

Ashton Church of England Primary School

Roade Hill, Ashton, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN7 2JH

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- School leaders and governors do not have an accurate picture of the school's performance. They are not sufficiently rigorous when checking on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Senior and subject leaders do not deal with the school's weaknesses in a timely manner. Their expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Teaching is not good enough to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- In too many classes, teachers do not assess pupils' work accurately and, therefore, fail to set work at the appropriate level. This is particularly true for the disadvantaged and the most able pupils.
- Too few pupils are making good progress in key stage 1, particularly the most able pupils. Phonics is not taught consistently well.
- In key stage 2, pupils are not challenged often enough in some subjects, for example science. Pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their education in these subjects because they have not learned the necessary skills and knowledge.
- Teaching in mathematics and writing is not consistently strong. Some teachers lack the necessary subject knowledge to ensure that the pupils make good progress.
- The school does not ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make sufficient progress in writing and in developing their handwriting and presentation.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of reading is generally effective in key stage 2. Pupils develop good reading skills quickly and many read widely and often.
- Pupils behave well. They generally have positive attitudes to their work and are respectful towards each other and the adults who teach them.
- Pupils are cared for well and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.
- Pupils who join the school at times other than the usual entry point receive good support and settle quickly into school life.
- The early years provision is good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that senior leaders:
 - develop the role of subject leaders in reviewing their areas of responsibility and supporting improvements
 - check on the consistency of teaching and learning more rigorously
 - raise expectations of the progress that pupils can make, especially the most able and disadvantaged pupils
 - improve outcomes in all subjects, and particularly writing and phonics in key stage 1, by ensuring a systematic approach to the teaching of writing and by building more effectively on the pupils' prior learning in phonics
 - improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work
 - improve the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum so that, by the end of key stage 2, pupils' outcomes improve and the pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that all teachers and support staff use assessment effectively to plan work that challenges pupils of all abilities and backgrounds more consistently
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge of mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length for a variety of audiences.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of the school. They are not accurate enough in their analysis of pupils' performance and of the quality of teaching.
- Senior and subject leaders do not pay enough attention to the standard of work being achieved in all year groups. As a result, the progress that some groups of pupils make, including the disadvantaged and most able, is not as good as it should be.
- Senior leaders give subject leaders too little time and guidance about what they are expected to achieve when they check on the work of teachers and pupils. As a result, school leaders do not have a well-informed view of the school's strengths, or of areas that are in need of improvement.
- School leaders do not focus enough on the performance of the most able and disadvantaged pupils when reviewing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. They do not check closely enough on the impact of the additional support that these pupils receive, including that provided through the pupil premium funding. Consequently, successes are not identified, shared or built upon across the school.
- The actions of school leaders to improve teaching and learning are not followed through with sufficient regularity, understanding or rigour to sustain improvements. The management of the staff's performance and associated professional development does not make the impact required to improve the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have developed a safe and caring school community which places a great emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. The school's clear collective identity embraces pupils from a range of backgrounds and learning needs.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to learn across a range of subjects and through extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is enriched through visits and residential experiences. Notably, the school has made good progress in the introduction of the new computing curriculum.
- The school uses its physical education (PE) and sport premium effectively. Sports coaches work alongside teachers and demonstrate good practice. Pupils have a good understanding of how sports activities contribute to healthy living.
- Pupils understand what is meant by British values. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to consider the differences between cultures and religions. The pupils understand the importance of tolerance and respect towards people who hold different views. They gain an understanding of the general principles of democracy through an enthusiastic and active school council, for example.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. Most of the responses on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were positive. A substantial majority of the respondents would recommend the school to others. This view is echoed by the pupils. Parents rightly believe that their children are looked after well at the school and feel safe while there.
- The local authority has recently identified that the school requires additional support. It has introduced a well-targeted support plan that deploys external advisers to help the

school. It is too early to assess the impact of this support in securing any consistent improvements.

Governance of the school

- Although improving, the governors' knowledge of the school's performance is too generous. Governors' increasing levels of challenge for the school leaders have not resulted in rapid school improvement.
- Governors are highly committed to the school and bring a wide range of experience and expertise to their role. They play an active role in school life and are well known to parents and pupils. Governors are aware of how the school's performance compares to others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors are aware that improvements are needed at the school and are kept well informed of the support provided by the local authority. They visit the school regularly to gain valuable insight into the progress being made.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders, including governors, ensure that appropriate systems for safeguarding pupils are in place.
- The school's single central record of staff and visitor checks is kept effectively and meets requirements.
- Staff and governors have a clear understanding of safeguarding and have benefited from the training that has been delivered to support them. They understand their roles and the procedures that they must follow.
- Leaders respond promptly to concerns and ensure that there is early support in place for pupils needing additional help. Leaders work closely with external agencies to make sure that pupils are safe. When there are concerns, leaders meet regularly with parents to discuss their children's welfare and ways to support each family.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school. Not enough teaching is consistently good or better. As a result, not all groups of pupils make good progress in all year groups.
- The quality of pupils' work across the full range of subjects in key stage 2, particularly in science, is not consistently of a good standard. Teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the pupils to gain the necessary skills and understanding in these subjects.
- In key stage 1, the teaching of phonics is less effective, with widespread repetition of work. Activities do not build on pupils' prior knowledge and assessment is not used to tailor and to adapt work to meet pupils' needs.
- Teachers do not use their assessments of what pupils have learned effectively to ensure that the work that they set provides the right level of challenge. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.

