



# Ashbrook School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110384  
**LEA** Milton Keynes LEA  
**Inspection number** 278421  
**Inspection dates** 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alan Jarvis AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	The High Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Two Mile Ash
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 7		Milton Keynes MK8 8NA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01908561366
<b>Number on roll</b>	176	<b>Fax number</b>	01908263486
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Peter Edwards
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 December 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janet Newman

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 June 2006 - 29 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278421
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This average sized infant school serves a generally advantaged area. There are fewer pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities than average. More pupils than usual come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds and around one in five is at an early stage of speaking English. Most year groups have unequal numbers of boys and girls. Attainment on entry fluctuates each year and has been falling. It is currently a little below average. The school has recently achieved Healthy Schools Status.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

The school views itself as outstanding and the inspectors agree. Parents are extremely satisfied with all the school offers. As one parent said, which echoed that of others, 'My children have had the best possible start to their education in an extremely well organised, fantastic and forward looking school'.

All groups of pupils make outstanding progress in all years because the teaching is excellent and very challenging targets are set. Other factors influencing this are the razor sharp systems for tracking pupils' progress, the emphasis on thinking skills and the first class learning environment in classrooms and the school grounds.

Children make a flying start in the Reception class where standards and quality are excellent. Most children reach, and many exceed, the goals set for the end of the year because teaching, learning and the curriculum are all top notch. In Years 1 and 2, standards in reading are consistently and exceptionally high and achievement is outstanding. In the past two years there has been a small gap between these and standards in mathematics. This has widened a little this year because the Year 2 pupils have found problem solving difficult. However, pupils still make very rapid progress in mathematics. Pupils also achieve very highly in art, ICT and music.

Pupils personal development is also outstanding because of the excellent care provided, the inspirational assemblies, opportunities to learn about the world beyond their immediate environment, the focus on healthy eating and exercise and constant encouragement to give of their very best. Bullying, racism and exclusions are virtually unknown.

The headteacher and her talented staff continually look for improvement and keep the school in 'tip-top' condition. Dynamic and extremely effective, governance steers the work of the school. Consequently, very good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school is extremely well placed to continue this and provides excellent value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Keep the provision for mathematics under review so that standards equal those attained in reading and writing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

All groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well in all years. They meet or exceed their very challenging targets. This is a result of first class teaching, the meticulous tracking of pupils' progress, the emphasis on thinking skills and the first class climate for learning which has been established. Children in the current reception class started with standards that were just below average. They make excellent progress across all areas of learning. Almost all are likely to reach, and many exceed, the goals expected

for their age. In the last two years, overall standards at the end of Year 2 have been exceptionally high, particularly so in reading and writing. However, there has been a small gap between these and standards in mathematics. This remains the case in the current Year 2, but the gap between these and mathematics has widened slightly. This reflects the more rigorous approach taken to assessing standards this year and the fact that more pupils have found problem solving difficult. However, the school's records and progress seen in lessons clearly show that pupils make very rapid progress in terms of their capabilities. Achievement in art, ICT and music is also very high.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils enjoy school tremendously. This is evident from their above average attendance and the beaming smiles on their faces. One parent said, 'He is happy when he knows it is a school day.' The motto 'Everyone matters; everyone is important' filters into everything the school does. As a result pupils show confidence, self esteem and attitudes to learning far beyond that expected for their age. Bullying, racism and exclusions are virtually unknown.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and their resulting behaviour is excellent. They happily get on with each other but if they have a problem they say 'we often sort it out ourselves'. There is no school council but all pupils are given extensive opportunities to voice an opinion. For example, the school grounds now have 'dens and shades'.

These young children have an astute awareness of the wider world. They are involved in fund raising activities, for example, with their partner school in Nairobi. Compared with their peers elsewhere they have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They know what foods are nutritious and enjoy a wide range of physical activities. Pupils excellent basic skills prepare them well for later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. The use of interactive whiteboards to enliven teaching, very high learning expectations and pace of learning are exemplary elements in all classes. The excellent learning environment stimulates learning. Teaching assistants play a huge role in all classes by providing extremely well thought out, tailored support, to pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of speaking English.

