

Ashfield Junior School

High Street, Workington, Cumbria CA14 4ES

Inspection dates

12–13 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress over time has not been strong enough. Although there are signs of improvement, the progress made by current pupils in mathematics is still too variable across the school.
- The work set for pupils is not always well matched to their abilities. As a result, pupils are not always challenged appropriately in their learning.
- The agreed marking policy is not followed consistently in all classes. Consequently, marking is not always effective in moving pupils' learning forwards.
- Governors do not have an accurate enough understanding of how the school's performance compares with that of other schools nationally.
- Action plans are not always focused sharply enough on the key priorities for improvement. As a result, it is difficult for leaders and governors to easily check on the progress being made towards targets.
- Leaders and governors do not routinely check that statutory documents and procedures are kept up to date.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and other senior leaders have a firm understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are working steadfastly to improve the school. Their high expectations are shared by staff and governors who are determined to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good overall. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and pupils are keen to succeed. Teachers have good subject knowledge and question pupils effectively to help move their learning forwards.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are well cared for and fully integrated into the life of the school.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils are friendly, happy and have good manners. They enjoy school and their attendance is improving.
- The progress made by current pupils in reading and writing is improving because the quality of teaching is good.
- Planned actions to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are starting to have an impact.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. They have many opportunities to broaden and deepen their learning experiences on school trips, by listening to visitors and by taking part in a wide range of after-school clubs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - checks are completed routinely to make sure that statutory documents and procedures are kept up to date
 - governors have a clearer understanding of how the school's performance compares to that of other schools so they can support and challenge leaders more effectively
 - action plans are more sharply focused on weaker areas and that progress made towards targets can be checked more easily.

