

Ashbrow School

Ash Meadow Close, Sheepridge, Ashbrow School, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD2 1EX

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors share a passion to give pupils the best possible start in life. This has ensured a relentless focus on tackling the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and improving further other aspects of the school's work.
- Most teachers use regular assessments of pupils' work to plan activities that are well matched to their current abilities. They usually develop specific activities to help struggling pupils catch up with their peers and provide the most able with extra challenge.
- Pupils make good progress from starting points that are often very low. In 2015, Year 6 pupils' progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, was close to that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities attending the resource base achieve well because of the high-quality provision and targeted support.
- Attainment remains below average. Differences between Ashbrow pupils and other pupils nationally have diminished, notably from the early years to Year 2. Year 6 test results were below average. Leaders know that they have to improve pupils' confidence in tackling unfamiliar questions, because results in mathematics did not reflect their good achievement in class.
- The early years provision is good. Children thrive in the vibrant provision and enjoy their time there.
- Improvements in the teaching of phonics have resulted in a rapid rise in the number of pupils reaching the expected level in Year 1. The difference between Ashbrow pupils and other pupils nationally is closing.
- Pupils develop good reading habits because they read every day. Occasionally, in guided reading times they do not concentrate well enough when adults are working with other groups, which slows the pace of learning.
- Ashbrow is an inclusive school. Pupils of different faiths and cultures play and work together in harmony. Behaviour is good. The many pupils who enter at different times of their school lives quickly settle in.
- The rich curriculum and wonderful resources indoors and out entice pupils into learning. Their horizons are broadened and aspirations raised. The curriculum and outstanding pastoral care keep pupils safe and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Governors' insightful understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is used to hold leaders to account robustly for the impact of their work.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress further so that more attain at least national averages by:
 - making sure that teachers consistently use the information they have about pupils' current abilities to match work that moves them on quickly from what they already know
 - developing pupils' concentration in guided reading sessions so that they focus on the work in hand and do not waste any learning time.
- Ensure that pupils' attainment in national tests reflects the good progress pupils actually make during their time at Ashbrow by developing pupils' confidence and resilience in answering unfamiliar questions in tests, so that they can apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in tackling them more successfully.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's visionary and inclusive leadership has tackled weaknesses identified at the last inspection successfully and driven further improvement across the school. The headteacher's and governors' infectious passion to do the best for the pupils and to tackle the barriers many face on entry is embraced by all staff. They are working successfully to ensure that all pupils are equally valued and provided with an ambitious, rich and nurturing experience so they can learn and thrive during their time at Ashbrow.
- Although the standards pupils attain remain below average, pupils' progress has hastened well across all key stages and is close to that found for pupils with similar starting points nationally. Good early years provision is ensuring that children settle in quickly to make good gains in their learning and development.
- Special educational needs funding is used to make sure that pupils in the resource base and those with an education, health and care plan achieve well. Leaders are aware that their achievements are above those of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are identified as requiring additional support. However, the differences are diminishing as this is an area that leaders are tackling effectively this term.
- The relentless focus on improving teaching is making its mark. The quality is usually good. Assessment procedures to measure pupils' progress have improved. Teachers use information about pupils' current skills to plan learning; leaders set ambitious targets for each pupil and for groups of pupils. Leaders check pupils' progress. Staff are challenged and supported to make sure pupils achieve well in class and any pupil at risk of falling behind is given support to catch up with their peers. Staff are also challenged to stretch the work for most-able pupils through leaders' regular checks on planning, learning and reviews of their progress in class.
- Leaders' accurate and honest evaluation of the impact of the school's work leads to succinct plans and actions for improvement that are checked for impact and changed or amended where needed. For example, new actions are in place to tackle the concern that some pupils in Year 6 did not do as well as they should have in their 2016 tests. A number struggled with the wording of some questions and did not think about the knowledge they already had to tackle them; consequently they lost vital marks.
- Staff are enthusiastic and proud to be part of the 'Ashbrow team'. Newly qualified teachers report on the high-quality support and training they receive to help them succeed. Regular training activities ensure that teachers and senior and middle leaders continue to develop their skills in teaching and in their areas of responsibility.
- Arrangements to manage teachers' performance are effective. Senior and middle leaders monitor the quality of their teaching and their pupils' work and progress in lessons. Where there are concerns, support plans are put in place and decisive action is taken should performance not improve. Recruitment of staff is difficult, but leaders are resolute that only the best is good enough and will not make unsuitable appointments.

