

# Ashurst Primary School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104771
<b>Local Authority</b>	St. Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	287028
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 January –1 February 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under the Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	271
Day care	72
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Janet Roberts
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Brian Banks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 February 2003
<b>Date of previous day care inspection</b>	1 February 2005
<b>School address</b>	New Glade Hill off Chain Lane Blackbrook St Helens Merseyside WA11 9QJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678150
<b>Fax number</b>	01744 678151

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<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 January –1 February 2007
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Re-Published due to amendments.

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Ashurst is a slightly larger than average school. Broadly average proportions of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need. Average numbers are eligible to receive a free school meal. Almost every pupil is of White British heritage. Not all children who enter the part-time Nursery transfer into the Reception class and some who enter Reception have not attended the school's Nursery. The school achieved the Basic Skills and Foundation Stage Quality Marks, together with Investors in People status in 2005, and Activemark Gold and Healthy Schools Awards in 2006. Since the last inspection, the school has had two new headteachers, the most recent of whom took up his post in April 2006.

The school provides an out of school club both before and after school from Monday to Friday during term time. In addition, a playscheme operates between 8.00am and 17.30pm during school holidays. Children attend a variety of sessions. This provision was inspected as part of a pilot project for Single Inspection Events and was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Ashurst is a satisfactory school with some areas of strength, not least that of its successful promotion of the 'Family of Ashurst' philosophy that is very evident throughout school. It provides satisfactory value for money. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are pleased with the school's provision and confirm that their children are very happy there. They understandably have particular praise for the good provision in the Foundation Stage, where children get off to a flying start in the lively, well focused environment. One parent's comment, 'My daughter skips into school every day, she loves it,' echoes that of many others. The parents of some older children express concern about their rate of progress. Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with overall skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress both there and throughout Key Stage 1, to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2. Progress in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching here mean that it is satisfactory overall, so that standards are still broadly average by the end of Year 6. Although there is a system for monitoring teaching, the leadership is not yet using the information gained effectively enough to ensure equally good quality across all year groups. In some Key Stage 2 classes, the pace of learning is too slow, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils and they fail to make clear to them what they want them to do.

Pupils' personal development is good. They form good relationships, behave well and enjoy taking on responsibilities so that the school has a happy atmosphere. Teachers in the Foundation Stage make particularly good use of the outdoors for all areas of learning and the school is successfully extending the Early Years provision into Year 1. Throughout the school, the effective curriculum is strong in sport and pupils have plenty of opportunities to pursue their interests through extra activities at either end of the school day. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well across a range of subjects. Staff show great commitment to pupils as individuals and offer them good quality guidance and support. However, because the quality of marking is variable, in Key Stage 2, pupils are not all sufficiently aware of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has carefully evaluated the school's current position and, while delegating increasing responsibilities to other members of the management team, has started to introduce new systems designed to raise standards and achievement. Staff are clear about priorities and given helpful guidance about what should be done and when. It is too early for the actions to have ensured that pupils make even progress across Key Stage 2 and thereby raise their achievement. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development and is taking action to tackle the weaknesses, with a strong thrust currently on raising standards in mathematics. The school is demonstrating that it has satisfactory capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so that pupils have an equally good experience whichever class they are in.
- Ensure that teachers' marking and use of pupils' targets in Key Stage 2 help them to understand how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the stimulating and imaginative experiences there that make learning fun. They quickly gain confidence and a good level of independence so that, by the time they enter Year 1, most are working towards the expected skills for their age. The weaker areas are calculation and the ability to link letters with sounds. In Key Stage 1, pupils build effectively on their previous learning and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, progress slows and is only satisfactory because it is uneven across year groups. As a result, by the end of Year 6, standards remain broadly average. With good support, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to the other pupils in their class. The school is beginning to use its assessment information more effectively to keep a closer check on pupils' progress to help raise achievement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means that they contribute well to creating the harmonious, family atmosphere that extends throughout the school. From the youngest upwards, pupils respectfully reflect on, for instance, the right ways to behave or how to face up to difficulties with courage, so that they develop a good awareness of others and their own place in the community. They are caring and tolerant of those with physical or emotional difficulties and are beginning to understand about the richness of other cultures and the multi-cultural nature of modern Britain. Attendance is good. Pupils are polite and most behave well, both in and out of the classroom. They enjoy their learning, act safely and have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. The school council, where Year 6 pupils ably represent the youngest children, has a real impact with its ideas to improve, for instance, pupils' behaviour. Its anti-bullying week song-writing competition was greatly enjoyed and has, according to pupils, made unpleasant incidents even rarer events than before. Pupils' good collaborative skills and average literacy and numeracy levels prepare them suitably for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although good quality teaching and learning takes place throughout the school, overall, it is satisfactory because of the unevenness of quality in Key Stage 2 which has an impact on pupils' achievement. Where teachers organise interesting activities, explain them well and lessons move at a good pace, pupils become very involved in their learning, really think about their work and enjoy rising to the challenges set. They discuss their thoughts sensibly with their work partners, as Year 6 pupils did when deciding how to improve their work. Teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, where the work is lacklustre and places limited demands on pupils, their interest flags and they make too little progress. As one commented, 'some lessons do go on a bit'. The teachers of younger pupils assess, monitor and track their progress closely. They use the information very effectively to plan the next sessions, guide pupils about how to improve and keep parents

