

Ash Cartwright and Kelsey Church of England Primary School

School Road, Ash, Canterbury, Kent CT3 2JD

Inspection dates

21–22 June 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has experienced a period of leadership turbulence since the previous inspection. Leaders have only recently begun to implement the actions that are needed to drive the school forward. As a result, many of these actions are not yet embedded across the school.
- The curriculum is not developed sufficiently to engage pupils and to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding across a wide range of subjects.
- Variability in the quality of teaching has resulted in inconsistent expectations and attainment across the school, especially in mathematics.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their skills in English and mathematics across the curriculum.
- Too often, work does not challenge pupils sufficiently, especially those who are the least able and the most able.
- Until very recently children in the early years did not have a wide enough range of learning opportunities. As a result, children have not made enough progress from their starting points.
- The attendance of some groups of pupils is not good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher has identified the correct priorities for the school. Her energy and expertise, together with effective support from the local authority, are driving the school forward. She has the support of most parents, who recognise the impact she is having.
- Governors now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are holding leaders to account in a way that supports school improvement.
- Behaviour across the school is good. Pupils are courteous and kind. They are well cared for, safe and happy.
- The teaching of phonics is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement a rich and robust wider curriculum which offers all pupils the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills that will prepare them well for the next stage of their education.
- Raise expectations, particularly for the least and most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, so that all pupils experience a consistent level of challenge that supports and accelerates progress across the curriculum.
- Raise standards in mathematics across the school, by:
 - making sure that teachers plan appropriately sequenced work that meets the needs of all pupils, especially the least and most able
 - ensuring that teachers' subject knowledge is consistently strong across the school so that pupils' misconceptions can be systematically identified and their understanding developed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The interim headteacher has made important adjustments to the school since her arrival in January 2017. Changes to staffing and the development of teaching and middle leadership are starting to have an impact so that governors and parents can see the improvements that have been made. Nevertheless, leaders and governors acknowledge that there is more to be done to ensure that the school provides a consistently good education for all its pupils.
- The headteacher has worked effectively with the local authority and the expertise provided by the leadership from her own school to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Together, they are improving teaching through training and coaching. However, there has not been enough time to enable this to secure consistently good teaching.
- The skills of middle leaders are developing, yet their impact is limited. Not all middle leaders have done enough to ensure that their subject is taught effectively across the school. Many initiatives are at early stages and have not been consistently embedded.
- Performance management targets for leaders are not linked closely enough to school plans to drive improvement.
- The curriculum is not sufficiently well developed to excite and extend pupils. It lacks the richness and depth that give pupils scope to develop sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding in science, humanities and the arts. Pupils told inspectors that they would like more opportunities to investigate and experiment in science and to be creative in art.
- Pupils do not have enough occasions to extend and apply their mathematical and writing skills across the curriculum. This means that pupils do not routinely apply their mathematical skills to meaningful problems, or write in depth and at length for a range of purposes.
- While the taught curriculum lacks depth and breadth, it is enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and clubs. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy choir, cricket, netball, French and dance clubs.
- The inclusion leader has made important changes to the provision to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She has ensured that plans include well-focused appropriate targets and that additional funding is used more effectively. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- The pupil premium is now spent effectively to support the needs of most disadvantaged pupils, who are making similar progress to their peers from their starting points. However, there is not sufficient attention on the most able disadvantaged to ensure that their progress is maintained, particularly in writing.
- The additional sports funding has been appropriately used. Provision has been improved so that there is a greater variety, quality and uptake of activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their developing

understanding of British values are promoted well through regular assemblies which reflect the values of the school and involve community partners. For example, pupils described a recent assembly about the rule of law which included a visit from a policeman. During the inspection, the local vicar helped develop understanding of the school value of forgiveness through an assembly about the Lord's Prayer.

- The local authority has provided extensive support and challenge for the school that have already helped secure improvements to teaching and learning. Its support has ensured that strong leadership is in place to enable the school to improve while governors have recruited a substantive headteacher, who is already involved in a process of supported handover.

