



Ashdene Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111227
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278628
Inspection dates 22 March 2006 to 23 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Arthur Markham CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Thoresway Road |
| School category | Community | | Wilmslow |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 | | Cheshire SK9 6LJ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01625 531 118 |
| Number on roll | 400 | Fax number | 01625 535 495 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr A Wright |
| Date of previous inspection | 28 February 2000 | Headteacher | Mr K Wadcock |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school situated in a residential area in Wilmslow, Cheshire. The vast majority of children are of white British background with only a small number from minority ethnic groups. Eleven children are at an early stage of learning English. The number entitled to free school meals is low, as is the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. On entry to the school the children's skills are above average. The school has Investor in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree that this is a good school with some outstanding features. Children enter the school with above average skills overall. Provision in the reception classes is good and many children attain above average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Children make good progress in years 1 to 6 and standards are high because teaching is stimulating and lessons are interesting. The curriculum is challenging and enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors. Children consequently enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. Their personal development is outstanding. Behaviour is very good. The school takes exceptionally good care of children and pays close attention to meeting their needs. The academic guidance given to children has many positive features and children have a good awareness of their year group targets, but the use of individual short term targets is not yet fully developed and teachers' marking does not always help children to know what to do to improve their work.

The school is highly regarded by parents and children. One parent stated, 'I am totally impressed with every aspect of the school. It is encouraging to know that your child's education is in good hands.' The headteacher provides strong leadership. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are excellent and the school has a clear understanding of areas needing development. The reasons for the relatively low performance in writing in 2005 have been identified and the action being taken is having a positive impact. The issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed and a number of improvements have been made to the school's buildings and environment to enrich learning while maintaining very high standards. The school's capacity to improve further is good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing by raising the challenge presented to children and giving them more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Develop the setting of short term targets for individual children.
- Ensure that the marking of children's work consistently makes clear what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average. On entry to the school, children's attainment is above average overall. They make rapid progress in the reception year because teaching is good and many achieve standards above those expected by the time they join Year 1. Children make consistently good progress and achieve well throughout years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above those expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This rate of progress is maintained in years 3 to 6 and standards are high. Children's performance in the national tests at Year 6 has been exceptionally and consistently high in English, mathematics and science in recent years, but dipped in English in 2005 because no

child achieved Level 5 in writing. The school has identified a number of factors that contributed to this and the determined action being taken is having a positive impact.

Close attention is given to meeting the needs of all children. Those children with additional learning needs and the few who speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well. Similarly, children who are gifted or talented are suitably challenged and achieve highly. Virtually all children successfully achieve the challenging targets they are set.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development is outstanding. They enjoy school and say, 'Learning is fun; we want to come to school!' This explains their very positive attitudes, good achievement and high rate of attendance. They develop spiritually through opportunities for reflection during assemblies, art and religious education lessons and through the school's caring ethos, which pervades all aspects of its work. Behaviour is very good. Children show respect for each other and readily abide by the school rules. Extensive opportunities for social development, including residential visits and taking part in inter-schools' competitions, help children to develop confidence and independence and ensure that they are well prepared for later life. They respond very well to the many opportunities they are given to learn about other cultures and to enjoy the diversity of modern society. One child commented about a recent Sikh Day, 'We learnt a lot about what it means to be a Sikh - a really great day!'

Children develop a very good understanding of their own well-being. They feel safe at school and are proud to have achieved the Healthy Schools award. They readily explain why they need to eat healthy foods and take exercise. Children have opportunities to express their views through the school council and like the way the staff put their ideas into action.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers prepare lessons well and generally have high expectations of what children can achieve. Activities are carefully planned to meet the different learning needs of children and teachers' explanations are clear so that children understand what they have to do. Teaching is often lively and includes a range of approaches and resources that stimulate interest. As a result, children enjoy their studies and are eager to learn. For example, children in Year 6 enjoyed calculating VAT at 17.5% for items on a local supermarket's bargain offers.

