helping pupils learn to speak English.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is spent very effectively. As a result of highly effective additional support, the gaps between their attainment and others' are closing. These pupils make outstanding progress from their individual starting points.
- Vulnerable pupils are supported extremely well. The school deserves its good reputation for success in meeting the needs of these pupils. A wide range of well-established partnerships with external agencies contribute well to this work.
- Staff know pupils very well as individuals and ensure that their needs are fully met. Excellent relationships are fostered with parents and outside agencies. Ashbury Meadow is a very inclusive school and all staff ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to excel. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The school provides a well-planned, rich and vibrant curriculum which captures pupils' interests and their awareness of their local area. It opens their horizons to the world beyond. Methods to assess the new curriculum are well-established and providing school leaders with an excellent understanding of the progress made by pupils.
- The primary school sports funding is being spent very effectively. Additional coaching for pupils, including those with gifts and talents in this area, and training for staff has resulted in increased participation in activities. Pupils report that the quality of teaching in physical education has improved and an enhanced range of sporting activities are available to them. Pupils are proud to have represented their school and gained a number of trophies following sporting competitions with local schools.
- Manchester City Football Club is a valued partner of the school, not only in physical activities but also in building pupils' self-confidence and raising their self-esteem.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Pupils learn about different faiths and British values are promoted very well. The weekly 'question of the week' assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to consider issues like 'What if all people looked the same?' or 'Do you agree there should be no rules?' These questions are shared with parents so that they can carry on the discussions at home.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders ensure that staff training is kept up to date and systems and procedures are robust and are checked regularly.
- The local authority recognises the many strengths of the school and provides appropriate light touch support. The current building programme and ongoing move to double the number of pupils on role demonstrates the local authority's confidence in the school and its leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly ambitious for the school and share the passion and determination of the headteacher to make the school the best it can be.
 - Meetings with the school council and regular visits ensure governors have a first-hand view of school life. Detailed reports from senior leaders provide the governing body with a clear picture of all aspects of the school's performance. Governors use their skills to robustly challenge and effectively support

school leaders. Together with the headteacher, they have ensured that a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement has been maintained despite the challenges presented by the large building programme and the increase in the number of pupils.

- Governors have an excellent understanding of the quality of teaching and arrangements for the management of teachers' performance. They understand teachers have targets to reach and these are used to hold teachers to account for pupils' achievement and to reward effective teaching.
- The governing body ensures that the finances of the school are managed efficiently. They check that the primary sports funding is deployed effectively. Governors know how well the pupil premium is spent and the very good impact it has on the achievement and personal development of disadvantaged pupils.
- Rigorous monitoring by governors ensures that the school meets its statutory duties including those for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They are friendly and make visitors and new pupils very welcome. All staff have the highest expectations of behaviour and this is reflected in the polite and well-mannered way that members of the school community conduct themselves.
- Pupils appreciate the diversity of the different cultures and experiences they bring to the school. As one child explained in this multicultural school where all are valued, 'we're like a mini world.'
- In lessons, pupils regularly display the qualities and values the school expects of learners at Ashbury Meadow. They are encouraged to be curious and develop enquiring minds. Pupils show much independence and resilience when tackling the tasks set by teachers.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Routines are well established and adhered to even by the youngest children in early years. Pupils move around in an orderly manner and show great respect for each other and the staff. A few pupils who do sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour are helped to do so sensitively by the adults.
- Pupils make an excellent contribution to the life of the school and they relish taking on many responsible roles. This effectively extends their understanding of British values. For example, older pupils act as playtime buddies or 'Ash Buds'. One explained to an inspector how proud he was to be an 'Ash Bud'. He takes seriously his job which is 'to make sure everyone gets a friend to play with'.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance over the last few years with much success. The daily 'Beat the Bell' arrangements are very popular. Overall attendance is now a little above average and most of the pupils who previously found it difficult to attend school regularly now do so.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe and cared for well. The school's most recent pupil and parent questionnaires support this view.
- Weekly 'safety' assemblies and class based learning opportunities effectively develop pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy, stay safe and manage risks. Pupils are well informed about the different types of bullying, including the risks posed through unsafe use of the internet and mobile technology. Older pupils, in particular, have a very good understanding of the various kinds of prejudice based bullying. Pupils explained that 'name calling can hurt the heart and the head'. Pupils say there is very little bullying and that staff deal with any incidents swiftly. Staff keep meticulous records and follow up is rigorous.
- The pastoral team provide very effective support for pupils who might have worries or concerns. School staff work very effectively with external agencies to support children and their families, particularly those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. The very high exclusion rates seen in 2012 and 2013 reduced significantly last year and current records show rates are now very low.
- The school site is completely secure. Any visitors are checked thoroughly before they enter the school's premises.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The headteacher and other senior leaders' focus on improving this aspect of the school's work has moved the quality of teaching to outstanding.

