



Ashford Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125113
Local Authority Surrey
Inspection number 281889
Inspection dates 7–8 February 2007
Reporting inspector George Rayner

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Station Crescent
School category	Community		Ashford
Age range of pupils	4–11		TW15 3HN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01784 250305
Number on roll (school)	406	Fax number	01784 250305
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Darren Buttigieg
		Headteacher	Mrs Sophie Parker
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. It is located in a busy suburban area on the edge of London and close to Heathrow Airport. Pupils' socio-economic circumstances are generally average, but with considerable variation. Most pupils have white British heritage. The number at an early stage of speaking English is low, but is rising as increasing numbers of pupils with east European backgrounds are coming to the school. The entry standards of pupils in most years were close to expectations, although the schools' data shows that they were below expectations for the current Foundation Stage and Year 1 pupils. This is due to drawing pupils from a wider area. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) on site, called the Acorn Centre. The school is part of a federation of several local schools. It has the Active Mark and 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: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. The school cares very well for all pupils and works actively to ensure that they are happy and secure. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. One parent expressed the views of many by saying, 'We have watched our daughter blossom and grow in confidence.' Pupils show their enjoyment through their willingness to work hard and their enthusiasm in joining in with all that the school has to offer. Their good respect for safety and their active and healthy lives are recognised by national accreditation. The curriculum is good and contributes particularly well to pupils' personal development by engaging them in their learning and promoting enjoyment through a variety of interesting opportunities.

Pupils' standards are average at the end of Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. The school is ambitious to improve pupils' achievement, so that all make good progress. This is not yet happening because, while the curriculum is good, teaching is only satisfactory. It is not consistently providing good challenge for all pupils. The school is beginning to work effectively with its federation partners to share training and good ideas. Improvements are beginning to have a clear impact but are not yet firmly established. The school has developed good systems for assessing pupils' progress, but teachers are not yet using these sufficiently to give pupils a clear idea of their improvement targets. Provision is good in the Foundation Stage, so that these children make good progress. This is because staff have a good understanding of what young children need to learn and know the value of discovering things through play and exploration. The local authority has recognised the good provision the school makes for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and their consequent good progress, by placing a specialist MLD unit there. The school is meeting the challenge of providing for the increasing number of pupils who are at an early stage of speaking English by working effectively with the local authority's language support agency.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. They have several strengths, but have not been able to raise teaching or achievement above satisfactory. The school has systematic procedures for monitoring teaching. Feedback to teachers gives them some useful pointers towards improving their technique. It does not give them clear enough guidance on the effect of their lessons on pupils' learning and progress, however. This has reduced its impact in helping teachers to ensure that their lessons consistently lead to good achievement for all pupils. The school has secured satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Its track record, together with a commitment to securing higher standards, show that it has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement by improving teaching so that it consistently provides good challenge for all pupils.
- Ensure that teachers use assessment information to give pupils a clear idea of their improvement targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave the Reception class, they are able to read, write and use numbers to the extent expected for their age. In other years pupils make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science and standards are average overall. Progress is improving in Years 1 and 2, due to improvements in teaching. This has resulted in slightly above average standards in mathematics. Year 2 writing standards, which were below average at the last inspection, are now average. In Years 3 to 6, achievement has recently been inadequate in mathematics. Although improvements in teaching the subject are not yet having their full impact, the current pupils are making satisfactory progress. Most pupils have the skills expected for their age in carrying out basic tasks such as multiplication and using decimals, but are weaker in choosing and using these to solve problems. Because of the effective support that they receive, both in mainstream lessons and in the Acorn Centre, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Most pupils attend school regularly. They behave well and learn respect for the views and feelings of others. They are prepared to listen to each other and work and play safely together. Pupils explain confidently why exercise and a healthy diet are important. They willingly take on responsibilities, for example through the school council or by becoming a 'peer monitor'. While they were delighted at the heavy snowfall at the time of the inspection, a group showed good safety awareness by explaining the potential dangers of throwing snowballs. Pupils show consideration for each other and agree that, as a result, bullying is infrequent. They know that they can speak to an adult who will listen if they have any concerns. Members of the school council are proud of the help that they give towards bringing improvements to school life. For example they suggested some playground games to purchase and were pleased that the school agreed to do so. Pupils show their appreciation of the school's strong emphasis on sport and physical education by joining in enthusiastically in lessons and clubs. Their progress in developing their main learning skills contributes satisfactorily to their preparation for the future. Their abilities to work cooperatively make a good contribution to this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers explain the purpose of each lesson, so that pupils know what they need to do. Lesson plans clearly show what tasks pupils