- Improve outcomes for all pupils, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers consistently follow the agreed marking policy of the school so that pupils have more opportunities to reflect on their learning
 - the tasks set for pupils match their abilities more closely
 - pupils have more opportunities to apply their learning of basic skills in independent work.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The senior leadership team has completely changed since the previous inspection. The new headteacher and other senior leaders have embarked on ambitious plans to improve the school. They have regathered and regrouped after a period of much instability. Their vision is shared by all staff who are fully committed to improving outcomes for all pupils. Despite their best efforts, the progress made by pupils who left the school in 2015 was well below that expected of them. Current pupils are making stronger progress, particularly in reading and writing, but their progress in mathematics remains too variable.
- In the past, leaders have not ensured that the additional funding the school receives for disadvantaged pupils has been used effectively enough to improve outcomes. In 2015, the gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils in the school and nationally widened in all subjects. Leaders identified this as a priority and have taken effective steps to start to close this gap.
- The school improvement plan does not set out the key priorities for improvement in a focused way. Targets are not always clear enough and there is limited evidence of progress made towards achieving them. There are other action plans in place which are separate to the main plan, but the work completed on these and evidence of impact are not reflected in the main improvement plan.
- Leaders know the key strengths and weaknesses of the school and are working well to effect improvement. Plans to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and other plans for improvement in mathematics are showing early signs of success.
- The quality of teaching declined since the previous inspection due to the long-term absence of the previous headteacher and the subsequent, significant, changes in senior leadership and governance. Leaders have embarked on an ambitious journey to improve the quality of teaching. They undertake a range of regular monitoring activities to check on the quality of learning in each class and there is a clear focus on improving outcomes for pupils. All lessons observed, work in pupils' books and the improving progress being made by current pupils shows that the quality of teaching in all subjects, including English, is now good. The quality of teaching in mathematics is improving rapidly.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary sports funding. The funding is used in a range of ways to improve participation in, and enjoyment of, sport. Many clubs are on offer throughout the school year, including street dance, tennis, archery, netball and football. Pupils compete against other schools in the local area in a range of different sports. Funding is also used to employ specialist sports coaches who teach the pupils key skills while at the same time providing important training for school staff in teaching sport.
- The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of opportunities for pupils to enjoy. Teachers work hard to provide learning experiences which motivate and engage pupils, including studies around current world events such as migration and environmental protection. Pupils learn how to become effective learners, developing their character and resilience, and how to learn from their mistakes. They also develop cultural awareness by visiting different places of worship, such as a synagogue in Liverpool.
- The local authority provides strong support to leaders. It has been heavily involved in the recruitment of senior leaders in the last two years. It has also ensured that leaders receive appropriate guidance and challenge around their key improvement priorities, helping to broker links with different improvement partners. Local authority personnel are regular visitors to school, meeting with senior leaders and governors to ensure that improvement plans remain on track.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors do not have an accurate enough view of how the school's performance compares with that of other schools. For example, although the governors knew that the progress made by the previous Year 6 was low, they were not fully aware of how far progress had fallen. They have not challenged leaders and held them to account stringently enough to improve outcomes over time and maintain the overall effectiveness of the school.
 - Governors have not ensured that the school meets all of its statutory requirements consistently well. The school's website does not contain all of the necessary information for parents, improvement plans sometimes lack focus and the recording of information on important documents is not always kept up to date.
 - A new chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2015. He has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He works closely with senior leaders and the local authority, visiting regularly to check on progress towards targets. Other governors are also very committed and passionate; they are determined to improve the overall effectiveness of the school.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Although leaders make sure that relevant checks are completed on all adults who work with pupils, they appreciate that the recording of these checks needs to improve. Leaders ensure that relevant training is up to date so that all staff are aware of how to keep pupils safe. A very small minority of parents responding to Parent View (Ofsted's online parental questionnaire) suggested that their children did not feel safe at school. There was no evidence to suggest that this was the case.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching across the school is characterised by very positive relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. Teachers and other staff have high expectations and are successful in engaging and motivating pupils to learn. As a result, current pupils are starting to make stronger progress.
- Teachers use effective questioning to initially find out what pupils know and then to delve deeper into pupils' understanding to move their learning forwards during lessons. Support staff are well informed of the intended learning and mirror the expectations of teachers, often taking responsibility for the learning of different pupil groups.
- Routines within school and within lessons are well established. Lessons start briskly and minimal time is wasted. There are smooth transitions between different parts of lessons; pupils know what is expected of them and work hard to complete their learning tasks.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge helps them to plan lessons which are relevant, purposeful and engage pupils to learn well. In a Year 4 lesson about Judaism, pupils could explain clearly how the Jewish culture was different to theirs. They had an in-depth knowledge of celebrations, such as bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah. They could explain what happened at these events and how things are different for girls and boys in the Jewish faith. They could also see examples of artefacts which helped to secure their understanding.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they are starting to make stronger progress over time, especially in writing. Leaders have recently changed the mathematics curriculum so that pupils have more time to learn different aspects of the subject, for example calculation strategies and the place value of numbers. This was instigated because leaders' analysis of pupils' mathematics skills showed there were gaps in their understanding. This new strategy is starting to have an impact. The quality of teaching in mathematics is improving rapidly and progress within recent topics is clear to see. At this stage, however, although pupils are making stronger progress in certain aspects of mathematics, their overall progress in the subject is still too variable across the school.
- Teachers set homework regularly and in line with school policy. This helps to consolidate pupils' understanding and allows them to develop independent learning skills at home. It also allows parents to become more involved in homework activities. Leaders have engaged well with parents and have taken their views into account when developing the new homework policy.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning well within lessons and are quick to intervene where pupils have a lack of understanding. When assessing pupils' written work, not all teachers consistently follow the agreed marking policy of the school. This means that pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity to correct any errors in their learning.
- Teachers usually plan tasks that challenge pupils well, but occasionally the match of tasks to pupils of different abilities is not secure. At times, pupils who need more support with their learning are given tasks which do not move their learning along quickly enough. Similarly, the most-able pupils do not always complete tasks which challenge their thinking or allow them to broaden and deepen their understanding.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to learn basic skills such as spelling, grammar and number which are taught in weekly sessions. They do not routinely use and apply these skills in their independent learning activities, such as when they complete extended writing or when they solve problems in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders are developing a philosophy with pupils that encourages them to become more successful learners. Pupils explain that it is acceptable to make mistakes because this shows them what they still have to learn. In lessons, they persevere and work well with their peers when completing tasks. They listen to others and

consider the views of all. They want to succeed.

