

# Ashmole Primary School

Ashmole Street, London SW8 1NT

## Inspection dates

9–10 November 2016

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The leadership team, in under two years, has dramatically improved all aspects of the school.
- Leaders, sharing expertise with partner schools within the federation, have rapidly identified what has to be done. They act decisively to improve pupils' skills across the curriculum.
- The federation continues to provide wise support to Ashmole leaders. The school is well placed to sustain the outstanding quality of education it offers to its pupils.
- Governance is strong. Governors share the leaders' relentless drive for improvement.
- Leaders manage the quality of teaching extremely well, so that it is now consistently highly effective. Governors successfully hold leaders to account for this. As a result, pupils throughout the school make outstanding progress.
- Leaders at all levels closely check pupils' achievement throughout the school and provide tailored support for those who need it. All groups achieve extremely well, including the most able and those who might otherwise struggle.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able among them, is excellent. Their achievement is much higher than that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' outcomes are considerably above those of their peers nationally in a range of subjects across the curriculum.
- Teaching is extremely strong across the school and in all subjects, enabling pupils to develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding. The teaching of reading is a particular strength.
- The curriculum, both in the classroom and beyond, is rich. It raises pupils' aspirations and provides opportunities for individuals to excel in a range of skills.
- All adults share the drive to raise pupils' aspirations and provide them with extensive chances to take responsibility and to think for themselves. The school's values are shared by its whole community. Pupils leave Ashmole exceptionally well prepared to take their place in society as fully rounded citizens.
- Pupils' behaviour is second to none. They are eager to learn. They are kind, confident, articulate young people. They respect those from all backgrounds and heritages. The school keeps them safe.
- The Nursery and Reception Years provide children with a wonderful start to their schooling. They quickly learn new skills in a rich, stimulating environment. Their speaking skills develop extremely well.
- Children in the early years provision are prepared extremely well for the move to Year 1. When they arrive there, however, the classroom environment and activities provided for them are less rich than in the early years, making the transition into formal education a little too sudden.

## **Full report**

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

- Provide more stimulating resources and play equipment for pupils in Year 1 to support further their transition from the early years.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Leaders and governors have in a relatively short space of time dramatically improved all aspects of the school. In the first two terms of their leadership, pupils' achievement rose, so that it was no longer significantly below average. The rise continued even more sharply in the year 2015 to 2016. The outcomes of pupils throughout the school are now among the highest in the country.
- The leadership team, largely drawn from the federation and working in highly effective partnership with it, enabled leaders to identify quickly what improvements needed to be made. New clear systems for improving teaching and providing accurately tailored support for those who needed it quickly began to bear fruit. The continuing strong impact of leaders' actions indicates that the school is well placed to maintain its journey of improvement.
- Almost all staff who were at the school at the time of the previous inspection and who responded to the online survey of their views feel that the school is now much better. Parents, too, are aware of improvements. A typical comment was, 'I have been impressed with the improvements in both behaviour and teaching.'
- The local authority provides strong support in the school's upward journey. For example, it brokered the partnership with the federation that brought successful leaders into the school. This triggered the process of rapid improvement.
- Leaders and governors motivate staff extremely well, so that all willingly share in raising standards. Leaders provide helpful and detailed advice to teachers. They encourage staff to continue their professional development, with the result that staff are ready to take on additional responsibilities. All these measures improve teaching, so that it is now outstanding across all year groups and all subjects.
- Leaders have improved ways of checking how well pupils are learning. They collect a wide range of information about the outcomes of different groups, and use it to provide accurate and flexible support for pupils who need it. Such finely tuned support has improved the outcomes of many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The culture of high expectations, created by leaders and governors, has created a school where there are no barriers to pupils' success. This aspirational culture particularly benefits the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, enabling them to achieve at the level they are capable of.
- Leaders and governors spend additional government funding wisely. Their detailed and accurate understanding of pupils' progress enables them to provide highly effective support for disadvantaged pupils, so that their achievement is considerably above that of other pupils nationally. The most able disadvantaged pupils achieve particularly well.