- An exciting, tantalising and broad curriculum, including visits and after-school clubs, ensures that pupils are motivated to learn and make progress. Pupils and parents speak highly of the rich array of opportunities including those that encourage healthy lifestyles such as the Bikeability lessons, bee-keeping and vegetable gardening.
- Most-able pupils read with confidence and comprehension. They access a rich array of reading books that whets their appetites for more. Carefully targeted sessions for lower ability pupils take place across the school day. Staff are well trained in the teaching of phonics so that pupils learn the sounds correctly. Improvements since the inspection mean that pupils can practise their reading and writing skills in other subjects. Topic books show this improvement.
- Work to develop the qualities essential for pupils to be active citizens in modern Britain is interwoven successfully across the curriculum, assemblies and class time. Current, vibrant displays across the school showcase pupils' understanding of themes such as the environment and world resources, race equality, world religions and celebrating the diversity of cultures of pupils in school and their local community.

Governance of the school

- Governors share the headteacher's unequivocal vision to do the best for all pupils. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the work undertaken to improve. The headteacher's reports to the full governing body and its regular reviews of the school's work through the committee structure ensure that governors are well informed about the progress, attendance, behaviour and development of all pupils and of different groups. Minutes of governing body meetings evidence the wide range of information they receive to challenge leaders on their impact and the robust challenge brought to bear.
- Governors have a good understanding of the performance of teachers and ensure that any decisions on pay are linked closely to teachers' professional development targets and pupils' outcomes. They review the use of the additional funding for the pupil premium and sport premium regularly and know its impact. For example, reports identify that the sport fund is used to develop pupils' skills in, and enjoyment of, a range of sporting activities successfully. Detailed termly reports on the progress of pupils entitled to the pupil premium show that they are making at least the same levels of progress as their peers and often more. There is evidence of strong challenge on the actions leaders are taking to ensure that resources are well spent.
- Governors are highly visible in the school and visit regularly. They are reflective and keen to improve their own practice, through skills audits, training and by recruiting governors with the right skills to carry out their varying responsibilities.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, governors and staff are vigilant and well trained in how to keep pupils safe, including risks from extremism, social media or sexual exploitation. Safeguarding and safe recruitment policies are up to date and used meticulously. The headteacher has a comprehensive understanding of risks in the community. She does not shirk from taking difficult decisions and urgent action to ensure that pupils are safeguarded when concerns are raised.

