



Ashingdon School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115275
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 283078
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Robert Ellis LI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fambridge Road
School category	Foundation		SS4 3LN
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01702202857
Number on roll	281	Fax number	01702205826
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Liz Durham
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2004	Headteacher	Mrs. Ann Stewart

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	283078

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

When Ashingdon School was inspected in March 2004, it was judged to require special measures. It is a popular school that is similar in size to most schools of its type. Pupils' standards are usually around average on joining the school and although the balance of higher and lower attaining pupils can vary considerably from year to year the proportion of pupils who have learning disabilities is lower than in most schools. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds but there are no pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion entitled to free school meals is very low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The senior managers have an accurate view of the school's overall effectiveness. The school is well led and efficient management ensures that it provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils are proud of their school and feel safe and valued. Parents have confidence in the school and know that their children enjoy attending. Although standards overall are lower than they ought to be, mostly as a result of previous weaknesses in teaching, they are rising and many pupils now achieve the standards expected for their ages. The school recognises that there remain areas for development, including improving standards, particularly in mathematics and science, and for providing opportunities for girls and the most able pupils to achieve better. The school is well placed to improve and all of the issues identified by the previous inspection, including improving the quality of teaching, have been addressed. Nevertheless, the teaching still varies in its effectiveness. Managers monitor the work of the school and have a mostly accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Appropriate systems to monitor the school's performance and to track the pupils' progress are being developed. The resulting information is analysed well and is used to inform the deployment of resources and set the priorities for future development. The school's managers judge leadership and management and personal development to be good rather than satisfactory, largely because their assessment of the impact of the work of the co-coordinators and the pupils' cultural development and behavior is too high. In other respects, their judgments match those of the inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise attainment, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Improve the opportunities for the most able pupils and girls to achieve the best of which they are capable.
- Develop the role of co-ordinators to ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When pupils enter the school their standards are broadly average but some have better than expected communication and language skills. The pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Reception many reach the standards expected for five-year-olds. Nevertheless, the school recognises that continuing development in this area remains a priority. In 2004, the performance of pupils in Key Stage 1 was above the national average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. The results of the 2005 tests show similar levels of attainment. At Key Stage 2, standards in English have been around the national average while those in mathematics and science have been below average. Generally, the school has performed worse than other schools with a similar intake. However, provisional results for 2005 show a marked improvement when

compared with the results for recent years. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress, including many of those who have low prior attainment or learning disabilities. However, many of the brightest pupils do not achieve as well as they might. There is also some variation in progress between boys and girls when compared to the national picture and the school has identified that raising the attainment of girls is a priority.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils enjoy school and attendance is satisfactory. They settle well in Reception and quickly become familiar with the everyday routines and clear expectations of how they should behave and learn. As they progress through the school they gain a good sense of right and wrong, through, for instance, the good range of topics and discussions during their citizenship and personal, social and health education lessons. They consider the plight of others and reflect on their lives and those of people in different countries. For instance, they support people in Africa through their charity work. Older pupils take on responsibilities well. However, their knowledge of different cultures and their preparation for growing up in a multicultural society are limited. Behaviour is satisfactory. Although behaviour around the school is good and pupils are polite to adults and each other, occasionally in lessons they do silly things and do not always listen when others are talking. At times, older boys try to dominate activities and are not always considerate when the girls are talking. Pupils mature reasonably well and by Year 6 many are confident individuals willing to participate in discussions and offer suggestions and answers to questions. They have a good understanding about keeping safe and about healthy eating, healthy snacks are brought to school and pupils know the merits of exercise. The good range of sports instructors and opportunities also contributes to pupils' health and exercise. Pupils are now more adequately prepared for later life and academic standards are improving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but often with many good features. Teaching is improving because of the greater stability of staffing and regular monitoring which identifies good practice and areas for improvement. Recent changes in the Reception year have resulted in good teaching which stimulates children's interests and develops their confidence. In the best lessons the teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and provide a variety of interesting activities to engage and challenge the pupils. The weaker lessons are not planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The objectives are unclear and so the pupils make less progress than they might. The way teachers assess pupils' work varies between classes. In the best practice, the teachers' marking gives pupils clear indications about what they have done well and how they can improve in the future. At the end of lessons, pupils are encouraged to assess how well they think they have done and what they need to do next. The information gained

