



Ash Green School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125765
LEA Warwickshire
Inspection number 283109
Inspection dates 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005
Reporting inspector Caroline Bolton HMI

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	Comprehensive	School address	Ash Green Lane
School category	Foundation		Ash Green
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		West Midlands CV7 9AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02476 366772
Number on roll	816	Fax number	0124 7636 6383
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms S Hancox
Date of previous inspection	13 October 2003	Headteacher	Mr G Tyrer

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	283109

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

Ash Green School is smaller than most secondary schools. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. A relatively high proportion of pupils has special educational needs. Few pupils have English as an additional language. In the summer term 2005, the school entered into a federation with the nearby Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College, the headteacher of which is the executive headteacher of Ash Green School. The acting headteacher is also a senior manager at Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College. In recent years Ash Green School has found difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers but the staffing situation is now much more stable. When the school was inspected by HMI in May 2005 in connection with pupils' behaviour, inspectors had serious concerns about the quality of education provided and therefore revisited the school in October 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement, standards, the quality of teaching, subject leadership, attendance and punctuality.

Ash Green School is improving and has made significant progress since the last HMI inspection in May 2005. The senior leadership is effective and has established a clear direction for the school. Senior managers evaluate the school's performance realistically and take appropriate measures to promote improvement. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in particular are much better than in May 2005. Staff and pupils report that relationships and the overall climate in the school are much more positive. A high priority has been given to pupils' personal development and much has been achieved in this area. Attendance has improved but remains below the national average. Too many pupils arrive late for morning school.

Teaching and learning have also improved since the last HMI visit but they remain inadequate overall. This is also the judgement of the school's managers in their self-evaluation. Whilst there is much good practice in the school, teaching and learning are inconsistent and too much is less than satisfactory. Standards remain too low. In the GCSE examinations in 2005 the proportion of pupils achieving five or more passes at A*-C grades rose but there was a decline in the pass rate at A*-G. At Key Stage 3 attainment improved in all three subjects but remained below the school's targets. Because standards and the quality of education are inadequate, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money. Since Easter 2005 the school has been part of a federation with a local secondary school and benefits significantly from this partnership. Whilst subject leadership is improving, it remains uneven in its effectiveness. The governors are beginning to develop their monitoring roles. The school does not comply with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. At senior level leadership is effective and has enabled the school to make significant progress in a short time. The school's capacity to improve is consequently good.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that the teaching consistently challenges all pupils so that they make the progress of which they are capable
- improve the consistency of subject leadership
- improve attendance and punctuality
- meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Overall standards have been significantly below national figures for several years. In 2005 the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*–C grades in GCSE rose from 18% in 2004 to 27%. Results remained well below the school's target of 39%. There was a fall in the pass rate at A*–G grades. The results of the Key Stage 3 national tests in 2005 improved in all three subjects but not significantly. These standards are lower than might be expected taking account of pupils' starting points. The school has set itself challenging targets for 2006.

Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is below average although indications are that in the present Year 7 attainment is slightly higher. Pupils make insufficient progress as they move through the school so that, by the end of Year 9 and Year 11, they do not do as well as pupils in similar schools. In the past unsatisfactory behaviour and lack of challenge in work has marred pupils' progress. Whilst the new leadership team has tackled the unsatisfactory behaviour successfully, the quality of teaching is not consistent enough to provide all pupils with the challenge needed to raise standards significantly. The school is working hard to raise pupils' expectations of what they can achieve through a sound system of setting targets for individual pupils. Pupils' progress towards their targets is monitored regularly by senior staff. This strategy is helping some pupils to make faster progress but teachers do not always use the targets to pitch the work at the right level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Behaviour has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection and is now satisfactory, with much good behaviour in Years 7 to 9 in particular. This improvement results in pupils enjoying school more than they did and feeling safe because the environment is orderly. It also provides the right basis for learning. However, there are still some occasions when pupils do not pay attention in class because of weaknesses in the teaching. Although pupils work collaboratively in some lessons, particularly where teaching is most effective, they do not use and develop skills in working together as well as they should.

Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and take better care of the school building than in the past. They show awareness of others and adopt safe practices, for instance, in their sensible movement about the school. They have a satisfactory awareness of the importance of a healthy diet and of taking regular exercise. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community and there is a good level of involvement in the work of the school council.

Even with the improvements in behaviour the number of pupil exclusions from school remains high because some individuals have not come to terms with the fact that unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated. Although attendance has improved the attendance rate remains below the national figure. Too many pupils arrive late for

school in the mornings. Although pupils generally make satisfactory progress in gaining the skills necessary for their future economic well-being, those whose attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory are not well enough prepared for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning have improved since the time of the last HMI inspection in May 2005 but they remain inadequate overall because the quality is uneven and there is too much which is unsatisfactory. The senior managers evaluate the provision rigorously and have a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. The school has systematic arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning and has provided a good range of professional development opportunities to enable staff to improve their practice. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour has become more consistent and therefore more effective. In many lessons relationships between adults and pupils are of good quality and based upon mutual respect and courtesy. In the best lessons teachers' high expectations of pupils' application and progress meet with a very positive response. Learning is most successful where teachers plan for a variety of challenging activities, including opportunities for independent learning. The teachers of the most effective lessons use assessment well, both in their planning of work and during lessons, to ensure that all pupils are making suitable progress.