have to carry out. However, they often give insufficient attention to the progress that is intended to come from activities, making it difficult for teachers to assess how successful the lesson has been. Teachers usually clearly set out their expectations for behaviour and effort, which contributes to pupils' good attitudes. Teaching assistants work well with teachers to support pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers do not make enough use of assessment to provide a high enough level of challenge for all pupils or to adapt plans when a task proves too difficult for some. In a few lessons, some activities go on too long and occasionally pupils do not have enough to do. This results in them losing concentration and become rather noisy, so that their progress slows. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils, but do not give enough guidance on how they could improve their work. All pupils have targets for literacy and numeracy, but these are not known by all or often referred to in lessons, making it difficult for them to evaluate their own progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a broad range of activities including French in Years 3 to 6. This gives pupils an early introduction to an important skill and helps them to learn about another culture. In improving its curriculum further, the school is developing links between subjects to strengthen pupils' learning through opportunities to apply the skills learned in one subject to another subject. The school's themed weeks and days, such as Healthy Living Week provide further opportunities for pupils to draw together a range of skills for a particular topic. The curriculum in the MLD unit caters particularly well for pupils by giving them stimulating, manageable, useful work. The Foundation Stage curriculum gives children a well planned variety of experiences that enables them to make good progress in their learning and social development. Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide variety of visits that link well with subjects such as history and science. Pupils enjoy the well attended extra-curricular clubs that extend their interests and skills, particularly in sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Very positive relationships coupled with the high priority placed on treating each child as an individual ensure very effective pastoral support for all pupils. As a result pupils feel secure and are growing up well as thoughtful and considerate young people. Induction for children in Reception and for those who arrive in other years is thoughtfully planned and ensures that pupils settle in quickly. All risk assessments are in place and child protection procedures are well established. Provision for the care and academic support of pupils with moderate learning difficulty in the MLD unit is very good. The school works very well with a variety of external agencies to support all children, including those most at risk. Academic guidance is improving and a good assessment system has been established over the past year and is now being used consistently to track pupils' progress. However,

there are still some weaknesses. For example, teachers are still not using the systems sufficiently to give all pupils a clear idea of their improvement targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school. The senior leaders and staff are united in supporting her in pursuing this. Management procedures are soundly organised. The Foundation Stage and MLD unit are well managed, ensuring that the provision effectively meets the needs of all pupils, so that they feel secure and make good progress. Many of the governors have been recently appointed. They are working diligently to increase their knowledge of the school's work and of their own roles. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school carefully analyses its results and has a generally accurate view of its performance. However, it does not have a clear enough strategy for using its findings to make sure teaching is effective enough to provide consistently good challenge and secure good achievement. There have been some good improvements since the last inspection, for example in raising pupils' writing standards in Years 1 and 2 and their spiritual development. Leadership has secured satisfactory improvement overall though, because in most areas standards are no higher than at the time of the last inspection.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and letting us look at your work. We were able to see that yours is a satisfactory school and some things about it are good. We could see that you are well cared for. Lots of you told us that you enjoy school and you showed this by your good behaviour, hard work and the way you join in with things like clubs. This helps your teachers a lot. You may remember that it snowed while we were in school. We could see that you enjoyed playing in the snow, but were very sensible about making sure you did not hurt each other with snowballs.

You make satisfactory progress in your work. Your work is similar in standard to what we find in most schools. The teachers make your lessons interesting, which helps you to work hard. They do not always give everybody difficult enough work and sometimes not all of you have enough to do. This means that not all of you do as well as you possibly could. We have asked them to help you to make even better progress, by making sure that your work always stretches you. We have also asked them to make sure that you always know your own improvement targets. In mainstream classes, those of you with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Those of you in the Foundation Stage and in the Acorn Centre also make good progress. This is because the staff really know what you need to learn and the best way to do this well.

The headteacher and her staff are keen to help you to be even more successful. They often check to see how good lessons are and share their ideas for making them even better. Although teachers are good at planning what you do in lessons, they could think a little more about what they expect you to have learned by the end of each lesson. We have asked those who check the lessons to give the teachers more advice on this. This will help them to make sure that you all make good progress in every lesson.

Well done all of you for your achievements so far and good luck in making these even better in the future.

George Rayner

Lead Inspector