- Some teachers' weak subject knowledge of mathematics means that pupils do not make consistently good progress. In particular, teachers do not plan lessons that develop pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- The quality of assessment is also variable. Too often, teachers fail to identify errors in pupils' work, which limits the progress that is made.
- Pupils are articulate and use language confidently to express their ideas and opinions in lessons. That confidence is not always reflected in their written work. Pupils do not develop consistently positive attitudes towards writing. This is because writing is not taught systematically across key stages 1 and 2 and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write at length.
- Teachers are skilled at providing sensitive, calm and thoughtful support to the pupils, which they do often, asking helpful questions. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, in particular, benefit from this caring approach.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are caring and respectful. Pupils enjoy their learning because they know that their efforts will be valued.
- Reading is taught effectively and pupils use language increasingly confidently to express their ideas and opinions. Pupils develop positive attitudes to reading and, in key stage 2, many pupils, particularly the most able, read widely and often.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils who join the school at different times during the school year. They are particularly effective in their work to support the pupils who have many gaps in their previous knowledge and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' social and emotional development is catered for extremely well. As a result, pupils enjoy school and quickly develop good relationships with other pupils and the adults who teach them. They become confident, happy learners.
- Parents say that the school provides a caring and nurturing environment. A high proportion of the parents who responded to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The quality of care, guidance and support, and the strong values that underpin the school's work ensure that the school provides highly effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- All of the parents who responded to Parent View said that their children are happy in school, well looked after and feel safe. Pupils also said that they feel safe in school and are regularly taught about different aspects of personal safety, including internet safety.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is typically calm and purposeful. Pupils told the inspector that there is hardly ever any disruption in lessons and this reflected the behaviour seen during the inspection.
- Pupils work hard in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. This is not always reflected in the quality of presentation in their books.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful towards each other and the adults who teach them.
- School leaders have been successful in improving attendance this year by making expectations clearer to parents and being more rigorous in challenging persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- By the end of key stage 2 in 2016, pupils' attainment in writing was below the national average and no pupils achieved greater depth. For too many pupils, this does not represent good progress. Furthermore, many pupils are capable of producing a higher standard of written work across a range of subjects than that seen in their books during this inspection.
- Pupils, particularly the most able, do not develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding to the depth expected, especially in key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, quickly enough. This lack of progress was reflected in the 2016 key stage 2 results, which showed that attainment was below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils passing the Year 1 national phonics check in 2016 was well below the national average. At the end of key stage 1 in 2016, overall attainment in reading was below the national average.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding do not make enough progress to close the gaps in learning between themselves and other pupils nationally. At the end key stage 1, these pupils are generally below the expected level for their age. Too few disadvantaged pupils make better than expected progress across key stage 2, and so the gap between them and pupils nationally is not closing rapidly.
- From broadly typical starting points, pupils generally make progress at the expected rate in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling as they move through the school. Overall attainment at the end of key stage 2 was slightly above the national average in 2016.
- Pupils joining the school during the course of each school year and who have complex learning needs receive very good support and settle quickly into school life. School leaders were able to provide many examples of these pupils achieving well. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates from their various starting points. Consequently, the additional funds to support this group of pupils are well used.

Early years provision

Good

- School leaders have a clearer understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years than in other parts of the school. They ensure that children make good progress from their broadly typical starting points. It is for this reason that the effectiveness of the early years provision has been judged to be better than the school's overall effectiveness.
- Outcomes at the end of the early years improved significantly in 2016, particularly in the areas of literacy and mathematics. Overall, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development was above that seen nationally. These results reflect improvements in the quality of teaching last year.
- The early years teacher has taken steps to ensure that children have a broad experience in all areas of learning. This is having a positive effect on the progress that children make.
- The early years teacher has ensured that all staff have high expectations of children based on accurate assessment of children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they join the school. The staff use regular and precise assessments to plan activities tailored to each pupil's needs.
- The staff are proficient in the teaching of phonics in the early years. Children leave well equipped to develop their early reading skills when they enter Year 1.
- The teacher plans an engaging range of activities indoors and outdoors to meet the learning needs of the children. For example, during the inspection, children were enjoying opportunities to photograph their newly created words and sentences in the outdoor classroom.
- The school has developed very good relationships with parents. In one example, a parent said that she felt she was in a genuine partnership with the school in her child's education.
- School staff visit children in their homes prior to the children starting at the school to get to know about their interests. This helps children to settle in quickly once they start school.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in the early years. Adults have clear plans in place and cater for these children well to ensure that their needs are met.

School details

Unique reference number	121957
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10031311

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Milner
Headteacher	Melanie Whitlock
Telephone number	01604 863189
Website	www.ashtonprimary.co.uk
Email address	head@ashton.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-size primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, for whom the school receives the pupil premium, is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal times is well below average.
- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, is broadly in line with the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed learning in all classes in the school. Some lessons were seen jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and a representative from the local authority. Two governors from the governing body were also interviewed.
- The lead inspector looked at a wide range of the school's documentation, including: the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan; information on pupils' attainment and progress; behaviour, bullying and attendance records; safeguarding procedures; reviews of the pupil premium and the sport premium; and minutes of the meetings held between the education adviser from the local authority and the headteacher.
- The lead inspector observed behaviour around the school, including at breaktimes and lunchtimes. He spoke formally to one group of pupils and informally with others around the school. He listened to pupils reading.
- The 26 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered. The lead inspector spoke with parents before school.
- The responses to pupil and staff questionnaires were considered.

Inspection team

Philip Garnham, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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