

Ashperton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116649
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	290577
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Hope
Headteacher	Chris Bandfield
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2002
School address	Ashperton Ledbury HR8 2SE
Telephone number	01531 670385
Fax number	01531 670385

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ashperton Primary is a fairly small school. Almost all of its pupils are of White British heritage and all pupils have English as their home language. The school has identified an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Children start in the Reception class with the range of knowledge and skills typical of children of this age but their personal, social and emotional development is above average. There have been many changes in the management structure of the school. The headteacher has been in post for less than a year and the deputy headteacher for less than a term. Many other management positions have been reorganised this year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

One parent's comments are typical of many, 'Ashperton Primary School is a very positive place which provides a caring and nurturing environment'. Parents recognise that relationships through the school are very good and pupils consequently feel safe and well cared for. This contributes significantly to pupils' good personal and social development and, although the care, support and guidance are satisfactory overall, it is the high levels of pastoral care that is a particular strength of a school.

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The new senior management team are successfully improving systems for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Many positive strategies have been put into place but the headteacher and staff know there is still much to be done to ensure that all pupils achieve well. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and the next stages of improvement have been identified correctly. The headteacher is supported by all staff in his determination to make Ashperton Primary a really good school.

Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. They have been higher in the past and evidence from teachers' assessments shows that standards are improving again this year. Children make a positive start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress in all areas of their learning. Although teaching is good, pupils' achievement through the school is only satisfactory because teachers' expectations for pupils' progress have not been based on a clear understanding of how well they are doing from year to year. As yet, little use is made of assessment information to set targets for what pupils will achieve each year; consequently, underachievement is not always effectively identified. The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched by a wide range of additional activities that extend pupils' interest and skills.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are developing a new ethos for the school, which focuses on extending the well-being of its pupils and on raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been too slow but it is currently moving at a faster rate under their guidance and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The leadership and management roles of subject coordinators are effectively identified and they have made the first steps to improving the school's provision but there has been no time to implement these ideas or to monitor teaching or standards in their subjects. Governors have played an important part in appointing the new leadership team. The school is aware that governors are not well enough informed about the quality of the school's effectiveness to ask important and challenging questions.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment give a clear view of their progress from year to year so that underachievement is identified and addressed.
- Set challenging targets for each pupil to achieve by the end of the year and assess how well they are doing through the year so that teaching continues to be well matched to their needs.
- Provide subject coordinators with the additional skills, knowledge and time to lead and manage their subjects effectively so they have an impact on raising standards and achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in developing a wide range of knowledge and skills in the Reception class. By the time they enter Year 1 most have reached age related expectations and a good number are well launched into their reading, writing and mathematical development. Standards at both key stages are broadly average and progress in Years 1 to 6 for all groups of pupils is satisfactory overall. There has been a declining trend in standards, particularly in Year 2 mostly as a result of the increasing number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The provision for these pupils has been improved this year and they are making similar progress to their peers. Weaknesses in reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2, and in writing in Years 3 to 6, have been identified by the school and strategies for improvement are beginning to have a positive impact. Teachers have not had the information to help them monitor pupils' achievement effectively enough and the progress pupils need to make has not been sufficiently identified. This is also improving and in consequence, standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are rising this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a happy and harmonious community. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. As one parent commented, 'My son loves school and can't wait to get here in the morning'. Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, but too many parents take their children on holiday during term time.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils work together amicably, respect the feelings of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. They respond positively when given responsibility, for example as members of the active school council or as 'buddies' for those who might need support at break times. Pupils are safety conscious and are concerned for the welfare of others. They enjoy a good range of physical activities and understand the importance of healthy eating. Pupils grow their own vegetables and appreciate the quality of the food they produce. They have a strong social and community awareness, and are keen fundraisers for good causes. Their sound progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) helps to prepare them satisfactorily for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is good. In all classes, teachers make learning interesting and focus well on systematically developing pupils' understanding and skills. They use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, successfully to motivate pupils and to help them understand new ideas. The youngest children in the Reception class, for example, are encouraged to learn from their own explorations and experience. Most lessons move along at a brisk pace. There is a clear purpose to the activities that pupils understand and they usually make good progress during the lesson. Teachers match activities well to pupils' needs by evaluating what pupils have learnt but do not set targets for what pupils should achieve over the year. Generally, there is no formal assessment of standards of attainment until the end of the year, by which time it is too late to rectify any weaknesses in their progress. Some of these weaknesses are now being addressed

