

# Inspection of a good school: Ascot Road Primary School

Ascot Road, Watford, Hertfordshire WD18 8AD

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Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2023

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Ascot Road Primary School is at the heart of the community. Pupils are confident, happy, spirited individuals. They are polite and respectful to adults and visitors to the school. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They know the difference between bullying and 'one-off incidents'. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they feel safe. If pupils have concerns, they know that they can speak with any adults in school.

Pupils read a wide range of books that reflect the rich diversity of their community. Pupils understand that everyone is different and that people should be 'allowed to be themselves' and be accepted.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and speak enthusiastically about their current learning. However, in some subjects, pupils are unable to recall important facts from previous learning. This means they do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils learn about a wide range of cultures and religions. They say that they enjoy playing with friends and attending the variety of after-school clubs on offer, such as cooking, computer coding and cricket. They enjoy being class ambassadors and attending celebration assemblies.

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

Leaders have adopted a curriculum that is well ordered. The curriculum sets out a series of learning for each subject that builds knowledge for pupils in each subject across all year groups.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. The reading curriculum is well structured. Leaders have set out what they want pupils to be able to do and by when.

As soon as children start early years, they are introduced to high-quality books. Staff are expert at teaching reading, and children learn to read quickly. Adults in early years consistently check the sounds children know. They provide specific support to help children practise new sounds and revisit sounds they are unsure of.

Teachers choose texts carefully to engage and develop pupils' vocabulary. Teachers revisit and clarify vocabulary from prior learning. They use a range of strategies to check pupils' understanding of individual words and phrases. Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well supported to read, and they catch up quickly if they fall behind. Pupils have a range of opportunities to listen to and read to adults. As a result, pupils across the school learn to read with increasing confidence.

In some subjects, such as geography and history, subject leadership and the curriculum development are in their early stages. Although the curriculum sets out what leaders want pupils to know and by when, teachers are not ensuring they revisit pupils' prior learning so that pupils are given the opportunity to build on what they already know. In addition, teachers are not reinforcing the subject-specific vocabulary so that pupils are able to use the vocabulary accurately and in the right context. This means pupils are not remembering what they have learned to be able to use it to help them learn more.

New subject leaders have not had the necessary training to be able to check closely how well pupils are achieving in some subjects or to evaluate how well the curriculum area they lead is being taught in line with what they expect. As a result, leaders do not know how well pupils are achieving and are therefore not able to identify what actions need to be taken to improve pupils' achievement.

Leaders have ensured that pupils' personal development is a priority. Pupils develop a good understanding of the different cultures, relationships and family units they may come across. They enjoy the responsibility of being a member of the 'learner voice council.' Pupils develop a comprehensive understanding of how to use the internet safely and the potential risks. Pupils leave the school equipped with the ability to build positive relationships and contribute to life in modern Britain well.

Staff value the 'open' communication they have with leaders and the clear guidance and support that leaders provide.

The trust leaders have a clear oversight of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have identified some of the weaknesses in the curriculum and are supporting leaders to further improve the quality of education.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work collaboratively with external agencies and specialists to make sure the most vulnerable pupils and families get the support they need quickly.

Pupils learn, through the curriculum content, about safeguarding risks and where they can get help and support if needed.

Staff, governors and the trust know the potential safeguarding risks to pupils in their local community. They know the signs that indicate a pupil may be at risk of harm and how to report concerns promptly. Leaders record and review all information carefully so that they can support pupils effectively where needed.

Leaders carry out all the necessary employment and safeguarding checks on staff and visitors to the school thoroughly.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Although the curriculum for subjects is well ordered, in some areas teachers are not consistently ensuring that they revisit pupils' prior learning. Additionally, they are not routinely using or reiterating the subject-specific vocabulary that pupils need to know. Teachers should ensure that they revisit pupils' prior learning in all subjects, including revisiting the subject-specific vocabulary. This will ensure pupils can demonstrate an in-depth understanding in all they learn.
- Some subject leaders are new to their role. They have not checked fully that the curriculum is being consistently taught in line with their plans or looked at how well pupils are remembering what has been taught. Therefore, they do not know how well pupils are achieving in the area of the curriculum they lead. Leaders need to support new subject leaders with appropriate training so that they have the knowledge and skills to check what is working well and what needs to be improved, to ensure pupils achieve as well as they should.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

## **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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140956
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255200
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	376
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Martin Day
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cathy Elsley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ascotroadcfs.org.uk/">www.ascotroadcfs.org.uk/</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Ascot Road Primary School joined Danes Educational Trust in 2021.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, curriculum subject leaders and the inclusion team. The inspector spoke with staff and pupils.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector held a meeting with the trust's director of primary education.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, Spanish, history and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- A range of documents were reviewed, including leaders' school development plans, curriculum plans, the school's single central record of pre-employment checks on staff, school policies, minutes of governor meetings and records of pupils' attendance.
- The inspector considered 61 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 24 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. No pupil surveys were completed.
- The inspector spoke with several parents attending a reading morning in the school on day two of the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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