

West Ashtead Primary School

Taleworth Road, Ashtead, Surrey KT21 2PX

Inspection dates

2–3 July 2019

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

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have not maintained a good quality of education.
- Until recently, leaders have not measured rigorously enough the impact of additional support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils have not made strong rates of progress across the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. Teachers' expectations are not high enough, particularly for the most able pupils in key stage 2.
- Improvements that leaders have made to the curriculum are at too early a stage to have had an impact on pupils' progress.
- Subject leaders are new to their roles and do not yet play a full part in enabling pupils to achieve well across a wide range of subjects.
- Good practice has not yet been shared effectively across the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is diligently and systematically tackling weaknesses. She understands the priorities for the school.
- Leaders have established a culture where pupils are well behaved, positive and respectful towards each other. Their conduct throughout the school is good.
- Pupils are happy, safe and well cared for. They learn how to keep themselves safe online.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Pupils make a good start with reading.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start in all areas of their learning. This is because activities are carefully planned to meet the needs and interests of young children.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the effectiveness and impact of leaders by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders drive improvements in their subjects so that pupils achieve well across the curriculum.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching learning and assessment is consistently good or better in all year groups by:
 - developing the challenge for the most able pupils, so that a higher proportion achieve greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2
 - refining and monitoring the quality of support that disadvantaged pupils receive so that they make strong rates of progress in every area of the curriculum
 - ensuring that pupils' assessment information is used accurately and effectively to inform teaching and learning so that a higher proportion of pupils achieve at least in line with pupils nationally by the end of Year 6.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new headteacher has accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses. She provides strong leadership and has injected a much-needed sense of purpose and ambition. Under her leadership, staff are beginning to focus more clearly on the key aspects that need to be improved across the school.
- Leaders have made sure that governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and governors are, therefore, taking the right actions to improve the school. However, it is too early to see the impact of these improvements on outcomes for pupils in the national tests at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Recent changes that leaders have made to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics have improved the way that pupils learn across classes and year groups. However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all year groups is still inconsistent in quality. Additionally, teachers do not routinely challenge pupils, especially the most able pupils, to enable them to make strong progress, particularly in key stage 2.
- Most subject leaders are new to post. Although they are enthusiastic to drive improvements in their subjects, they have not yet had time to make sufficient improvements to make a difference to pupils' rates of progress across the curriculum.
- Leaders have ensured that provision for pupils with SEND is effective. Classroom visits and work scrutiny showed that these pupils are supported well by staff, make good progress, and feel included and valued by their peers.
- Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have not achieved as well in the past. Current leaders and governors have only recently started to monitor and evaluate the impact of additional support these pupils receive to ensure that it is effective and supports disadvantaged pupils well.
- This a happy school where everyone receives a warm and sincere welcome. Pupils are nurtured well in a kind and caring environment. The promotion of British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are key strengths. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The additional government funding to promote sport and physical education (PE) is spent effectively. Pupils have access to sports clubs, events and competitions involving other schools in the area. Leaders have also used this funding well to develop staff skills in teaching aspects of the PE curriculum.
- In a short space of time, the new headteacher has won the confidence and support of both parents and staff. 'The headteacher has taken the reins with gusto and is transforming our school' is just one of many similar comments made during the inspection by parents. However, a very small minority of parents feel that their concerns about behaviour incidents were not addressed effectively in the past.
- The local authority has given timely and effective support. It has supported leaders and teachers to identify and improve teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the impact of this work is not yet consistently embedded throughout the school.

Governance of the school

- For too long, governors did not have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. They recognise they were too accepting of information given to them by school leaders. They now receive regular accurate information about the school's effectiveness. This enables them to hold school leaders more closely to account.
- Governors are caring, committed, and reflective. They want the best for the school. They accept that they did not respond quickly enough to challenge pupils' falling standards, including those for pupils who are disadvantaged. More recently, they instigated an external school review of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment including the impact of additional support for vulnerable pupils. Governors now challenge leaders effectively to ensure that the additional funding helps disadvantaged pupils to achieve well and pupils' outcomes to improve across all the school.
- Governors now have a much better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They undertake their safeguarding responsibilities diligently.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders work effectively with other professionals and agencies for the safety and welfare of pupils. They readily follow up concerns if they are not satisfied with the response. Staff also work closely with parents and carers to keep children safe.
- Leaders ensure that all statutory requirements with regard to recruitment are met. The school's vetting systems for checking and recording the suitability of staff are robust. These are routinely checked by governors.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when online and in their local community. They know to report concerns and worries to adults at home or to staff at school. Parents who spoke to inspectors expressed their confidence in staff to keep their children safe. A high proportion of parents who replied to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire expressed the view that their children feel safe in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is too variable. Teachers' subject knowledge and expectations of pupils are not consistently strong.
- Teachers have responded well to the training and support by leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, in key stage 1, pupils make sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Teachers and support staff use praise effectively to boost pupils' confidence. This has a particularly positive impact on pupils with SEND, who thrive as a result of the support they receive.
- The teaching of phonics is effective, and this is helping pupils to develop their early reading skills. Pupils are able to use their understanding of phonics to help them to write increasingly accurately.

