

Ashgrove School

116 Widmore Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 3BE

Inspection dates

23–25 January 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders do not monitor carefully the quality of teaching and learning, which is inconsistent across the school.
- Leaders have not addressed with any rigour the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. With no governing body, the headteacher is not held to account for the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders do not have plans in place for how to improve the school further. There is a lack of vision as leaders do not feel the need to develop the school.
- Leaders do not have an overview of the progress pupils make in all their subjects. They do not track pupils' progress sharply enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress.
- Teachers do not tailor work to the individual needs of pupils. Activities, particularly for younger pupils, often do not provide enough challenge and can be repetitive.
- Children's starting points in the early years are not assessed promptly. Limited resources outside do not provide children with a stimulating outdoors environment.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are safe and happy. Leaders provide pupils with a well-rounded education and there are strong relationships between staff and pupils.
- Pupils respond well to leaders' high expectations of behaviour and conduct. Pupils are keen to do well and they have positive attitudes to their learning.
- The rich curriculum ensures that pupils have the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6 are good. The majority of pupils gain places at local selective schools.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - closely monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that standards are consistently good across the school
 - establishing a governing body or equivalent to challenge and support the headteacher
 - tracking pupils' progress more effectively so that leaders have a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing in all subjects across the school
 - developing plans to improve the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - assessing pupils' starting points accurately and using these to track pupils' progress
 - planning lessons that consistently account for pupils' prior learning and abilities
 - ensuring that time in lessons is used productively and that activities are purposeful.
- Improve the early years provision by:
 - assessing and recording children's starting points accurately and using this information to plan activities that will move children's learning on more quickly
 - developing the outdoors provision to enhance children's learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders do not have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have no definite plans to develop the school further as they do not recognise that the school requires improvement.
- Leaders do not ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is good across the school. They have an awareness of the standard of teaching through informal monitoring but leaders do not rigorously hold teachers to account.
- Investment in staff development is a low priority for the school. Consequently, teachers do not have enough opportunities to develop their professional skills.
- Leaders do not track pupils' progress carefully across all year groups and subjects. They do not ensure that teachers use assessment information to plan suitably challenging activities. As a result, teachers do not always adapt work to meet the individual needs of pupils and progress is not consistently good across all year groups.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher is well respected within the school community. She sees the potential in every pupil and takes pride in giving pupils a safe and happy learning environment. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher take an active role in daily school life as full-time class teachers.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Lessons in music, French, art, science and computing are balanced with a strong focus on English and mathematics. Sports are an important part of the school, particularly for older pupils who use the nearby cricket club facilities. Pupils enjoy the variety of extra-curricular activities and themed days such as Victorian day. More school trips would further enhance pupils' learning.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils learn about and discuss different moral issues in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and have a good understanding of British values. The school has established links with a local church where pupils perform their Christmas carol concert and show off their music skills at the annual Bromley Music Festival. The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and religions through the curriculum.
- Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and ensure that teachers uphold these expectations in the classroom.

