

Ashbrook Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112602
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	310942
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Buxton HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Steare
Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Jaszczuk
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2001
School address	Victoria Avenue Borrowash Derby Derbyshire DE72 3HF
Telephone number	01332 673785
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' standards and achievement, particularly in mathematics; the impact of teaching on pupils' learning; and the rigour with which the school evaluates the impact of its improvement strategies. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and school life, scrutiny of pupils' work, analysis of pupils' performance data, interviews with pupils, scrutiny of parental questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school serving the local communities of Ockbrook and Borrowash, just to the east of Derby. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly higher than in most schools. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average. The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Standard, the Derbyshire Anti-Bullying Campaign Intermediate Award, the National Sports Activemark and the Football Association Charter Standard for Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The leadership team at Ashbrook Junior School judge the school's effectiveness as satisfactory overall, but with some good features, and the inspectors agree. The vast majority of parents hold the school in high regard and their comments capture its key qualities. Typical comments include, 'Ashbrook is a very caring and happy school with approachable and helpful staff.'

The close links with the infant school help pupils to settle quickly when they transfer. Over recent years pupils enter the school with attainment that is broadly average. Pupils make satisfactory progress so that by the time they leave the school they achieve standards in line with the national average, which ensures they have the skills needed for the start of their secondary education. The good support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they make good progress and achieve standards above similar pupils nationally. However, the attainment of the most recent intake of pupils is significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics; as a result, the school is adjusting its teaching to better meet the needs of all ability groups, including the more able.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and, as observed during the inspection, good in some respects. Relationships are good and pupils are eager to participate in lessons and show good attitudes to learning. Most lessons are pacy and keep pupils' interest throughout. Teaching assistants are briefed and deployed well, usually supporting those pupils needing additional help and guidance. The school is already working to improve teachers' assessment of pupils' progress to ensure that subsequent learning is planned appropriately. They are also supporting some members of staff to make greater use of information and communication technology in their lessons and, in particular, to become more skilled at using the interactive whiteboards. The staff provide good care, guidance and support for the pupils. They know them well and ensure that all appropriate safeguarding requirements are fully met. Pupils are confident that they have plenty of choice of adults to talk to if they have any problems or concerns. They are increasingly aware of how well they are achieving and how they can improve their work. The developing use of self-assessment across the school is helping pupils focus increasingly accurately on their next steps.

The good curriculum is making a strong contribution to pupils' overall engagement with learning. This is because the teachers are increasingly using relevant themes to link together the learning in different subjects and make the lessons more relevant and coherent for pupils. For example, the recent focus on poetry provided a good stimulus for creative work in English, technology, science and music, which culminated in pupils performing their work to each other. Although this approach of linking learning to practical experiences is increasing, it has not been developed to its full potential and more can be done, particularly in mathematics. A good range of sports, clubs and trips adds to pupils' enjoyment and enriches the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development is good as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although a very few parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour, the inspectors agree with the school that pupils behave well overall. This is because the school provides pupils with good strategies to manage incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The recent opening of the 'nurture room', where pupils can talk to a trained adult, and the appointment of older pupils as 'playground buddies' who promote structured play, are good examples of how the school is responding positively to help pupils work and live together successfully. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school council has been proactive in

promoting the introduction of healthy snacks at playtime and the recent introduction of a salad bar at lunchtime has proved very popular. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and enjoy opportunities to take on responsibilities. They participate eagerly in fund raising events for the local community and the school. Attendance is satisfactory although the school works hard with a very few families who find it difficult to maintain good levels of attendance for their children.

The day-to-day leadership and management work well ensuring the smooth running of the school. Following a period of change the leadership team is now established and working smoothly. The school's leadership have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and the areas where it needs to improve. For example, considerable efforts have been made, including the use of educational consultants, to raise pupils' attainment in mathematics; however, because the different initiatives have not yet made any significant impact on improving pupils' standards, this priority remains. As a result, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The leadership monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly; although they focus appropriately on teaching strengths and areas to develop they do not look closely enough at how well the teaching impacts on pupils' learning. The headteacher and deputy work together well to create a clear direction for future improvement work, which they present to the governors. Governance is satisfactory but the governors are looking to develop their role further by enhancing their skills in monitoring so that they can play a greater role evaluating the school's progress. The school's improvement plan focuses appropriately on the Every Child Matters agenda; however, the success criteria do not specify how each action is expected to impact on raising pupils' attainment and so help the school to achieve its academic targets.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the links between mathematical lessons and other subjects and pupils' everyday practical experiences and interests to make learning more coherent and relevant.
- Ensure that lesson observations focus on how well teaching impacts on pupils' learning and thereby increase the number of good lessons.
- Sharpen the school improvement plan's success criteria so that they focus on raising pupils' attainment, can be used to evaluate progress and contribute to the school achieving its academic targets.

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.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ashbrook Junior School, Derby, DE72 3HF

Thank you very much for making us so welcome and helping us to find out about life at Ashbrook Junior School. We really enjoyed speaking with you in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and during our meeting with the school council. Many of you told us how much you like your school and we can see why.

These are the things that we found are best.

- The staff know you well and take good care of you.
- The good progress made by pupils who find learning difficult.
- You enjoy your lessons and find them interesting.
- You behave well and have good manners.
- You like the range of clubs that the school offers, particularly the salsa club and the science club.
- You know how to stay safe and lead a healthy life.

These are the things that we think can be improved.

- Make the mathematics lessons more relevant to your everyday experiences and interests.
- Ensure that the school leaders focus their observations of teaching on how well you are helped to learn.
- Make sure that the school's improvement plan includes clear targets that focus on helping you to achieve high standards.

Thank you once again and don't forget to do your best at all times.

Ken Buxton

Her Majesty's Inspector