from these regular and accurate assessments enables teachers to plan work that is challenging for most levels of ability. However, improvements are needed to enable teaching to fully stretch the brightest pupils. Lesson planning for those pupils who have learning disabilities ensures that, except in the development of reading, their work takes their learning forward at the right pace. Teaching assistants sometimes work well alongside teachers to give pupils good individual support. However, their expertise is not always used as effectively during other parts of the lessons when the teacher is working with the whole class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is satisfactory but the provision for understanding other cultures is less well developed. Recent significant improvements have been made to the curriculum for the children in Reception and this is helping them to settle in school well and enjoy their learning. This was seen when a group acted out a story and the class listened intently, fully interested and involved. The focus on developing the children's personal and social education is helping to develop their confidence and give them a good start to their formal education. In the rest of the school, teachers are beginning to make links between subjects and to develop pupils' skills and knowledge systematically over time. A good range of extra-curricular activities extends the curriculum and helps the pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle, in, for example, sports. These activities are well attended. Pupils also enjoy the visits to local places of interest which help them to remember key learning points and which enrich the curriculum. Older children enjoy taking part in local music festivals.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school cares for its pupils adequately. The pupils are kept safe, happy and secure and child protection matters are well understood. The school makes every effort to ensure that the younger pupils are well looked after by older pupils through the play leaders' scheme. Lunchtimes have become productive times which pupils really enjoy; however, younger pupils think that break times could be more interesting if there was more equipment to play with. A few girls think the boys 'don't give them a chance' and in some lessons this is not managed adequately by staff. The school's provision for pupils who have learning disabilities is now led by an experienced co-ordinator who has recognised the good practice, such as the positive links with the secondary school, which enables pupils with learning disabilities to benefit through using appropriate computer programs. She is also addressing some of the issues the school faces, such as the quality, use and review of targets in individual education plans, a lack of reading progress by some pupils, and ensuring that the deployment and management of support staff is as efficient as possible. The support and work to

improve more able pupils' skills are improving but, nevertheless, this still remains an area for development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and her senior management team provide effective leadership and management. Regular and frequent monitoring of lessons involving observation of classes and scrutiny of the teachers' planning and the pupils' work, has enabled managers to have an accurate picture of the overall quality of teaching and learning. Areas for development have been identified and sensible steps taken to address the evident weaknesses, including revising staffing structures to ensure more balanced teams across the key stages. The senior leadership is committed to continuing professional development for staff and the teachers spoke positively about being encouraged to share best practice and to develop their skills and responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators are developing an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the learning and teaching in the areas that they manage. Many of the subject leaders are recent appointments and in some subjects rigorous systems for assessing the pupils' achievements, monitoring their progress, and setting challenging targets are at an early stage of development. For example, in information and communication technology a computer based system for recording and analysing the pupils' achievements is being trialled with one year group and training for staff is planned so that it can be implemented throughout the school. The school has an accurate picture of most aspects of its performance and uses self-evaluation well to identify priorities for improvement and the deployment of resources. Governors are well informed, they monitor the progress that the school is making and hold the school to account for the standards it achieves.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

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, we visited your school to see how well it is doing. We think that you have made such good progress that we don't need to come back each term to check how well you are doing. Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome, with a special thank you to all of you who showed us your work or spoke to us and told us about your life at school. Everyone we spoke to said that you enjoy being at school and feel safe and well looked after. I am pleased to say that we agree. The adults all help you to learn the right sorts of things in your lessons and they encourage you to do your best. By the time you move onto your next school most of you know the same sorts of things as other children of your age. Mrs Stewart and the others who are in charge of your school check on how well it is doing and have some good ideas about how it can be made even better. We have encouraged the school to continue the improvements that it is making and to try to make all of your lessons as good as the best. We would also like you to try to make sure that everyone has a fair chance to do their best. We enjoyed seeing you at work in your lessons and it was obvious to us that you really enjoy using the outdoor play equipment and you keep to the play zones. I particularly enjoyed the Year 6 minibeast rap and the play that the reception children performed as part of your Divali assembly. Thank you again for helping us with our work.