informed about how they can help. In Key Stage 2, marking is inconsistently linked to pupils' individual targets and is not always helpful in identifying what pupils need to do next to improve their work.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum makes helpful links between different subjects and includes extra support for those who are struggling to acquire basic skills. The use of creative learning activities designed to improve pupils' thinking skills in some classes, keeps them interested and focused. Good use of ICT across a wide range of activities means that each pupil has many opportunities to become 'e confident'. The school's strong promotion of pupils' physical and personal development has been recognised by the recent achievement of the Activemark and Healthy School awards. The Foundation Stage curriculum is vibrant and well organised, both inside and outdoors, giving children a positive start to school life. Older pupils sample science at the high school and others follow a French course. A range of visits and visitors helps to bring pupils' learning to life, while popular clubs, including sports, dance and choir, cater for a good range of different interests.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is fully committed to ensuring pupils are safe and well cared for. It provides a welcoming, friendly environment where pupils are happy in their learning. The school conducts regular health and safety checks, and appropriate procedures for child protection and safeguarding children are in place. The required checks are made and recorded on all adults who work with pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and helped to take a full part in lessons. Consistent but fair systems promote good behaviour and deal effectively with any instances of bullying, should they occur. As a result, pupils are confident that staff will help them with any difficulties. Good induction arrangements into the Nursery and Reception help children to settle quickly and gain self-confidence. Older pupils do not all receive sufficiently clear guidance about how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Satisfactory leadership and management mean that the school runs smoothly on a day to day basis, financial management is sound and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school has conducted extensive, focused evaluation of its provision over recent months and started to take action to bring about improvement, for example, in mathematics. The newly introduced systems for monitoring teaching and pupils' progress are beginning to highlight where this is not good enough, but the information gained is not yet used to best advantage to help individuals reach their potential, especially in Key Stage 2. The improvement plan takes good account of stakeholders' views and has suitable priorities for development, but is not sufficiently specific about how success will be judged in relation to pupils' raised standards. Good leadership and management in the Foundation Stage underpin the high-quality experience that children have there and their good rate of progress. Good partnerships with outside agencies, including the Behaviour Support Team, provide help for staff who deal with some pupils' complex needs.

Governors monitor the school's work and question its actions suitably. They support it well and ensure that it successfully maintains its spirit of the 'Ashurst family'.

## **Effectiveness of registered day care**

### **Grade: 3**

The before and after school care is satisfactory overall. Children attending benefit personally and socially and really enjoy the opportunity to mix with others in a relaxing, calm environment. The children's health and hygiene is generally promoted satisfactorily. Routines for washing hands before snacks are not carried out consistently and as a matter of course, and children do not always take their own initiative to do so. Children enjoy the snacks provided but the variety of food is limited and does not sufficiently promote their understanding of healthy eating. A healthy option is not always available for them to choose. Children's welfare is safeguarded well through well-organised health and safety arrangements. Parents speak warmly about the staff and the level of care provided for their children. Staff work well as a team to ensure children's different needs are catered for. They have a flexible approach to planning, allowing children to contribute their own ideas to the activities provided. Relationships are very good with both children and parents. Children are friendly and very well behaved. They are clearly happy and at ease with each other, and are confident to involve others in their activities. There is a good range of resources, though the range of books is not very enticing, especially for older children, and does not promote cultural diversity well enough. Mandatory policies and procedures are in place, although the documents for the recording of complaints are not in line with current requirements.

### **Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further, the registered person should take into account the following recommendations:

- ensure all children consistently adopt good hygiene practices and are helped to develop an understanding of healthy eating
- update the system for the recording of complaints in line with the latest requirements
- provide a more interesting range of reading materials, especially for older children and to promote cultural diversity.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

**The effectiveness of the registered day care**

<b>The quality and standards of the registered day care</b>	3
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	3
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	3
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	Yes
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming Mrs Aspinall, Ms McIntosh and me so warmly to your school and for being so willing to talk with us and explain what it is like to be a pupil at Ashurst.

Our visit was part of the inspection system for the whole country that assesses how well pupils are learning. Yours is a satisfactory school that has a number of strengths. These include the good quality of your relationships and care for others that help to keep the 'Family of Ashurst' atmosphere strong throughout the school. The school council helps pupils to have a real impact on improving things - the Golden Ticket idea seems to be working well because your behaviour is good. Staff know you well as individuals and offer you good quality care and support so that you feel confident to go to them if you are upset. Children have a great time in the Nursery and Reception classes and this continues into Years 1 and 2 so that younger pupils make good progress in their learning. All of you have a good variety of different activities to keep you interested and we were particularly impressed by how much you use information and communication technology across a range of subjects.

In order to make sure that you all receive good quality education and achieve well throughout the school, we have asked your headteacher and other staff to:

- improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so that you have an equally good experience whichever class you are in
- through better marking and use of your individual targets, help Key Stage 2 pupils understand more clearly how to improve their work.

Your job will be to continue to enjoy learning and attending school as well as you do at the moment.