

Ashingdon Primary Academy

Fambridge Road, Ashingdon, Rochford, Essex SS4 3LN

Inspection dates

29–30 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	Requires improvement
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

- Leaders and managers have an over-generous view of the performance of the school.
- School leaders do not have a strategic view of the good progress pupils should make from their starting points in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, the progress pupils make in key stage 2 has been average or below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The good pupil outcomes achieved at the end of key stage 1 are not sustained in lower key stage 2. This is because the quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across year groups and subjects.
- Boys do not make as much progress in writing as they should.
- Pupils' attendance has been in slow decline over three years and is currently below the national average.
- Teachers do not use their assessment information well enough to alter their plans and ensure that individual pupils' needs are precisely met.
- Middle leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching is not rigorous. They do not focus well enough on the progress pupils are making across the curriculum.
- Adults do not insist on the highest standard of presentation and handwriting, which detracts from the quality of work in pupils' books.

The school has the following strengths

- Children start school well in Reception. They are well cared for and learn in a stimulating and interesting environment.
- New governors are dedicated to improving the school. They visit frequently to check the information they receive.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and supportive of one another. They want to learn and succeed.
- Pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has been above the national average since the previous inspection.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - leaders having a precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, with a clear plan for addressing areas of improvement
 - leaders having a clear strategic overview of the progress pupils should make from their starting points
 - equipping middle leaders with the strategies to effectively monitor and improve the quality of the provision in their subject area
 - ensuring that pupils receive a well-planned curriculum so they acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in a wide range of subjects
 - raising pupils' attendance so that it is consistently in line with or above the national average and no group is disadvantaged by poor attendance.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure that teachers use assessment information accurately to plan learning that meets the needs of all pupils in their class
 - adults routinely insisting upon, and modelling, the best presentation and handwriting, so pupils demonstrate consistent pride in their work.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - accelerating the progress that pupils make from their starting points in lower key stage 2, particularly in mathematics
 - ensuring that more pupils reach the higher standard in mathematics and reading and, therefore, make good progress from their starting points
 - ensuring that boys make better progress in writing.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have not maintained the consistently strong quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Pupils do not make good progress across key stage 2.
- The new headteacher currently has an over-generous view of the school's performance. Self-evaluation lacks rigour and is too positive. Senior leaders do not have a strategic view of the progress pupils should make from their starting points in reading, writing or mathematics. As a result, school improvement plans are not precisely focused on the correct priorities.
- Middle leaders have not received sufficient training and opportunities to lead and monitor their subject areas well. Consequently, the progress that pupils make varies too much. The quality of provision in subjects such as history and geography, together with science for the younger pupils, is not good enough for pupils to show their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Performance management targets are not robust enough to hold teachers fully to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Some staff have the same or similar targets irrespective of length of service or experience.
- The headteacher has implemented a large number of changes since taking over the leadership of the school, some of which have been useful and beneficial for pupils. However, the monitoring of the impact these activities have on the progress pupils make has not been rigorous. Consequently, the progress of the most able pupils in lower key stage 2 remains slow.
- There have been a number of changes to the leadership team since the last inspection and some leaders are very new to their role. For example, this term, the recently appointed deputy headteacher has taken on responsibility for the analysis of pupils' achievement information. It is too early to assess the impact of this work.
- Leaders have not planned the curriculum as well as possible to develop all pupils' fascination for learning. In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils do not regularly receive stimulating and interesting work that meets their needs. Pupils state that they do not regularly learn about subjects such as geography. Their 'theme' books demonstrate that their view is accurate.
- Leaders are making progressively better use of pupil premium funding. Until recently, up to 30% of the additional funding was not allocated. New leaders are correctly reviewing and updating these plans to ensure that this is no longer the case.
- The current leadership of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. All necessary paperwork and tracking of individual pupils' progress is in place. Through case studies, leaders are able to demonstrate that pupils who have particular learning needs make good progress. Additional funds are appropriately used.

- Leaders ensure that the additional funds for physical education and sport they receive

are used effectively, so that pupils benefit from a varied selection of sports and extra-curricular activities. Many parents agreed that this aspect had altered for the better during this academic year. A parent commented, 'It's nice to see such a positive attitude to extra-curricular activities, especially sport, from the new headteacher this year.'

- The school is providing well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding of British values. In an assembly seen, pupils sang with enthusiasm, and relished showing their parents the work they had produced in class. Displays around the school demonstrate that pupils reflect well on their learning. They have an age-appropriate understanding of democracy, through voting for members of the school council.