- Leaders and governors make extremely good use of the additional funding for primary sports and physical education. Strong links with the nearby Oval cricket ground inspire pupils, both boys and girls, to develop an interest in the sport. Leaders are highly aware of the role sport plays in reducing obesity, and ensure that as many pupils as possible partake in a wide range of sporting activities. Leaders ensure that the benefits of the funding will continue by using external coaches to train class teachers in delivering high-quality sports teaching.
- The curriculum is successful in creating well-rounded resilient pupils, able to take full advantage of the next stage of schooling. They learn a wide range of subjects in depth, and this gives them an informed and enquiring attitude to learning. For example, pupils studied designs for the new £5 note, and they observed that most of the important people celebrated on the banknotes were men and that all were white. This inspired pupils to design their own banknotes, including such figures as Martin Luther King because, in the words of one pupil, 'he wanted equality between all people'.
- Through the curriculum pupils gain an excellent grounding in British values and what it means to grow up in modern Britain. For example, Year 6 pupils are encouraged in English to write about matters important to their own time, such as the implications of the murder of the member of parliament, Jo Cox.
- The curriculum beyond the classroom is exemplary in its focus on raising pupils' aspirations. It makes a huge contribution to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It results in pupils who are curious about the world and ready to take their place in the community. Leaders have ensured that pupils have opportunities to develop their musical skills, including participating in violin lessons in Years 1 and 2. The impact of this is that pupils' resilience has increased as they persevere in their learning and develop high-quality social skills through making music together.

## **Governance**

- Governors have benefited enormously from the external reviews of their work. Aided by support from partner schools within the federation, governors sharpened their procedures. As a result, there is now close scrutiny of all aspects of school life. They keep a close eye on how additional government funding is used. For example, governors hold the school to account for the achievement of all groups of pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, to ensure that they are achieving as well as possible.
- Governors ensure that pupils are kept safe because they are vigilant and well trained in safeguarding procedures, including the safe recruitment of staff and the prevention of extremist views and radicalisation. They ensure that the school promotes British values strongly, so that each member of the school respects the rights of others.
- Governors secure the highest quality of teaching by promoting the professional development of staff. They are relentless in their pursuit of excellence and do not rest on their laurels. They continually seek ways of making the school even better.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Scrupulous checks are carried out on all adults within the school and those who visit. The school's child protection arrangements are carried out rigorously. Staff are trained in safeguarding procedures, and the training is regularly updated. Children in the early years provision are safe. The dietary needs of the many children who eat lunch at the school are known and there are strict procedures to protect them from allergic reactions. Parents report that their children are safe, and pupils told inspectors that they feel safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because pupils in each year group and in all subjects make outstanding progress. Teachers routinely use their excellent subject knowledge to challenge pupils in their learning. For example, in one Year 3 science activity, pupils gained a sophisticated understanding of molecules, and how they behave differently as solids, liquids and gases. The teacher skilfully demonstrated these properties, asking pupils to represent molecules, huddled together in solids or dispersing as gases. Such techniques enabled pupils to learn quickly, and to be able to recall, when questioned, important scientific principles.
- Exceptional planning enables teachers to move pupils on quickly in their learning. The culture of high expectations particularly benefits the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. The most able excel, not just in English and mathematics, but also across the curriculum, for example by gaining high music grades.
- The teaching of reading is a particular strength. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to read at school and at home. Pupils' reading records are scrupulously checked by the school, resulting in strong partnership between school and home. Pupils of all abilities who read to inspectors showed through their fluent reading that they were able to handle challenging texts. Inspectors saw high-quality teaching of phonics. Phonics sessions were highly effective in enabling groups to make rapid progress in acquiring reading skills.
- Older pupils enjoy working with pupils in lower year groups. This helps the older pupils refine their learning and has helped create a culture of learning across the school community.
- Feedback, both written and oral, powerfully improves the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils absorb the feedback and this enables them to improve quickly.
- Additional adults are deployed extremely well to help those in danger of falling behind, and to provide flexible support to groups or individuals where needed. Consequently, progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those pupils who speak English as an additional language, is consistently good or better.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

### Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils are confident, articulate young people. They are encouraged to think for themselves and to think of others. For example, in one assembly pupils reflected on how their school rules were linked to such British values as the rule of law and individual liberty.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They told inspectors that they understand that bullying can take different forms, such as cyber bullying. They report that there is no bullying. Pupils know and follow the school's rules. They know to whom to turn if they have any worries. Pupils told inspectors they look out for one another and warn anyone that looks about to cause trouble that, in the words of one pupil, 'There are consequences.' As a result, the school is a safe and happy environment.
- A scrutiny of the school's records on safeguarding shows that pupils are kept very safe. For example, the school thinks ahead about all possible risks, both within the school and when taking pupils out on trips.
- Those who stay for breakfast club or the after-school care provision are extremely well looked after. A typical comment from one parent was, 'Breakfast club and after-school care club are staffed by very caring people.' Children receive healthy food and stimulating activities, with the opportunity to play with those of all ages.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are eager to learn. They conduct themselves in an orderly way. Playground activities are well supervised. Pupils pay close attention in lessons. They keep the classrooms neat and tidy. Pupils show, through their beautifully presented exercise books, how much pride they have in learning.
- Behaviour was good at the time of the previous inspection. It is now outstanding, because of highly effective actions taken by the school. For example, the 'good to be green' initiative, popular throughout the school, provides pupils with a clear structure, so that they understand what constitutes good behaviour and what does not. As a result, incidents of challenging behaviour are extremely rare, and pupils are hardly ever excluded.
- The school's system for dealing with attendance is increasingly effective. Overall attendance is improving and persistent absence is falling. No particular groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance. Attendance during the inspection was high. The school, in cooperation with the local authority, carefully examines all instances of extended absence, and this ensures that pupils are accounted for and safe.
- The school's strong promotion of its core values, such as tolerance and respect for others from all faiths and heritages, makes this a harmonious community school. A typical comment from one parent was, 'Ashmole has created a safe, caring and happy environment.'

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- At the time of the last inspection, and in the year before that, pupils' outcomes at the end of Years 2 and 6 were significantly below average. The current leaders rapidly made a considerable impact on pupils' outcomes. Within a year, pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 rose strongly to average. The Year 1 phonics screening check followed a similar pattern. The same pattern of improvement was evident in the proportions of children gaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year.
- The impact of leaders' actions has been even more marked in 2016. All members of the school share the leaders' culture of high expectations. Provisional outcomes indicate that pupils overall, and for different groups, make rapid progress from their starting points. This is evident in the proportions of pupils excelling by the end of Year 6 in the reading and mathematics tests. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check and those pupils reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception are also high. Writing skills are very well developed across the school.
- The school's information on the achievement of current pupils indicates that this very strong picture of pupils' outcomes is likely to continue. The quality of learning demonstrated by current pupils across the school is very high, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A particular focus of the inspection was on the learning of groups. Inspectors found that all groups do exceptionally well, and this is because the expectations of all the adults are high. Pupils believe in themselves, and this was clear from talking to them and to their parents. One parent summed up this ethos by commenting, 'The school gives every pupil the feeling that they are special.'
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is particularly strong. They outperform all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress is exceptionally strong. Inspectors talked to the most able among them and scrutinised their work. This showed that the most able disadvantaged pupils achieve extremely well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with the right amount of support they need, both in class and in small groups, and make at least good progress in comparison to other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly catch up and achieve extremely well. This is because the school provides them with a language-rich environment, encouraging them to learn a wide vocabulary and to join in with others.
- By the time they leave school, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of schooling. They have, in the words of one pupil, 'a good work ethic'. They are highly motivated to learn, and their work is very well presented, neat and largely free from errors.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- The Nursery and Reception Years are outstanding, and provide the best possible start for the children's schooling. Children learn exceptionally well in this secure environment, and make an exceptional start in acquiring social, language and number skills.
- The provision is led extremely well. Leaders at all levels understand the importance of this phase in enabling children to develop habits of learning that will stand them in good stead throughout school and beyond.
- Leaders in the early years have introduced new ways of working that have had a dramatic impact on the children's learning. For example, all adults now engage children in high-quality conversation, widening their vocabulary and encouraging them to speak confidently.
- By the time children leave the Reception Year, their achievement in all the areas of learning covered in the provision is extremely high. All groups achieve highly, including children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because their needs are identified quickly. The school works in highly effective partnership with such external agencies as speech therapists to ensure that the children achieve as well as they can.
- Disadvantaged children, including the most able among them, learn extremely well because a great deal is expected of them. This is also the case for the most able children, who receive stimulating activities that enable them to learn rapidly.
- The early years curriculum is exemplary. It is integrated successfully with the curriculum for pupils in the rest of the school. In this way, pupils higher up in the school build on what they have learned in the early years. For example, children in the Reception Year receive music lessons that skilfully prepare them for the more formal skills they will be learning in their violin lessons when they enter Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding, because all adults share in developing children's literacy and number skills. For example, children were learning about shapes during the inspection. They were taught their shapes through varied and enjoyable activities. One group fished up shapes from a water tank, using nets. Another group wound electronic 'elastic bands' round pegboards on computer tablets, experimenting with different shapes that could be made. The adults sang little jingles about the numbers of sides and corners to reinforce the children's learning through rhyme.
- Teaching is ambitious and expectations are as high as in the rest of the school. For example, children are shown carefully how to write cursive script, so that they quickly learn the handwriting skills they will be using higher up in the school. Children are expected to aim high when learning mathematical skills. Some could easily subtract eight from 12, demonstrating strong habits of learning.
- Children behave extremely well. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the early years provision. Adults are caring. Children are ready to share the resources and to take turns when using the equipment. Children are kept very safe. Adults all know each child and provide for their individual needs extremely well.