Strengths in teaching include the way children are managed so that they work hard and behave well. In an outstanding lesson in Year 2, the challenging pace kept children on their toes and ensured they completed a very good amount of work. Behaviour was exemplary here. Where teaching has weaknesses, the pace of learning slows because

children can become noisy and then do not listen well enough. Marking indicates how well children have done but does not consistently place enough emphasis on guiding them to improve.

Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to learning. They work in close partnership with teachers and provide good support for children who need a boost to help them make progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of the children extremely well. A strong emphasis is placed upon English, mathematics and science, but care is also taken to ensure that other subjects get due attention. An increase in resources, and teachers' confidence to use them, has helped to improve the provision for ICT. Learning is enriched by lessons in French and German for years 5 and 6. Links between subjects are strengthened as children practise skills achieved in one subject while learning another. Personal, social and health education makes a very strong contribution to children's capacity to stay healthy and safe. There are also very good opportunities for children to develop skills that will prepare them for their future and the world of work.

A wealth of exciting activities enriches the curriculum. A regular programme of residential and other visits throughout the school brings the curriculum to life and gives many opportunities for children to develop their social and personal skills. Many visitors share their expertise or beliefs with the children. A wide range of clubs complements an already stimulating curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for children are outstanding. Good relationships between children and adults ensure that children feel safe and know who to turn to if they need help. Behaviour is closely monitored and children say the rare instances of unacceptable behaviour or bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Child protection and health and safety procedures are very well organised. Careful attention is given to ensuring that children settle into school with ease, and the school also does all it can to ensure that transfer to secondary school is effective. Any children who find learning difficult are given good support.

Children's academic and personal development is carefully monitored. The school has recently introduced English and mathematics targets and these are beginning to motivate children well: one child said, 'You work harder to try and get to your next goal'. The targets, however, are not yet sharply focused enough to specifically guide individual children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's excellent leadership, well supported by the deputy headteacher, gives a clear educational direction to the school. In turn they are equally well supported by the staff who share their commitment to providing high quality education for all children. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and coordinators manage their subjects well. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are thorough and highly effective, and take account of the views of the staff, parents and children. The school consequently has a very precise understanding of its strengths and areas requiring development. The children's performance is carefully analysed and close attention is given to ensuring the inclusion of everyone, so that children of all abilities make good progress. Teachers' performance management objectives are linked to development priorities, ensuring that the whole school works together effectively to bring about improvements. The school has Investor in People status and this is clearly reflected in the emphasis given to developing staff in order to further improve the learning opportunities for children.

Financial management is good. The school is well resourced and staff are effectively deployed. A number of improvements to the accommodation have recently been made and a new classroom block is soon to be completed.

The governors are well informed and fulfil their responsibilities well. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing development because a number of them are regular visitors to the school. The school has successfully maintained the high level performance found at the last inspection and the capacity for further improvement is good.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | 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 | 2 | 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

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|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 1 | 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

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | NA |

¹ 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

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 2 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

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|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| 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 |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| 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 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| 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 |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| 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

As you know, three inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning. Thank you for being so friendly and willing to talk to the inspectors. It was really interesting to listen to what you had to say. We are pleased to say that we decided that you have a good school with some outstanding features. The things that we particularly liked were:

- the way your headteacher runs the school; he listens to what you all think could make it better and works hard to make the changes happen
- the way all the staff take very good care of you and help you to learn so well
- your excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school and the way you help each other
- the way you work hard for your teachers and take a pride in your work
- the excellent guidance you receive about healthy living
- the enthusiastic and polite way you told us your views about school.

We have asked your teachers to improve three things to make your school even better. We want them to:

- help you to improve your writing by making sure that you are set challenging work, giving you plenty of opportunities to write at length in subjects besides English
- use comments when marking your work that help you to understand how you can improve
- set you individual targets to explain exactly what you need to concentrate on.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We all hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers, so that Ashdene Primary becomes an even better school.