Governance of the school

- The new governing body is increasingly effective. Since the previous inspection, most governors are new, including the chair of governors. The multi-academy trust supports governors well in appropriately holding the headteacher to account.
- Governors visit the school to check that pupils are safe and well looked after. Governors have the required skills to carry out their clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Minutes of governing body meetings demonstrate that governors ask increasingly challenging questions of the headteacher about pupils' progress. The impact of this challenge is yet to be seen in accelerating the progress pupils actually make.
- The school's website was not up to date at the start of the inspection. Some areas were easily rectified over the course of the inspection. The information provided about the effective spending of the pupil premium was not as effectively documented as the practice seen in school.
- The multi-academy trust offers appropriate support and challenge to school leaders and governors. Representatives of the trust recognise that the school is currently going through a number of leadership changes and is providing increasingly rigorous and appropriate support for leaders and governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory safeguarding requirements are currently in place. Staff are well trained and receive updates regularly from the headteacher, who is responsible for this area of work.
- Governors ensure that all the necessary checks are completed when new members of staff are recruited. These records are kept in suitable order and are regularly reviewed.
- Child protection records are kept appropriately and demonstrate that leaders follow through any concerns to ensure that pupils at risk are cared for well.
- Pupils told inspectors that they were very happy and felt safe in their school. They know whom to speak to if they have concerns and are confident that they would be

listened to.

- Parents who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, have mixed views about how well leaders deal with bullying issues. Pupils told inspectors that although bullying does happen occasionally at school, adults are quick to respond and deal effectively with situations.
- Many pupils spoken with recognise the distress different forms of bullying can have on others. However, some pupils are not able to explain what bullying is well enough for their age. Pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to explore issues, such as name-calling and use of derogatory language, in their lessons, so they gain a more mature understanding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across year groups and across subjects. Staff do not use information from pupils’ assessed work as well as they should at the beginning of a topic. They do not alter their plans or sequence of lessons well enough so that learning activities meet the needs of differing pupils in the class. For example, teachers do not provide the most able pupils with sufficient opportunities or time to extend and practise their skills with sufficient depth.
- In lower key stage 2, there is less evidence of consistency in the quality of work pupils produce across the curriculum. This is because teachers do not routinely insist on the very best presentation and effort, and pupils’ handwriting skills are not as well developed. The progress pupils make starts to slow in lower key stage 2. This remains the case this year again for boys in writing.
- Although adults follow the school’s chosen approach to marking and feedback, the quality of feedback teachers provide varies. Where teachers intervene and provide precise direction, pupils respond quickly and improve their skills. This practice is not consistent across subjects. In many books, pupils remain uncertain how to improve their work further because they receive unclear advice. They often repeat mistakes or do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- In Year 2, most-able pupils receive the challenge they need to excel. For example, in one English lesson, these pupils were able to explain their knowledge and understanding with confidence and enthusiasm. Teachers provide activities and resources which help most-able pupils to think and work hard, so they can achieve the standards of which they are capable in key stage 1.
- In subjects such as science and design technology in key stage 1, adults often provide pupils with learning that is exciting and develops their skills well. In Year 1, for example, pupils were adeptly using papier-mâché to construct their designs of 1960s’ sweets. They were all delighted with their results.
- However, too often in key stage 2, adults provide pupils with the same worksheets or activity, irrespective of pupils’ abilities in subjects such as history or science. Consequently, for the most able pupils, and boys in particular, the curriculum is, at times, too narrow and they become uninterested.
- The teaching of phonics is well organised and many pupils receive their lessons in small groups with the class teacher. Lessons proceed briskly and regularly. Results in the

recent phonic screening check remain high. However, when listening to pupils read, inspectors found that some younger pupils are not blending their sounds well enough so they can read sentences with confidence and increasing skill.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Over the last three years, pupils' attendance overall has been in slow decline and is currently below the national average. Attendance for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was lower, and their persistent absence was in the highest 10% nationally in 2016. This has not changed over this current academic year and did not feature in any plans for improvement.
- The attendance of the small number of disadvantaged pupils is consistently in line with national averages.
- Many pupils work hard in lessons, even when the activities are less than stimulating. However, others become bored and uninterested. Consequently, pupils' good and positive attitudes to their learning are not developed well enough.
- Over one half of the school community completed the pupil questionnaire during the inspection. Their views were mixed. Most respondents agreed that teachers encourage them to be friendly and to treat others with respect. However, a minority of pupils considered that they were not challenged well enough in lessons. Inspection findings agree with these views.
- School leaders consider pupils' well-being carefully and thoughtfully. Leaders are implementing a whole-school approach to developing perseverance in learning and a positive approach to learning. This is proving successful, even though it is in the early stages.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are generally polite and courteous and respond swiftly to instructions and the well-established routines.
- All staff who responded to the online questionnaire agreed that pupils were well behaved at school and that staff manage behaviour consistently and well. Evidence from the school's behaviour and racist incident records supports this view.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They respond to adults' requests swiftly. Pupils are encouraged to behave well and have good relations with each other.
- At less structured times, such as breaktimes and lunchtimes, friendship and fun are evident. Pupils are proud of eating on the 'posh' table and many enjoyed the films shown regularly on Friday lunchtime.
- Some parents expressed concerns about the changes in leaders' expectations of behaviour this year. However, inspectors found that leaders are ensuring that pupils