- Nursery lunches are taken in the classroom and promote excellent social skills. Adults encourage the children to serve one another as well as themselves. There is a strong focus on good manners. Lunches provide enjoyable opportunities for children to interact with adults and with one another. Reception children eat in the dining hall, and build on the good habits of politeness established in the Nursery.
- Parents told inspectors that their children are learning a great deal and that links with the school are strong. They find the adults approachable. A representative comment from one parent was, 'The quality of teaching embodies excellence as standard.'
- Transition from the early years into Year 1 is an area for development. Although children are ready academically to learn reading, writing and mathematics in Year 1, the transition is too sudden. A few parents told inspectors that they would like to see more play-based learning and creative work. Inspectors found that the Year 1 environment is sometimes too formal, with too few resources to enable pupils to learn through play.

## School details

Unique reference number	100556
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10019650

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Higgins
Headteacher	Christopher Toye (executive headteacher) Adam Hickman (head of school)
Telephone number	020 7735 2419
Website	<a href="http://www.ashmoleprimaryschool.org.uk">www.ashmoleprimaryschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:info@ashmoleprimaryschool.org.uk">info@ashmoleprimaryschool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2014

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Ashmole Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- The school joined the Wyvern Federation in January 2015, under its executive headteacher, a national leader of education. At the same time a new head of school took up their post. These changes followed the resignation of the previous headteacher who had been in post at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school has announced that, from 5 December 2016, it is forming a hard partnership with the schools within the federation and a centre for children with autism. A new joint governing body will be formed.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than average.

- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average. Pupils come from a wide range of heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The school manages the breakfast club and after-school care provision.
- Most children attend the Nursery full time for 30 hours per week. Reception children stay all day.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes throughout the school and observed pupils' learning in a range of subjects. Most classroom visits were jointly observed with school leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils, listened to them read and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors met two groups of pupils in key stage 2 to hear how they felt about the school. There were no responses to the Ofsted online survey of pupils' views.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, including those who hold responsibility for specific subjects.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body, together with five other governors.
- The lead inspector met a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents during the inspection. There were 63 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, with 19 comments. Inspectors also received a letter from a parent.
- Inspectors took into consideration 23 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents. These included the school improvement plan and reports from the local authority on the quality of the school's work.
- Inspectors considered a range of evidence on pupils' attainment and progress. They also examined safeguarding information and records relating to attendance, behaviour and welfare.

## Inspection team

Natalia Power, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jennie Bird	Ofsted Inspector

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