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work that is challenging for all groups, including the most able and newcomers to the school. Careful questioning checks pupils' understanding and makes them think deeply about new ideas. Pupils rapidly acquire new knowledge and develop new skills because teachers provide clear explanations of learning. Lessons are very carefully planned to take full account of what has been learnt previously.
- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils are prepared to try hard and are not afraid to make mistakes. The skilled team of support staff make a major contribution to pupils' learning. They are carefully deployed and well briefed so that they know precisely how to help pupils during lessons. This is very effective for pupils who are new to learning English and those who need a little extra help with their learning.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge, commitment and enthusiasm lead to pupils developing a love of learning. They use their accurate knowledge of how well pupils are doing to provide tasks which are matched closely to different needs and abilities. As a result, pupils learn successfully, grow in confidence and make rapid gains in their learning.
- Teachers' carefully follow the school's marking policy. The clear guidance provided by teachers' marking helps pupils understand how to improve their work. Regular 'closing the gap' times are provided to enable pupils to make corrections and act on the guidance provided. As a result, progress is rapid because misconceptions are addressed quickly and pupils are challenged to make their work even better.
- Pupils appreciate the way teachers make work interesting by often linking different subjects together. They think this makes learning more purposeful and say teachers make learning fun. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their basic reading, writing and mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is highly effective. This is because their personal and learning needs are identified accurately and individuals and groups benefit immensely from the skilful support of well-trained teaching assistants.
- There is a consistent and highly effective approach to the teaching of reading across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are trained very well in teaching phonics. Starting in the early years, children get an excellent start to learning phonics so all children, and particularly those new to speaking English, make rapid progress. Teachers make sure that pupils develop a love of reading from the start and inspire pupils to read widely and for enjoyment as they move through the school.
- Writing has been a focus for the school and grammar, spelling and punctuation skills are taught very well and enhance pupils' skills. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to talk and rehearse their writing. They explain clearly what makes a successful piece of writing. All pupils, including those in Reception, use the same 'story map' format to plan their writing. This ensures consistency across the school and enables pupils to build on their skills as they move from class to class.
- Mathematics is taught very well. Teachers ensure pupils have an excellent grasp of the basic number facts and calculation skills appropriate for their age. They use quick checks in lessons to ensure that pupils can quickly recall and use this knowledge to solve problems. For example, Year 5 pupils confidently manipulated number sentences and equations to find inverses and decimal equivalents. Leaders have correctly identified that not all staff are confident teaching aspects of the mathematics curriculum to deepen pupils' reasoning and thinking skills. Staff training is underway to develop this aspect of teaching further.
- Homework is used well to extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' work and the information the school holds about the achievement of pupils show that as the quality of teaching has moved to outstanding so has the progress of pupils. Overall achievement is now outstanding.
- Almost all children who enter the early years do so with skills and understanding below those typical for their age and many have limited understanding of the English language. Children make excellent progress and are well-prepared for the Year 1 curriculum.
- This outstanding progress continues across the school. In 2014, almost all pupils in Year 6 made the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics and the proportion making better than expected progress was high compared to the national average. By the end of Year 6 most pupils had reached the standards expected for their age in all three subjects and a good proportion reached the higher levels. Some pupils gained the highest Level 6 in mathematics and grammar, spelling and punctuation.

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with the national average and are continuing to rise with more pupils in the current year group working at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make rapid progress in phonics because of the high quality of teaching. As a result the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard at the end of Year 1 is improving year-on-year and was above the national average in 2014.
- In the 2014 national tests for Year 6 pupils, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was similar to other pupils both within the school and nationally in writing. It was around a term behind in reading and two terms behind in mathematics compared to other pupils in the school and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils make similar excellent progress as other pupils in all subjects from their starting points in the school. Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than other pupils nationally.
- In the past three years the gaps in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils have narrowed in reading and mathematics and closed in writing. The school's present data show that these pupils are now working at very similar levels to other pupils in all subjects across the school.
- Current data show that the most able pupils are challenged appropriately. They are making rapid progress and are working at levels exceeding those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' individual needs are carefully identified and pupils are provided with excellent support through consistently good and often outstanding teaching. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make rapid progress and achieve well as do pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all to succeed.
- The high proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at other than the usual time can sometimes affect the published data at the end of each key stage. However all pupils, including those who start their primary education in this country when they join the school, make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points.
- Current predictions show that pupils in Year 6 are making rapid progress from their starting points. Standards of pupils who started the school at the usual time are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The learning gaps of pupils in this year group who joined the school at other than the usual time are closing in all subjects.
- Many pupils are confident in number skills but some lack confidence in applying their mathematical understanding which sometimes prevents them doing even better in this subject across the school.
- Almost all parents who responded to the school's questionnaire or who spoke to the inspectors agree that teaching is outstanding and are delighted with the progress their children are making.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children enter school with skills that are below what is typical for their age and many have limited skills in speaking English. Throughout the year a significant number of children join and leave Nursery and Reception classes and some children are newly arrived in the country. As a result of highly effective teaching, children including those who join the school at other than the usual time and those who are new to speaking English, make excellent progress from their individual starting points.
- The very large majority of children who join the school at the usual time in Nursery reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. The number of children exceeding expectations is increasing over time. The overall proportion of children reaching a good level of development is close to the national average and they are well prepared for Year 1.
- Outstanding teaching keeps the focus firmly on developing children's communication skills and their ability to read, write and understand number. Teachers and other adults plan activities in the classroom and outdoors which capture children's imagination and encourage them to explore and think creatively. During the inspection, children were taking part in the early years sports day. Parents, children and staff enjoyed this well-planned event. Children were able to show their parents how well they could count as they tossed bean bags and practiced their running and balancing skills.
- Children behave extremely well. They are encouraged to become independent, resilient learners. The children take these qualities with them as they move up the school. Routines are well-established and applied consistently by all adults.
- The leadership of the early years is outstanding. The assistant headteacher provides inspirational leadership. She has established a strong staff team, who all share her determination that all children should enjoy their time in school and achieve as well as they possibly can.
- Children are kept very safe and welfare arrangements are secure.

- Parents are encouraged to spend time in school with their children. Parents hold highly positive views about the care and education provided for their children. They appreciate the wide range of information provided about how well their children are doing.

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	133770
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	461750

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	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sean McGonigle
Headteacher	Lucy Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2011
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