- Case files and records for pupils at risk are detailed and thorough. They demonstrate the headteacher's proactive work with parents and services such as school nursing, children's social care, the 'Prevent' duty team, or the police, to secure the safety of pupils. Records also identify the targeted work undertaken to help tackle any barriers to pupils' learning and social or emotional development as a result of risks identified.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection, through training and coaching of staff and the rigorous way that leaders check its quality and take action if it is not up to scratch. More teaching is consistently good. New teachers in school are being supported to develop their skills to match those of the strongest teaching in school.
- Teachers use the school's marking and feedback policy effectively. Feedback to pupils, written or oral, is of good quality and identifies clearly pupils' successes or misunderstandings and what they need to do to move on to their next steps.
- Typical of all lessons is the calm and purposeful atmosphere teachers create. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning, behave well and are keen to try hard and contribute to discussions in pairs or respond to the teachers' requests or questions. Occasionally, in the daily guided reading lessons, teachers do not always make sure that the pupils who are working without an adult are focused fully on what they have to do. When this happens, their attention wanes and progress slows.
- Teachers know their pupils well, display good subject knowledge and use perceptive questions to probe pupils' understanding. Their high expectations of pupils' application to work are evident in pupils' English, mathematics and topic books and folders that cover the rest of the curriculum. Work is neat, well presented and indicates that pupils are productive in lessons and make good progress.
- Teachers usually, but not always, use the assessments of pupils' current skills to plan activities that help move them on quickly. This means that the most able are generally suitably challenged and lower-ability pupils given specific work to help them catch up. Occasionally, work is too easy for some and too hard for others. Leaders are taking action to tackle the remaining inconsistencies in school.
- Teaching assistants are generally well deployed in class or to small groups of pupils. This represents improvement from the last inspection. Teachers make sure that assistants know what is expected of the lesson. Teaching assistants record key achievements or barriers to pupils' learning, so teachers can identify what pupils need to do next.
- The teaching of reading, writing and comprehension is systematic, from the early years to Year 6. It was delightful to see pupils in Year 1 talk enthusiastically about the letters and sounds they were learning and then proudly sounding them out correctly in their work. Pupils used their developing phonological knowledge to build unfamiliar words and develop their sentence-making successfully.
- As in reading and writing, there is a consistent and systematic approach to the teaching of mathematics. Teachers usually ensure that pupils are given opportunities to develop their skills at a deeper level once the basics are understood. Books show that on occasions, pupils spend too long repeating work they have already tackled well.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The pastoral care provided is second to none. Parents who met inspectors spoke movingly about how the headteacher and staff go out of their way to support their children, especially in times of need. They are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Parents speak highly of how pupils in the additionally resourced provision are fully included in school life and well supported. This has enabled their children to develop, make good progress and enjoy school.
- A strong sense of community is evident from pupils, staff and governors and the vast majority of parents. Leaders have created an atmosphere where equality of opportunity and respect for each other are at its heart. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and any untoward incidents are tackled robustly, as seen in the school's records.
- Pupils value the range of responsibilities they have to contribute to the life of their school, for example as school counsellors, or older pupils supporting younger pupils in the dining hall. They take their gardening work, rearing chickens and bee-keeping very seriously. Pupils relish talking about how the food they grow for their school lunches and their many sporting activities help them to keep healthy and fit.
- Work to ensure that pupils understand how to be safe is strong. Staff and a range of visiting professionals support pupils to learn how to keep safe in school, from social media and from risks in their local community.
- The welcoming breakfast club attracts around 150 pupils daily and provides a safe, sociable and healthy start. It prepares pupils well for the day ahead.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good in class, in the dining hall and across the wonderfully resourced indoor and outdoor areas. Pupils are respectful of the beautiful environment and value the huge investment in the high-quality resources. They report that, 'this school is special because we have so many lovely things'. Over £750,000 has been raised by the school to add to the high-quality range of resources on offer.
- Pupils are proud of their school and are thoughtful and kind to one another. They say that instances of bullying are very rare. They cannot recall many instances of unkind or prejudicial name-calling, but say that these would be tackled quickly once an adult knew.
- Pupils report that the many pupils who join the school during the school year are made welcome. Pupils soon learn to understand what school is about, how to learn and how to behave well and adopt the 'Ashbrow way'. Older pupils are good role models for younger pupils and for the new arrivals.
- Pupils' attendance has improved well since the previous inspection but remains below average. Leaders promote good attendance through celebrations and high-profile information across the school and in letters to parents. They now quickly identify families who are at risk of not sending their children to school. Leaders work closely with the families, social care, healthcare or local authority officers to help tackle barriers and change attitudes. As a result, although the proportion of pupils persistently absent remains above average, it too has fallen dramatically since the last inspection.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The progress pupils make from their often very low starting points on entry to school has improved. Pupils' current work, observations of learning, the school's data on pupils' progress and books kept from last year show that pupils make good progress in their learning over time. Pupils who have always attended Ashbrow make strong progress.
- In 2015, the progress pupils made from their different starting points by the end of Year 6 was close to that found nationally. It was above average for disadvantaged pupils in reading and writing and similar in mathematics. School information for 2016 for disadvantaged pupils shows a similar pattern in Year 6 with the strongest progress seen in writing. School data indicates that the progress disadvantaged pupils make in other year groups is generally similar to, or above, that of other pupils across subjects.
- The proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in their Year 1 phonics check has risen rapidly since the last inspection. In 2016, the difference between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally had diminished significantly. This is because of the systematic way phonics is now taught from Nursery and into other key stages.
- Inspection evidence and Year 6 pupils' work in books indicated at least average skills, knowledge and understanding, representing good progress from their low starting points. However, this was not reflected in the provisional 2016 test results. The proportion of Year 6 pupils who reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was below average. A number of pupils did not use their knowledge to think properly about a few unfamiliar questions and lost marks in mathematics. Writing was stronger and differences between their attainment and national averages had reduced well. The school is likely to meet the government's floor standards as a consequence of the progress pupils make.
- Displays, pupils' topic books and folders and teachers' assessments of learning show that the majority of pupils are making good progress in subjects such as science, geography, history and religious education. However, on occasions, similar work is set for all pupils and when this happens it does not challenge the most able sufficiently. Leaders have already prioritised the most able in their plans and are working with staff to reduce any remaining anomalies in classes.
- Pupils from the resource base with an education, health and care plan are fully integrated into the life of the school. Teachers work closely with their key staff to make sure that learning and support help them to make good progress. The leader of the resource base provides high-quality, regular challenge and support to staff. This ensures that pupils are on track to achieve their challenging targets and develop their speech, language and communication skills. Their achievements are slightly above those of other pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who do not have an education, health and care plan. The inclusion manager is already working with staff to improve matters.