and formal systems are being used to check pupils' progress. This is helping teachers to be much clearer about what needs to be achieved and standards and progress are both beginning to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is good in the Reception class where children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to learn through practical activities, and very effective use is made of the outside environment as a stimulus for children's work. In Years 1 to 6, provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. Activities are adapted satisfactorily to meet pupils' learning needs. ICT skills are soundly promoted when pupils use the computer suite. However, in classrooms, opportunities are missed for pupils to use these skills to support their work in other subjects. The school provides well for pupils' personal development, and its achievement of the 'Bronze Eco Award' reflects its strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to care for the environment. A good range of additional learning opportunities, including clubs and musical instrument tuition, benefits pupils' learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the many visits and visitors that capture their interest and bring learning alive.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There are key strengths in the quality of pastoral care but areas for improvement in pupils' academic guidance and support. Pupils feel safe and secure, and know that staff will listen if there are any problems. Parents are justifiably confident that pupils are well looked after at school. 'The staff are very caring and take the trouble to make sure your child is happy', said one parent. Child protection procedures are sound, regular health and safety checks are carried out and staff are effective 'first aiders'. The school has forged constructive links with outside agencies to provide support for pupils when this is required. Pupils benefit from good support for their personal development and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and behaviour. Their academic support and guidance are adequate. The school has recently ensured that pupils have targets in English and mathematics but pupils' awareness of these is variable, and the targets are not always matched precisely to pupils' individual learning needs. In addition, pupils' involvement in evaluating their own progress is inconsistent. Pupils' work is regularly marked, and often provides encouraging remarks and well-focused advice. However, mediocre work is sometimes unjustifiably praised and pupils do not always receive clear guidance about how to improve. These weaknesses have been identified by the school and are part of its improvement plan.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has been through a period of considerable change. The headteacher has worked hard to speed up the improvement rate since the last inspection. There have been changes in the coordination of many subjects. Important management procedures such as the monitoring of standards, progress and teaching have been introduced. Many initiatives are very new and not yet complete and although some are having a positive impact, for others it is still too soon for differences to be seen. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and becoming more

perceptive. Governors are far more aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are involved in several aspects of monitoring, including the progress of the school improvement plan, but there are many required policies that are waiting for their final agreement. The commitment of all staff and governors to raising standards and improving the academic provision is clear and, based on developments so far, the capacity to improve is judged as satisfactory.

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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>	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	No

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	3

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

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

5 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashperton Primary School, Ledbury, HR8 2SE

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we thought about your school. We think that your school is presently satisfactory.

What we liked about the school

- This is an improving school because all the staff are working hard to make the school better. Standards you attain are similar to most children of your age and you make satisfactory progress in your work.
- You enjoy school and you behave sensibly and are kind to each other.
- Teaching is good and you find your lessons interesting and try to do well.
- You have a good understanding about how to keep healthy and safe.
- You enjoy working together to make the school a better place.
- The staff look after you well and help you feel safe and secure.
- Your headteacher is introducing many new ideas to help teachers understand how well you are getting on.

What we have asked the school to do now

- To keep a good check on the progress you make in your work from year to year so any pupils who need extra help are supported and you all make better progress.
- For teachers to agree at the beginning of each year what standards you should reach so they can ensure you all have every opportunity to succeed.
- For teachers who are responsible for the different subjects, to check how well you are taught and the quality of your work.

Thank you again for helping us with our questions.

Best wishes

Mrs Callaghan Lead inspector