Where teaching is unsuccessful work is not well matched to pupils' needs and attainment. Higher attainers are not always given work which is demanding enough, even when they are grouped by ability. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress when there is specific support for them. In lessons in which the range of attainment is wide and no specialist support is available progress is too variable. In a minority of lessons teachers' class control is insecure. Pupils sometimes lose concentration because the teaching fails to engage their interest, and answers to questions are taken from volunteers, allowing the less confident to opt out of discussion.

There are satisfactory systems for monitoring pupils' progress and attainment. Assessment data is analysed and used to establish pupils' starting points and their expected grades. Staff and pupils draw on this information to agree suitably challenging individual targets for each subject. The school monitors progress on a half termly basis but this process is not as firmly established as it needs to be to raise standards significantly. Targeted pupils in Years 9 and 11 receive additional support from senior staff to help them reach higher levels and grades. However, some staff do not make enough use of the data to plan work which fully meets pupils' needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In Key Stage 3 the school provides an appropriate curriculum for pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those identified as higher attainers, although in lessons the progress of these pupils varies with the quality of the teaching. The staff have worked hard to implement the national strategies, although overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is low and the school is aware that work remains to be done to raise standards in these basic skills. At Key Stage 4 the range of vocational and college based courses has rightly been extended to meet the needs of those pupils at risk of disaffection.

Pupils appreciate the new library facilities and the range of extracurricular activities and events, including out of hours teaching for Year 11 pupils taking examinations this year. Those who were involved in the recent school drama production enjoyed and benefited from the experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides a good level of care for pupils' personal well-being. The improvements in behaviour reflect the emphasis given to ensuring that pupils enjoy school and are provided with an environment in which they can learn without fear. The pupils who spoke to inspectors were positive about the systems for supporting them. Most reported that the positive relationships between pupils and adults mean that pupils are confident that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise.

Pupils generally feel safe at school. Adults, including senior staff, maintain a clear presence around the school. The school site is free of major hazards, although not all classrooms are clean and welcoming for pupils. Satisfactory action is taken to ensure that pupils gain awareness of how to stay healthy, for example, through helping pupils to make the right choices about diet and exercise.

There are good arrangements for seeking and acting on pupils' views. Pupils know that their opinions matter and that each one of them is important. The main weakness in the care for pupils is that the quality of advice from teachers on how to improve their school work is too inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In the relatively short time since they took up their present roles, the acting headteacher and executive headteacher have succeeded in establishing a clear educational direction for the school. This is supported by a practical agenda for improvement to which the staff as a whole have given their support. Issues facing the school are being addressed with determination and urgency. Teachers report that their morale and their sense of common purpose have greatly improved since the beginning of the summer term 2005.

The senior staff seek the views of pupils and of the local community and take appropriate action in response to the feedback. After a period of considerable difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified teachers, the staffing is now much more stable and pupils appreciate the continuity in their learning resulting from this improvement. There are systematic arrangements for the monitoring of provision and inspectors agree with the school's overall evaluation of teaching and learning.

The quality of subject leadership is inconsistent in its effectiveness and in the rigour with which teaching and learning are evaluated in different departments. This aspect of management has, however, improved considerably since the last HMI inspection in May 2005. Subject leaders have a clearer understanding of what needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement and have improved their skills, for example, in the use of data. The governors are supportive of the school and have benefited from the federation with the partner school. They are beginning to develop their monitoring role. The close links between the two schools in the federation have been crucial in enabling Ash Green School to make progress on a range of fronts.

Leadership and management overall are satisfactory and, at senior level, they are good. Much has been achieved in a relatively short time particularly in terms of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to study. There have also been improvements in the quality of the teaching and learning, although much remains to be done. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. Overall, the senior managers have addressed areas of concern with determination and urgency and their leadership provides the school with good capacity to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	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?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	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	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	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	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The School Council Ash Green School Ash Green Lane Coventry CV7 9AH

14 October 2005

Dear Pupils

After our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you of our findings. We would also like to thank you for welcoming us and for contributing to the inspection by talking with us about your learning and your views of school life.

You told us that the school has improved a good deal since our last visit in May 2005 and that behaviour is much better than it was then. We agree with you and we were impressed by the positive attitudes which most of you showed in lessons and by the considerate way in which you made your way around the building. The staff have worked hard to support you in making these improvements and it is a real success for the school as a whole. The senior staff have made it very clear to everyone concerned how they see the school developing in the future and we had a good sense that adults and pupils were supporting the changes which have been made. In 2005 there were some improvements in the results in the GCSE examinations and Key Stage 3 tests.

There are, however, a number of areas in which the school needs to make further improvements. We saw a number of good lessons in which everyone was making progress and enjoying their work because the teaching was so effective. We also saw some lessons in which some of you were not doing as well as you could because the work was not at the right level of difficulty. There were a few lessons in which some of you were misbehaving or unwilling to take part in class discussion. Some subject departments are well led but this is not so in all cases. Although standards in tests and examinations rose this summer they are still not high enough. Some pupils do not attend as regularly as they need to in order to make good progress and too many of you arrive late for school in the mornings. Finally, the law requires that all pupils have the opportunity to take part in an act of worship each day and the school is not yet ensuring that this happens.

We have asked the school to improve these matters as soon as possible by giving what is known as a Notice to Improve. We have confidence that the school will be able to do this because we know how many changes for the better there have been in the fairly short time since the new senior staff arrived. We shall be coming back to inspect the school in a year's time to check on the progress which has been made.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Bolton Her Majesty's Inspector