

Inspection of Ashingdon Primary Academy

Fambridge Road, Ashingdon, Rochford, Essex SS4 3LN

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The pupils at Ashingdon are very polite, welcoming and well behaved. During the inspection, they invited the inspectors to sit with them for lunch and held them in rapt conversation about their school. Most pupils are articulate and confident. During lessons, pupils are attentive. They follow teachers' instructions sensibly and contribute to discussions in a way that allows everyone to have a voice. Pupils told inspectors that they feel happy and safe at school. Their attendance is very good.

Pupils are proud of their school and its achievements. This is a school that sings together and has its own 'Ashingdon Rap'. Pupils take part in lots of clubs, from karate to local music festivals and sporting competitions. Pupils take on responsibilities, such as serving as school councillors or looking after the school pig, 'Princess'. Staff and pupils attribute the opportunities and positive energy to the leadership of the executive headteacher. One pupil, representing the views of many, said 'Mr Barton is a man that does!'

Although many pupils succeed at Ashingdon, those who struggle to learn to read in Reception and key stage 1 are not taught well. Leaders have not paid enough attention to the teaching of early reading. This limits some pupils' potential in academic subjects and dents their self-confidence.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Governors and leaders are committed to improving the school. Since the last inspection, the overall standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 are higher. Parents, governors, staff and pupils say that the school is a happier place.

The senior leadership team are looking closely at the curriculum. Teachers are planning new subject content together well. They have changed the year groups where some topics are taught. For example, learning about the Vikings now follows study of the Saxons so that pupils will be able to bring their prior knowledge to the topic.

The executive headteacher recognises that the new curriculum is in its infancy. Pupils' history and geography work in their new theme books, unlike in the previous year, includes little written work. Planning does not ensure that pupils are regularly attempting activities that require them to use detailed subject knowledge of the topic.

Where subjects are taught through a topic approach, such as art and history, teachers' plans do not always consider what art skills pupils need to master. For example, at the top of key stage 2, some of the pupils are not proficient in using scissors. Leaders recognise that whole-school subject plans should identify where such skills are taught explicitly and how much practice pupils need to master them.

Leaders do not prioritise the teaching of early reading. Staff are not well trained in

teaching phonics. Teaching does not ensure that all pupils have enough practice to remember the sounds that letters represent (phonics). This means that some pupils struggle to decode simple words. Some staff tell pupils to guess at words. For example, one pupil guessed 'wood' instead of 'log' after being told to 'look at the picture' to sound out the word.

Some aspects of the national curriculum for word reading are not followed. For example, staff do not match reading books to pupils' phonic knowledge. The school runs two different assessment systems simultaneously for monitoring pupils' reading. Adding to this confusion, pupils choose their own reading books from boxes offering too much choice for beginner readers.

Leaders are keen to improve pupils' reading ability. Staff read aloud regularly to their classes, which pupils enjoy. Some pupils like the 'resilient reader' reward system and are enthusiastic about reading at home regularly.

Singing is a strength of the school. The 'reading song' and a 'pirate's life for me' were sung well in tune and with great gusto by Years 1 to 6 during the inspection. Leaders say that through singing, pupils gain a good musical repertoire as well as building a sense of community and well-being among pupils and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture for keeping pupils safe is central to the school. Staff know all the pupils well. They give their welfare high priority. Staff are trained to spot any signs of concern. Leaders hold a regular well-being staff meeting to check on any concerns and to ensure that any potentially vulnerable pupils get the right support. Leaders and staff work closely together to ensure that they share knowledge of pupils. However, not all actions by staff are recorded systematically.

Pupils feel well supported at school and say that they are taught to know how to keep themselves safe, whether while out and about or online. They trust the adults who work in the school and say that they feel confident to share any concerns with them.

What does school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching of early reading needs to be prioritised urgently. Leaders should ensure that all staff follow the national curriculum for word reading. To achieve this, all staff need training in teaching phonics and how this links to reading accurately and fluently. Leaders should implement a cohesive policy for teaching and assessing reading. Reading books must be reorganised urgently to give struggling readers enough practice at a level that matches their phonic knowledge. Teachers should work more closely with the pupils who are at risk of

not achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check in year 1, giving these pupils enough targeted systematic practice to succeed. This will prevent some pupils being identified with special educational needs because of weak reading when they are older.

- Leaders should continue with their overall review of curriculum planning. Staff should ensure that pupils have enough time built into lessons to practise and remember what they need to learn so they are well prepared for what comes next. This is both in terms of learning how to do something, such as using scissors, and learning foundational knowledge, as in phonics. In addition, teachers should identify the detail to be learned in each curriculum subject within a topic. Activities should be planned which require pupils to use a detailed knowledge of the topics already learned, to ensure that they gain an understanding which matches the ambition of the national curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that all staff follow the agreed protocols for recording safeguarding information.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	137378
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10110202
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	204
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Hall
Headteacher	Ian Barton
Website	www.ashingdonprimaryacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	29–30 June 2017

Information about this school

- The school has a new executive headteacher who took over just after the previous inspection.
- The executive headteacher shares his time between Ashingdon Primary Academy and Plumberow Primary Academy, a local school within the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the chair of governors, two lay governors, a representative of the AET curriculum support team, senior leaders including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), staff and pupils.
- Reading, art, geography and history were considered closely in order to evaluate the quality of education. In each of these subjects, inspection activities included: lesson visits; discussions with staff and pupils; meetings with subject leaders and work scrutiny. The lead inspector also listened to pupils read.

- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils.
- The 47 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into consideration alongside the pupil and staff questionnaires.
- Many of the inspection activities gave inspectors the opportunity to evaluate the culture of safeguarding in the school. Additionally, inspectors looked at safeguarding records and the record of pre-employment checks, as well as asking staff about the impact of any safeguarding training they have received.

Inspection team

Gill Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Fearn

Ofsted Inspector

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