Early years provision

Good

- When children join the early years, their skills and knowledge, particularly their communication and language skills, are often well below those typical for their age. Home visits before children arrive ensure that staff have a very good understanding of children's interests and needs. Parents report how they value these sessions as it gives them opportunities to tell staff about their child and get to know the staff.
- Leadership is good and staff respond by working successfully as a team. They waste no time in using information about children's current skills to develop interesting activities that entice them into learning and play, and to tackle any barriers children may face. This includes the many children who have little or no communication skills or understanding of routines, good behaviour or how to develop positive relationships with others.
- Provision indoors and out is exciting and all activities have a purpose and direction. There are exciting areas for the children to investigate and explore and resources are readily available to aid play. Every opportunity is taken to develop early literacy, numeracy, communication and language skills alongside other areas of learning. Good teaching, timely and perceptive questioning and interventions by staff help children to think about what they are doing and then extend their learning and development.
- Staff are highly effective in teaching children letters and the sounds they represent in a way that makes it interesting to learn. For example, a range of activities were set up to reinforce the letter of the day, 'P', in an interesting way, indoors and out: using pink paper, playing pirates, Postman Pat and having a party. Staff capitalised on children's attempts to write the sound on the white-board and then modelling the correct way.
- The I CAN provision for children with speech, language and communication difficulties is fully integrated within the early years. I CAN staff work seamlessly with school staff to ensure that all children are well supported and fully included in the activities on offer.
- Partnership with parents is strong. Early years staff work closely with parents to help them support their children's learning.
- Although the proportion of children gaining a good level of development remains below average, there has been a rapid rise in the proportion since the last inspection, moving from 39% in 2013 to 66% in summer 2016. Improvement is mirrored in most areas of learning. Reading and writing have improved, but at a slower rate. The actions that leaders are now taking are tackling this.
- The proportion of children entitled to early years pupil premium funding who gained a good level of development fell in 2016. However, the school's tracking data shows that this group of children had high needs and the progress from their very low starting points was good and similar to that of other children in the setting.
- Children's safety, welfare and well-being are high priority. All staff are well trained in policies and procedures, and practices are consistently strong. The school's speech and language therapist, educational psychologist as well as the range of agencies leaders work with ensure that children's complex needs are met or they and their families are well supported in times of great need.

- Relationships between staff and children are a strength and are the bedrock from which children grow in confidence and self-esteem. Children learn quickly the routines and expectations of staff through reinforcement and high expectations. The positive attitudes to learning and behaviour they acquire stand them in good stead as they move through the school. Consequently, they are effectively prepared for key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	107628
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10002110

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	431
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Doughall McCormick
Headteacher	Dora Plant
Telephone number	01484 452 128
Website	www.ashbrowschool.org.uk
Email address	office@ashbrowschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Ashbrow is a large, two-form entry primary school with 431 pupils on roll. The school has grown in size since the last inspection. There is part-time Nursery provision for 26 places each morning and each afternoon. Provision in Reception is full time.
- Around two thirds of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. Well over half are known to be entitled to the government's additional pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are identified by the school as requiring additional support is above average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities with an education, health and care plan is also above average. This is partly because the school has additionally resourced provision for pupils with speech, language and communication needs, commissioned by the local authority. There are currently four pupils in the provision and they are fully integrated into the life of the school. The local authority has recently consulted with the local community to decommission this provision. The outcome of consultation has yet to be determined.
- The school also hosts provision for up to 12 children from I CAN, a children's communication charity for children with speech, language and communication needs. All children are fully integrated into school with identified key workers and staff supporting them.
- A high number of pupils join or leave the school during their primary education. The mobility of pupils currently runs at around 33%. A significant proportion start at Ashbrow then return before the end of Year 6.
- The school runs its own breakfast club with around 150 pupils attending daily.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, the minimum standard expected for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2. Provisional information indicates that they are likely to do so in 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in classes across the school, including two jointly with the deputy headteacher. They also looked at records of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching across the school.
- They talked to pupils informally on outside play areas, in the dining hall and during classes. They also spoke formally to two groups of pupils on day two of the inspection.
- Inspectors sampled work in pupils' books in all classes across a range of subjects. They also reviewed pupils' books that had been kept from last year. These included English and mathematics books and topic books and folders that included foundation subjects.
- Meetings were held with six representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and a range of other school staff. They also met with two school improvement partners from the local authority.
- A wide range of documents was reviewed. These included information about the school's curriculum, policies and information regarding the safeguarding of pupils, governing body meeting minutes and the school's records of the progress individual pupils and groups of pupils are making across the school and in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors gained the views of 23 parents who completed Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. They also took account of the 11 parents who came to a meeting with inspectors on day two and seven parents who spoke to inspectors at the start of the school day.
- The views of 42 staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey were considered alongside the school's own recent survey of pupils' views.

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Soutar	Ofsted Inspector
Ella Besharati	Ofsted Inspector

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