- When pupils first join the school in Year 3, they are allocated an older 'buddy' from Year 6 who helps them to settle in and is a familiar face if the younger pupils need any help.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They feel safe in school and would speak to an adult if they were concerned about anything. They are confident that any issues would be quickly dealt with.
- The school is welcoming and secure. Classrooms and other areas, such as corridors, are well maintained. Displays around school celebrate good work and help to reinforce positive thinking, good behaviour and regular attendance.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying. They say that bullying is rare and are confident that it would be dealt with swiftly if it were to happen. Recorded incidents of bullying are low and when they occur, they are treated seriously and are dealt with thoroughly. This includes the involvement of parents at every step.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are very well cared for. They are integrated fully into the life of the school and are accepted and supported by all pupils and staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They work well with each other, listen to each other's views and have very good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' conduct around school, during breaks and at lunchtime is also strong. Pupils are friendly and respectful to each other. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they have lots of friends to play with and that they get along well.
- Pupils attend school regularly and few pupils are persistently absent. Staff work closely with the families of pupils who struggle to attend school regularly. As a result, current attendance figures are improving.
- A new behaviour management policy has been introduced and is having a positive impact on behaviour. Pupils are rewarded for good work and behaviour and lose privileges if they misbehave. The number of pupils losing privileges has declined greatly since the system was first introduced in the autumn term in 2015.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- In 2015, at the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress in all subjects was significantly below the national average. Progress in mathematics was particularly weak.
- The proportion of pupils who meet and exceed the standards expected of them by the time they leave the school is broadly average in all subjects. However, as pupils typically join the school with higher than expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics, progress from these starting points is below the national average.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is too variable. Disadvantaged pupils who left the school in 2014, were approximately a year behind other pupils in reading and writing, but achieved similar outcomes in mathematics. Against other pupils nationally, they were also a year behind in writing but achieved almost as well as other pupils in reading and mathematics. In 2015, however, the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school and nationally widened. Pupils were almost two years behind their peers in mathematics and approximately a year and a half behind in reading and writing. Improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils is a key focus for leaders and disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are already making stronger progress.
- Outcomes for the most-able pupils are inconsistent. The proportion of pupils who made more than expected progress in 2015 was below the national average in all subjects. However, the proportion of pupils who reached the highest levels of attainment in all subjects was at least in line with, and sometimes above, the national average.
- The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs or disability is also inconsistent. The progress made by these pupils and the proportion who met the standards expected for their age in 2015 were below the national average. Leaders do not compare the progress made by those who have special educational needs or disability with that of other pupils nationally, so they are less well informed about whether these pupils are doing as well as possible. This includes the small number of pupils who attend the resourced provision for pupils with education, health and care plans for physical and medical needs.

- Progress for current pupils is improving, particularly in reading and writing. School records indicate that in all classes, pupils are making strong progress in writing. This is similar to the progress mainly seen in books since September 2015. Since leaders revised the teaching of mathematics in September 2015, allowing pupils to spend more time learning each aspect of the subject, strong progress can be seen in books within each topic area. However, because pupils have not yet learned the full curriculum in this way, gaps in their learning persist. Overall, current pupils' progress in mathematics remains too variable in Years 3, 4 and 5.

School details

Unique reference number	112147
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10002911

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.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Rafferty
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Frost
Telephone number	01900 604565
Website	www.ashfieldjuniorschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@ashfield-jun.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 May 2012

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- There are two classes in each year group.
- The school has a resourced provision base, for up to three pupils, who have physical and medical needs. There are currently three pupils in the resource base. Each of these pupils has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The proportion of pupils classed as needing support is average but the proportion of pupils who have a statement or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those that are looked after.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- There have been a number of changes to governance and staffing since the previous inspection. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2014. The previous headteacher left the school in March 2015 after a long period of absence. The deputy headteacher was then appointed as headteacher in 2015 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in 2015. The governing body was restructured in 2015 and a new chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2015.
- The governing body manages a before- and after-school club which is very much valued by parents.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about its admissions policy, the curriculum, the governing body, the details of a named contact person and its safeguarding policy on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in the vast majority of classes and in a range of subjects. The headteacher observed learning in four classrooms, alongside the lead inspector, on the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. An inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body. An inspector also met with the school improvement adviser and the senior school improvement officer from the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with inspectors. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils on the playground.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 36 parents from Parent View (Ofsted's online parental questionnaire) and also the response from parents dropping pupils off at school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents, including: minutes from meetings of the governing body, information on pupils' outcomes, the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Ian Hardman, lead inspector

Paul Edmondson

Ann Gill

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