Governance of the school

- Governors know their school well. An effective programme of review and training has supported them in developing a strategic overview and their ability to use a range of information to hold leaders to account. They are ambitious for the school and have ensured that they have the right skills to help to drive it forward.
- The governing body knows that the right leadership structure is a vital component of the drive for improvement. Governors have successfully recruited a substantive headteacher for September, and have wisely started the induction and handover process already so that no time or momentum will be lost.
- Governors have clear and effective oversight of their statutory duties. The safeguarding governor checks that policies and procedures are fit for purpose and followed in detail. Governors show due diligence in ensuring that finances, including the pupil premium grant, are being spent wisely.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All required checks are in place to help keep pupils safe. A strong culture of keeping pupils safe in school is in place. All staff takes their roles and responsibilities seriously and know what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. Efficient record-keeping ensures that relevant information is recorded and followed up as necessary with other agencies.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. During the inspection, the weather for sports day was especially hot. Pupils were reminded of the need to wear hats, apply cream and drink plenty of water, which was readily available. Pupils take part in regular e-safety lessons and know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Governors have completed a safeguarding audit and identified some areas which, although adequate, could be further improved to ensure that children are as safe as is possible.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school and across subjects mean that some pupils are making slower progress than they should be.
- Lessons are not sufficiently challenging for pupils, particularly the most and least able. This is because teachers do not consider what pupils can already do and match tasks well enough to this. This means lessons are often too easy and do not challenge pupils or extend their thinking.
- Across the school, teachers are implementing an approach to mathematics that requires pupils to develop their fluency with number and calculation. It also incorporates some problem-solving and mathematical reasoning. However, work is not planned in a way which develops sequences of learning and systematically builds on skills. Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently strong enough, which means that sometimes pupils' misconceptions are not picked up and addressed effectively. As a result, some pupils are not making enough progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn how to work scientifically. Teachers rarely have the opportunity to teach skills in art and geography.
- Presentation of work and handwriting is not of a high quality, especially in science and topic books.
- Pupils' books show that writing skills have developed across the school, particularly in punctuation and grammatical sentence construction. This has been a curriculum focus and is evident in lessons. For example, in a Year 6 poetry lesson pupils writing about the blitz generated a simile, 'The planes were buzzing like bees.' After some discussion about the effectiveness of this, it was redrafted to read, 'The planes were buzzing like a vicious swarm of bees.'
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy opportunities to develop their understanding of stories through acting them out. Recently, pupils in Year 2 acted out the story of 'Pumpkin soup' in groups. This helped them to remember and understand the sequence of events when planning their own version of the story.
- The teaching of phonics is regular and effective. Teachers use actions which help pupils to link letters and sounds together. They compare words such as 'wasp' and 'squad' to explore the different ways letters can make sounds.
- Pupils who read to inspectors were avid readers, reading regularly at both home and school. Pupils read widely and with accuracy, enjoyment and fluency.
- Teaching assistants make valuable contributions to pupils' learning. They enable pupils to succeed by supporting them effectively and often extend work that is too easy through effective questioning.
- Some specialist teaching is supporting the development of skills in physical education and music well. During the inspection, Year 4 pupils were enjoying a music lesson led by a specialist music teacher. All pupils could play notes on their clarinets and notate their own compositions. In this way, their knowledge and skill were developed effectively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe at school and are confident that any worries or concerns will be listened to and acted upon. They told inspectors, 'Teachers are kind to us: if we feel sad we can tell them', and 'they really understand us'.
- Pupils feel involved in the life of the school and have a clear understanding of the school's values. Recently, pupils have been involved in selecting new school values. Pupils explained how they decided to keep the previous value of forgiveness, 'because we think it is important'.
- The family liaison officer builds strong relationships with families which help ensure that any needs are quickly identified and appropriate referrals to other support agencies can be made. She has put systems in place to help parents to understand the importance of punctuality and regular school attendance. However, while attendance is improving, there are still groups of pupils whose attendance at school is not yet regular enough.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils are attentive and keen to learn. They work well together and listen to each other. On the few occasions where pupils find it difficult to behave appropriately they are supported well by highly skilled staff.
- On the playground and in the dining hall, pupils enjoy social time by chatting and playing together well. Outside, adults and Year 6 pupils support younger pupils effectively through organising ball games, which are popular and enjoyable.
- At the breakfast club, pupils of all ages play well together. Staff ensure that plenty of food is available and encourage pupils to develop independence skills such as buttering their own toast. Pupils enjoy the breakfast - crumpets are a favourite - and the range of games and activities provided.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of current pupils in writing and mathematics is variable. Progress indicated by the school's tracking information does not match that seen in books. However, pupils in Years 1 and 5 are achieving better than those in other year groups. Recent improvements in teaching have led to acceleration in progress. However, for some pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2, teaching has not enabled them to achieve well over time, particularly for the most able, who are not challenged with demanding enough tasks.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are not making enough progress to reach higher standards. In 2016, the proportions of pupils exceeding