- Teachers' assessments of pupils' learning do not routinely take account what pupils already know, understand and can do. Levels of challenge are too variable across different subjects and within year groups. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, who, too often, are given work that does not stimulate or challenge. When this is the case, pupils disengage, and their learning slows.
- At times, it is unclear precisely what teachers want pupils to achieve in their learning. Pupils become confused and cannot tackle their work successfully, because they do not know what to do. This confusion sometimes means that work in books is not completed to high enough standards, particularly in key stage 2.
- Adults do not consistently intervene in pupils' learning to check how well they are achieving. This means that staff are unable to identify when they need to adjust teaching. For example, teachers ask pupils to do some mathematical investigations without checking that pupils understand how to tackle them. This means that pupils' learning stalls.
- Teachers provide feedback in line with the school's marking policy. However, reviews of pupils' learning reveal that written and verbal feedback does not routinely help pupils to understand how to improve their work. This restricts how well teachers can move pupils' learning on. Work in books shows that gaps in key basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are not addressed and eliminated over time, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are friendly, kind and courteous. They engage well with adults, visitors and each other.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and know about unsafe situations. For example, pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. Older pupils know and understand the dangers associated with cyber bullying.
- Pupils have opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular and sporting activities that help them to develop personally. Leaders provide important opportunities for pupils to take on leadership responsibilities in school such as digital leaders, friendship buddies, house captains and school council representatives.
- Pupils speak confidently about their understanding of differences and similarities between people. Leaders and teachers lead pupils by example through their active promotion of equal opportunities and their strong commitment to challenging stereotypes and derogatory language. Pupils told an inspector, 'We may all be different, but we are all equally important.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Attendance is in line with the national average for primary schools. Pupils arrive punctually and are ready to learn. Classrooms, corridors

and the outdoors are tidy and the atmosphere is bright and welcoming.

- Behaviour in lessons is generally good. Pupils consider the views of others and support one another in their learning. Occasionally, when tasks are not well matched to pupils' abilities, some pupils drift into off-task behaviour or become complacent in their learning. Teachers tackle any signs of misbehaviour promptly and pupils are quick to respond because relationships are so positive. Pupils take pride in their appearance.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to socialise and play with their friends at lunchtime and playtime. Adults supervise and engage with pupils effectively. This means that adults intervene swiftly when pupils need their help.
- Some parents who responded to the online questionnaire shared their concerns about the way that the school manages pupils' behaviour. However, this is not backed up by the views of staff or pupils themselves. The vast majority of pupils and staff confirm that behaviour is well managed.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. They comment that any problems are quickly dealt with by adults. The school's behaviour records show that leaders' actions have significantly reduced the frequency of unacceptable behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have been below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at both the expected and higher standards. Current assessments and evidence from work scrutiny show that pupils in key stage 2 make slower rates of progress than they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Outcomes for pupils currently in the school remain too variable in all subjects. The review of work in pupils' books shows that pupils are not challenged or supported well enough to ensure that they make rapid progress to close previous gaps in attainment. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to be done to ensure that all pupils make strong progress and achieve well in all subjects.
- Rates of progress for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, is too variable in key stage 2. Not all pupils make the progress of which they are capable because teacher expectations are not consistently high enough.
- Pupils' progress is stronger in key stage 1 than it is in key stage 2. The proportion of pupils who achieve the required standard in the phonics screening check is consistently above the national average because of effective teaching and well-matched strategies to children's needs. Current progress and work in pupil books show that a high proportion of pupils in Year 2 are on track to achieve well at the expected and greater depth standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with SEND typically make strong progress from relatively low starting points through the tailored support they receive.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils in key stages 1 and 2 is too variable. By the end of Year 6, the differences between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and that of other pupils nationally are wide and not diminishing quickly enough.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of early years is good. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the early years. Leaders track the progress of children carefully in all the different areas of learning. They identify those children who are falling behind to provide them with effective support and to ensure that they make good progress. For example, there are good links with external professionals to support children, including with their speech and language development.
- Most children start in Reception with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress, with many working above the age-related expectations in different areas of learning increasing as they move through the year. Children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Children are well behaved and cooperate well to work together and to share resources. An inspector observed children collaborate and work as a team to plan and set up a musical production. Children carefully discussed their ideas to develop the 'plot and script' for their play and allocate the different roles. They showed great maturity as they made decisions to assemble the stage and organise the music for their production.
- Good relationships are quickly established with parents. For example, they are welcomed into school each morning at the start of the school day. Parents are provided with valuable information about the progress their children are making and the next steps they need to take in their learning. Parents told an inspector, 'Our children enjoy learning in the early years so much that, if they could, they would come to school on the weekends too.'
- Early phonics is taught well and children make good progress. In a phonics lesson observed, children successfully used their phonics skills to read and identify real and nonsense words accurately. Leaders recognise that the level of challenge for the most able pupils is an aspect which can be further improved so that they have opportunities to use and apply their ideas more independently.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and statutory duties are met. Children generally work well together and support each other's learning. Relationships are strong between adults and children, allowing children to feel safe and secure.

School details

Unique reference number	125026
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10088192

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kimberley Elms
Headteacher	Ruth Hall
Telephone number	01372 272082
Website	www.west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk
Email address	head@west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 November 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club on site.
- The headteacher was appointed on an interim basis in January 2019 and took up the substantive post in April 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes, jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed phonics lessons in Reception and Years 1 and 2.
- Together with leaders, inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupils' books from all year groups and across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history and the topics being studied. Inspectors analysed and discussed with leaders a range of information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from across the school read. They spoke to pupils while visiting classrooms, the dining hall and the playground. In addition, inspectors met with a group of pupils formally to gather their views of the school.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the vice-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at playtime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed various documents provided by the school. These included: the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; the pupil premium statement; information about the use of PE and the sports premium; external reviews of the school; and minutes of the governing body's meetings.
- Inspectors reviewed documents relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour. These included the school's single central record, records of all behavioural incidents, exclusion records, and child protection and safeguarding files.
- The views of parents were collected at the beginning and end of the school day. Inspectors took account of the 121 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including free-text comments.
- Inspectors visited the breakfast club, spoke to staff and observed some activities.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Shaughnessy	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Burrell	Ofsted Inspector

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