feel valued and good behaviour is celebrated.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Children start in Reception with skills and abilities that are mostly typical for their age. The proportion of children who leave Reception having reached a good level of development has been above the national average for the previous three years. Many children attain well and are prepared appropriately for Year 1.
- In 2015, pupils' progress in mathematics was significantly below the national average for most groups of pupils, and in 2016 pupils' progress was average. Inspection evidence from pupils' mathematics workbooks shows that groups of pupils, such as the most able, the disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making improved, but inconsistent, progress in mathematics across key stage 2.
- The school's assessment information demonstrates that the proportion of pupils who are expected to reach the expected standard in mathematics in Year 6 is set to rise this academic year. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was below the national average. Inspection evidence demonstrates that the most able pupils do not receive enough challenge in lower key stage 2 so they can excel.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 has continued to be a strength of the school. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who left Year 2 achieving the required standard in these subjects was above that found nationally. However, in 2016, boys did not make as much progress from their starting points in writing and mathematics.
- The small numbers of disadvantaged pupils make average progress from their starting points. Often these pupils are not reaching the expected standard by the end of key stages. This is because adults' use of assessment is not precise enough so that their progress can be accelerated.
- Individual pupils who have specific special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for well. They make good progress both personally and academically.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016 was broadly in line with the national average. Girls achieved better than boys. This pattern has continued again this academic year.
- Pupils' achievement across the curriculum varies. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve varies in subjects such as science, geography and history. Most-able pupils, particularly in lower key stage 2, do not always have enough opportunities to apply their subject skills in a range of different ways so they can excel. When the pupils do have the opportunity, they relish the challenge provided.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start well at Ashingdon Primary Academy. Over the previous three years, the proportion of children who have left Reception with a good level of development has been above national averages. There is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls in reading and mathematics. This remains the case for this year. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is good and is having a positive impact on the progress children make. Through careful and regular monitoring of children's progress, leaders are using the assessment information well to plan learning activities that are interesting and cover all areas of the early years curriculum.
- Parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, recognise and appreciate the good provision that their children experience in Reception. One parent summed up the views of many: 'Foundation stage teachers and staff make learning fun and interesting, using a variety of resources and equipment. Adults are approachable.'
- Children behave well in Reception. They know, and follow, the routines and expectations very well. They take their responsibilities for tidying away resources sensibly and seriously. Children persevere with activities so they develop their skills well. For example, children created friendship medallions for each other and skilfully wrote their sentence praising qualities in their friends.
- Although some of the outside environment is old and in the process of being updated, children and adults use the space well to develop children's physical skills, for example, by using the bicycles available. During the inspection, children were deciding on the various sea animals they knew and using chalk to write about and draw these creatures on the concrete floor. Children demonstrated a wealth of prior knowledge and used their sounds well to write unfamiliar words.
- During playtimes and lunchtimes, children are confident to speak with adults and explain their enjoyment of their learning. In lessons, during adult-led times, children participate enthusiastically, giving their views and opinions easily and confidently.

School details

Unique reference number	137378
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10031460

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	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Trott
Headteacher	Sue Lesser
Telephone number	01702202857
Website	www.ashingdonprimaryacademy.org
Email address	contactus@ashingdonprimaryacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	27–28 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the barriers for disadvantaged pupils and the full allocation of additional funds to meet their needs. Nor does it comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish in this respect.
- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The school is a sponsor-led academy. The sponsor is Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- All pupils have English as their first language and the proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is significantly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education,

health and care plan, is below national averages.

- The school has significantly fewer pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for pupil premium than found nationally.
- The headteacher has changed since the previous inspection report. The current headteacher took up post in September 2016.
- The school meets the government's current national floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included learning walks and observing learning in all classes throughout the school day, some of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils, scrutinised books and evaluated the school's assessment information to take account of the progress pupils make over time. The views of pupils were also considered through the 112 responses to their online questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body (including the chair of governors), and senior representatives of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including information regarding safeguarding. They scrutinised leaders' records for the recruitment of staff. The arrangements for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were also considered.
- The inspectors spoke informally with some parents to gather their views. Parents' views were considered from the 62 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, together with 40 comments provided on the free-text service, and a letter sent directly to inspectors.
- The inspectors spoke to staff informally and took account of eight views in the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Maher	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Hughes	Ofsted Inspector

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2017