In Reception, the teachers are highly skilled in striking a fine balance between allowing the children freedom of choice for some activities and directing them carefully in others. In Years 1 and 2, not a moment of learning time is wasted. The teaching of reading and writing continues to receive top priority. The school is constantly reviewing

the emphasis and support given to mathematics, especially in problem solving and targeting any pupil who looks to be underachieving.

Pupils know exactly what they need to do in learning. They continually work with their teachers to assess their work. Constant oral feedback is given in Reception whilst in later years both verbal and written methods are used. Marking is closely linked to lesson goals and helps pupils improve the content and layout of their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum in all years is excellent because it is exciting and vibrant. It has an exceptionally strong focus on the development of skills across all subjects. Its key strength is the innovative and structured approach to thinking skills. This helps meet the needs of all pupils exceptionally well by building their confidence, self-esteem, problem solving capability and ability to consider all options. For example, during an inspirational assembly, pupils considered the feelings of the characters in 'Cinderella' before thinking about their own behaviour.

The high level of artwork on display shows the strong emphasis placed on creative skills. This is extremely well supported by local visitors, trips and visits. Pupils' talents and interests are further extended by a very good range of popular after school clubs, music and very strong links with the community. A creative approach underpins the school's excellent work in ensuring high standards in numeracy, literacy and ICT and helps prepare pupils very well for their next stages of life.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Staff take excellent care of pupils. This has a very positive impact on pupils' exceptional personal development and the excellent progress they make. Robust procedures for child protection and health and safety checks ensure pupils are safe at all times. The school works very well with parents and a variety of external agencies to support all children including those most at risk.

Razor sharp tracking systems means the school knows exactly how well individual pupils are doing. This information is fully utilised when planning topics and lessons so that pupils receive work which is very well matched to their needs. In this way, additional and early intervention for pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of speaking English is put in place.

For the youngest children highly effective induction arrangements make coming to school a happy experience whilst thoughtful transition procedures for those moving to the junior school prepare Year 2 pupils very well for the next stage of education.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteachers high aspirations and forward looking approach ensures the school is kept in 'tip top' condition. The school runs very smoothly enabling the headteacher to focus on fine tuning the extremely well established ethos and values. The capacity to improve further is very strong because the school never stops still and continually looks to improve its performance.

Leadership and management are extremely effective at all levels. Staff are trained to the very best levels, incisive systems of assessment have been built up, teaching is continually monitored and improved and the curriculum is imaginative. Excellent commitment to equal opportunities permeates the life of the school and enables all pupils to feel valued.

Systems for finding out how well the school is doing are extremely rigorous. All staff have an acute understanding of the differing needs of each year group. They keep these under constant review and as a result set very challenging targets for pupils. The views of pupils and parents have directly led to improvements in homework, opening times and further development of the creative curriculum.

The governors are dynamic, very capable and highly effective. For example, they make an excellent contribution to planning for improvement, evaluate their own performance and participate in regular training to make sure their skills are honed. The budget is in very good health. Money is extremely well targeted to support the extremely high achievement and some has been set aside to fund further improvements to the accommodation.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Pupils

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome during our visit to your school. We enjoyed speaking to you in lessons and in the playground.

We judge Ashbrook to be an outstanding school, and this is why. \* Staff look after you extremely well and you are very kind to each other.\* Many of the lessons we saw were first class and you do not waste a moment in lessons.\* We were impressed with how well you are doing in literacy and numeracy.\* Your attendance is better than normal and your behaviour is excellent.\* Your headteacher keeps the school in tip-top condition and is always looking to make it better.\* What a lot of exciting things you do! The trips you go on and the many visitors make your school a fun place to be. We saw how excited the Reception children were on the Teddy Bear's picnic!\* It was good to see how well you get on with one another and how you try to help other people, for example, by raising money for the school in Nairobi.\* Your parents think it is a fantastic school and many of you said this as well.

No wonder your parents are so pleased. Even in such a fantastic school such as yours there is always something that can be better. Your headteacher knows that even though you make very rapid progress in mathematics this could be as high as it is in reading and writing.Thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alan Jarvis

Lead inspector