

Inspection of Ashley Church of England Primary School

Ashley Road, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey KT12 1HX

Inspection dates: 16 and 17 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Ashley Church of England Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Ashley Church of England Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened in Ashley Church of England Primary School's effectiveness before and after it converted to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are usually very happy in school. They enjoy learning, get on well together, and behave well. However, sometimes, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) find school more difficult. Teaching does not always support learning for these pupils well enough. This means that, at times, they struggle to complete the work set. The way support for pupils with SEND is organised means that pupils sometimes feel self-conscious about receiving extra help.

Pupils behave extremely well during collective worship. They watch and listen intently and join in enthusiastically. During the inspection, pupils listened thoughtfully to the story of 'The Prodigal Son' and left the hall with a clear message during national anti-bullying week: 'There's no room for bullying at Ashley!'

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour during playtimes, collective worship and when moving around the school. Their expectations of pupils' learning during lessons, however, are not always high enough.

Pupils feel safe in school. They talk sensibly about some of the measures in place to ensure their safety. Pupils told inspectors that they do not have to worry about bullying in school. They say that their teachers sort out any concerns straight away. The school's records confirm this positive view.

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

The school has experienced a turbulent time during the past few years. This has made it difficult for leaders to focus on improvements needed in the school. However, the school is beginning to experience a more settled phase. The recently appointed headteacher has quickly established positive relationships with parents. She has a clear and accurate view of the school's work and is ably supported by the senior leadership team. Staff morale has improved. Most parents have confidence in the school.

Leaders have rightly focused on improving the school's curriculum in the past year. The completion of a much-needed curriculum overhaul has ensured that there are no longer any gaps in the curriculum. However, the updated subject plans have not yet been implemented fully in the classrooms. Early years staff provide a wide range of appealing activities. However, while children play happily, they do not always learn as well as they should. This is because adults are not always sufficiently knowledgeable about what they can do to support children's learning.

Variations in staff knowledge about phonics teaching have led to inconsistencies in pupils' learning. While many pupils become proficient readers, others fall behind. For example, some of the older pupils in key stage 2 continue to struggle with their reading when they should be reading fluently. The school is currently moving to a new phonics programme to ensure a more consistent and effective approach. This is already helping some of the weakest readers to develop more secure phonics skills.

The quality of provision for pupils with SEND is not good enough. Adults want to do their best for pupils and some provision is effective. For example, children with social, emotional, and mental health needs in early years benefit from well-focused support. However, weaknesses in teaching more generally, mean that pupils with SEND learn less well than they should. Assessments of pupils' needs are not always used well enough to plan learning. For example, sometimes, pupils struggle in lessons because tasks are too difficult for them to complete without adult support. Pupils quickly lose confidence when this is the case. Many parents are understandably frustrated about the quality of support for their children. However, recent improvements in SEND provision have been noted by some parents, who are reassured that the new leadership team are determined to put things right.

The school's curriculum supports pupils' personal and social development well. Pupils are encouraged to respect different beliefs and religions. Pupils behave well most of the time. Occasionally, however, some become fidgety and disengaged during lessons. Teachers can be too slow to notice when this is the case and so these pupils get on less well than their classmates. Such behaviour rarely disturbs other pupils.

Subject leaders provide passionate and determined leadership for their subjects. They have worked well with staff and senior leaders to review and revise subject plans. However, their roles in monitoring the quality of the curriculum are at an early stage of development.

The trust identified significant weaknesses in the school's work some years ago. It was right to do so. Weaknesses identified during the inspection in pupils' behaviour and the curriculum, including provision for pupils with SEND and early years, are long standing and deep rooted. Trustees and the governing committee are providing valuable support for the school, including training and expertise. It is essential that the school focuses on the identified and agreed priorities so that pupils currently in the school are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have improved safeguarding procedures during the past few years. For example, improvements in site security mean that pupils can learn and play more safely than before. Systems for identifying, reporting, and recording safeguarding concerns have been strengthened in the past few months. Rigorous training ensures that staff understand their responsibility for keeping pupils safe. Staff know what to do if they are worried about a pupil. Leaders work constructively with agencies such as children's services, to ensure that pupils and their families have the help they need to keep safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Historic gaps in the school's curriculum mean that pupils have not learned all that they need to ensure success in the next stage of their education. Leaders have revised the curriculum to address this issue. Subject plans in a range of subjects now provide a secure framework for teaching and learning. However, the subject plans have not been fully implemented in the classroom yet. Leaders should continue with their plans to ensure that the revised curriculum is delivered consistently and effectively across the school.
- Leaders have rightly identified inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics. An alternative phonics programme is currently being introduced to ensure a more effective approach. Staff training has begun, with further training scheduled for the coming months. Leaders should continue with arrangements to ensure that the new phonics programme is fully established.
- The quality of early years provision is variable. Weaknesses in subject knowledge mean that adults are not always clear about how to develop and extend children's learning. As a result, children do not learn as well as they should. Leaders know that this aspect of the school's work needs improvement. They should implement plans to review and revise early years provision.
- Leaders have already identified the need to improve provision for pupils with SEND. They have prioritised this aspect of the school's work for development. Procedures for identifying SEND have been tightened up and pupils are receiving help more quickly than previously. Leaders should continue with plans to improve this aspect of the school's work.
- Pupils' behaviour for learning in lessons is not consistently strong enough. Most pupils behave very well. However, some lose interest and become disengaged. This is because teachers' expectations of behaviour are not always high enough and the work set is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs. Leaders should implement plans to improve behaviour in lessons.
- Subject leaders are keen to play their role in the school's development. However, their roles in checking and monitoring the implementation of improvements are at an early stage of development. Leaders have already begun work to strengthen subject leadership. Subject leaders are increasingly knowledgeable about strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. Leaders should continue to support the development of subject leaders' roles.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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	141294
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10199336
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	616
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Very Reverend Dianna Gwilliams
Headteacher	Jennie Ratcliff
Website	www.ashleyschool.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The last section 48 inspection took place in 2017. The next section 48 inspection was due in 2021. It is now expected in 2022.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club which are open to pupils who attend the school. They are managed by the school and overseen by the local governing committee.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They spoke with the multi-academy trust's director of education, the chair of the trust, and the

trust's chief executive officer. They also met with four members of the local governing committee, including the chair.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, held a discussion with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central record. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead, reviewed the school's safeguarding records, and spoke with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered 316 responses to Ofsted's survey, Parent View, and 316 free-text comments. They also spoke with parents informally at the start and end of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of pupils about their views of the school, as well as speaking with pupils informally during playtimes and lunchtimes. They also took account of 184 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. They also considered the views of 51 members of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey, and a further eight staff surveys which were completed in paper form.

Inspection team

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