Governance

- The headteacher is also the proprietor of the school. There is no governing body.
- The headteacher ensures that policies are kept up to date and that the school meets statutory requirements. However, the headteacher is unable to fulfil the governance role well due to her other commitments in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff complete regular safeguarding training and are fully aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Staff follow school procedures if they have any concerns about pupils. Leaders make referrals to relevant external agencies as necessary. They are persistent about flagging up any concerns to ensure that pupils and families get the support they need.
- The procedures to ensure the suitability of staff meet requirements. There were some aspects of record-keeping in relation to employee checks that were remedied during the inspection.
- All parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire and/or spoke to inspectors said their children felt safe at school and are well looked after.
- The school's safeguarding policy, which has regard to the latest national statutory guidance, is available on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Teaching is less effective in key stage 1 than in key stage 2.
- Teachers do not plan lessons consistently well to meet the individual needs and abilities of pupils. In some lessons, especially key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, pupils, including the most able, are not sufficiently challenged by their work.
- The assessment system is not sharp enough to track pupils' progress closely. Teachers do not typically use assessment information to review pupils' progress. Pupils at risk of underachievement are not identified quickly enough as a result.
- Teachers do not always use time in lessons productively. Pupils often complete work quickly and have to wait for the next task. At times, pupils repeat activities unnecessarily and some tasks are not purposeful.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects. As the school is small, staff teach their subject specialisms across year groups. Consequently, they know the pupils well and share information about pupils' progress with other teachers.
- Teaching is most effective in upper key stage 2 where pupils concentrate on secondary school entrance examinations. Staff prepare pupils well and ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers use skilful questioning to gauge pupils' understanding. They tackle misconceptions well and use a variety of methods and resources to help pupils make progress.
- Teachers provide effective support for pupils who are struggling in literacy and numeracy. Additional sessions and one-to-one teaching helps pupils to improve their skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are highly motivated and keen to do well at school. Pupils are aspirational for their futures.
- Generally pupils are confident and articulate. Older pupils in particular demonstrate good presentation skills and discuss issues maturely.
- Pupils are safe at school and feel well cared for by staff. They know about safety procedures such as fire drills and playing sensibly in the playground. Pupils also learn about staying safe on the roads and on public transport. In Year 6, all pupils undertake first-aid lessons which teach them valuable and useful skills.
- Bullying is rare but pupils are knowledgeable about the different kinds of bullying. They feel confident that teachers will help them resolve any problems.
- Pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other, regardless of different faiths, religions and backgrounds. They support each other and there is a strong sense of community within the school.
- Year 6 pupils happily take on responsibilities as 'housemartins' for the school. They take turns to carry out jobs, such as cloakroom monitor. School leaders acknowledge that pupils would benefit from further opportunities to develop their leadership skills.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons. They are polite and courteous to adults and each other. At break and lunch times, pupils play together well. As one pupil said: 'The school's small so we know everyone and we all get on well.'
- Pupils know exactly how they are expected to behave and understand the importance of the school rules. The school is a calm and orderly environment.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They take pride in their school and look smart in their uniforms.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is not consistently strong across all year groups and subjects. Pupils in upper key stage 2 make better progress than in the rest of the school. This reflects the school's emphasis on preparing pupils for entrance examinations.
- Work in pupils' books shows that staff do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able pupils in key stage 1. Pupils are not doing as well as they should be.
- While pupils have opportunities to develop their literacy across the curriculum, writing skills are not always well developed because of low expectations. Spelling errors are not

consistently addressed in subjects other than English, for example.

- By the end of Year 6, most pupils gain places at local selective schools. Some pupils win scholarships in, for example, arts, music and sport. This is the main aim of the school and, in this respect, it is successful.
- Pupils read widely and regularly. Phonics is taught effectively despite the use of different schemes across classes. Pupils become able readers at an early age and have a good level of vocabulary.
- Pupils practise speaking and listening skills across the curriculum and their reasoning skills are strong.
- Handwriting lessons encourage pupils to form letters carefully and understand and use correct punctuation. By the end of key stage 1, pupils make secure progress in their handwriting skills.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not carefully assess children's development and ability when they enter Reception. Consequently, staff do not have a clear understanding of children's starting points and do not track their progress sharply enough across all areas of learning.
- Staff do not always plan activities that are appropriate to the needs of individual children so that they can make strong progress. Generic tasks mean that children are often doing activities that are too easy and not moving them on quickly in their learning.
- The outdoors provision is not well developed and is only used in good weather. This means that children do not have many opportunities to explore and learn in the outside environment.
- The indoor learning environment is bright and purposeful. Resources support effective learning and engage children's interests.
- Leaders make sure that children are safe. Welfare arrangements are strong and the early years provision meets all aspects of the independent school standards.
- Staff plan activities that cover all aspects of the early years framework so that children are well prepared for Year 1. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development was above the national average in 2017.
- Children play together well and are happy to share their toys and equipment with each other. Children are encouraged to develop independence. Warm relationships between staff and children are evident. As a result, children are happy and confident.
- Staff ensure that they have good communication with parents, who are kept informed of their child's progress through the use of learning journals. Children's achievements are celebrated in class and shared with their parents.

School details

Unique reference number	101694
DfE registration number	305/6075
Inspection number	10026277

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Primary day school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Patricia Ash
Headteacher	Patricia Ash
Annual fees (day pupils)	£8,730
Telephone number	020 8460 4143
Website	www.ashgrove.org.uk
Email address	pash@ashgrove.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	29 February to 1 March 2012

Information about this school

- Ashgrove School is a small independent primary school for boys and girls.
- The school was established in 1986 by the headteacher and is located in a detached house in Bromley.
- The early years provision comprises one Reception class.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school clubs.
- The school's last inspection was a full standard inspection in March 2012.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher/proprietor, the deputy headteacher and a group of staff.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally and observed pupils at breaks, lunchtimes and in lessons.
- The inspection team evaluated a wide range of documentation, including information about pupils' attainment, school policies, behaviour and attendance records and curriculum information. The arrangements for safeguarding were scrutinised.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in lessons and looked at a sample of their books to assess the quality of teaching and learning over time.
- Inspectors considered the 18 responses to Parent View and spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors took into account the 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jason 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.

Parent View

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 2018