expectations for their age were below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2. Mathematics is not planned or taught well enough to help pupils to make good progress.

- Pupils are not developing their skills widely enough in subjects such as science, geography, design and art. This is because the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for them to do so.
- In 2016, disadvantaged pupils attained levels below those expected nationally and made less progress than their peers. However, most current disadvantaged pupils are making better progress and differences in their progress compared to other pupils are diminishing. The pupil premium grant is being used effectively to support their needs. However, provision for the most able disadvantaged pupils does not support good progress in writing, in line with a lack of challenge for all most able pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress because of recent improvements to the support that they receive. However, it is too soon for these improvements to have increased their attainment and diminish the difference between their achievement and that of their peers.
- For the past two years, more pupils than the national average have met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. Phonics is taught effectively.
- Current pupils are attaining well in reading. Pupils read widely and have a good understanding of a range of texts.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- In the current Reception Year, children are not making enough progress from their starting points. Not enough children are on track to reach a good level of development that will prepare them well for Year 1.
- Until recently, Reception Year learning journals did not contain enough observations of the children across a wide enough range of activities to support staff in planning for the next steps in pupils' learning.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Some adults do not interact with the children in a way that enriches their language and develops their thinking. However, some teaching meets children's needs well. For example, a group in the Nursery Year were using play dough. The adult helped them to focus on the different patterns made by the rollers and to develop mathematical thinking by asking, 'If I chop this in half, how many bits will I have?' As the children explored, they chatted happily about friendships and family outings.
- The environment provides a wealth of learning opportunities and areas, both inside and out. Children enjoy digging and making 'sloppy' mud in the mud kitchen and building with a range of materials. However, learning is not supported well because insufficient resources to prompt children's interests are available.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by highly skilled staff. For example, a member of staff used sign language to support a child as the teacher read a story.

- Adults know what to do to keep children safe in the early years. During the inspection, there was a sudden clap of thunder. Adults quickly and calmly moved children inside, reassuring those who had been frightened and engaging the children in a familiar and reassuring song.
- Parent comments are included in the Nursery learning journals to capture home learning. Parents appreciate the caring atmosphere provided in the early years. Comments made to inspectors are typified by the parent who said, 'He has learned so much and his confidence has grown tremendously since being here'.

School details

Unique reference number	118745
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10032862

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicky Loveless
Headteacher	Donna Battersea
Telephone number	01304 812539
Website	www.ashckschool.org
Email address	dbattersea@ashckschool.org
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a period of leadership instability. The school is currently led by an interim headteacher. A substantive headteacher has been appointed and will start in September.
- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school. Children start at the Nursery from two years old.
- The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are similar to those found nationally. Few pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The school has received extensive support from the local authority and a Kent leader of

education, who is headteacher at the current interim headteacher's school.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes, spoke to pupils, heard them read and looked at work in their exercise books. Several observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in and around school, before school in breakfast club, on the playground and in the dining hall.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, a group of pupils, members of the governing body, the Kent leader of education and two representatives of the local authority.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's information about pupils' achievement, the school's evaluation of their work, plans for school improvement and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground and considered 75 responses, and 28 free-text responses, to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took into account 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Wibroe	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Baxter	Ofsted Inspector

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