

# Ashley Junior School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116488
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312336
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Laver

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	283
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Lawrence Tams
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Rix
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Ashley Road New Milton BH25 5BP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01425 616510
<b>Fax number</b>	01425 629130

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the achievement and standards of pupils, focusing on the current academic year; the quality of teaching and learning; and the contribution of leadership and management at subject leader level. Evidence was gathered from observations in lessons and of pupils around the school; from discussions with pupils, parents, a governor, the senior leadership team and subject leaders; from analysing a range of documents, assessment and tracking data; and from analysing replies to the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as reported in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The great majority of pupils are from a White British background and the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, which encompass a wide range of behavioural and emotional issues as well as difficulties with literacy and numeracy, is above average. In some year groups, a significant proportion of pupils join the school other than at the usual time, especially higher up the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Ashley Junior is a good school, providing a good standard of education. The great majority of parents are very complimentary about the school's provision. They are particularly enthusiastic about the quality of care and support, the dedication of staff and the range of activities provided for pupils. Typical of many parental comments were the following: 'I cannot praise the school enough. The school has encouraged my child to believe in her abilities and stretch the boundaries in all respects,' and 'The school is always looking for new ways to make learning fun.'

Ashley Junior is also an improving school, although the path of improvement has not always been smooth. The school has long and deservedly had a good reputation in the community, but academic success has been variable in recent years, and there have been several recent changes in staffing. The 2007 national test results showed a falling off in performance in Year 6, with many girls, in particular, making insufficient progress. However, this has not been part of a longer-term trend. Standards and achievement have risen in the past year, mainly due to a perceptive leadership team gradually embedding a range of improvement strategies. Standards higher up the school are currently in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 6 joined the school with below average standards, and in addition, a significant number of lower attaining pupils joined this group when they were in Year 5. All these pupils are currently achieving well and are on track to meet appropriately challenging targets. Year groups in the school are very different in their make up. The current Year 3 and 4 groups are of above average standard, and they are also making good progress and achieving well. Therefore the school has succeeded in raising progress over time so that it is now good, although a minority of pupils do not always achieve as well as they might in individual lessons, when there are insufficient challenges or expectations in the teaching.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school, particularly the good range of after-school clubs, such as those in sport and music. Pupils behave well, apart from occasional silliness in the playground. Good procedures have led to improved attendance. Pupils enjoy opportunities to help each other and raise funds for the wider community, although they feel that the school council could be a more vibrant body. Pupils understand the school's drive to promote a healthy lifestyle. The school successfully promotes good spiritual, moral and cultural development, whilst pupils' social skills, evident particularly in their collaborative work in lessons, are a strength of the school.

The school provides strong personal support for pupils, as they and their parents testify. Procedures to assess and track academic progress are relatively recent and still developing. Regular staff meetings about pupils' progress now effectively identify individual needs, so that potential underachievers are quickly identified, are given support, and consequently make good progress. The school uses data to set targets. However, not all pupils know their targets well and teachers do not yet use them systematically in the classroom. Marking is also variable in quality, and often does not give clear guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work, nor do teachers ensure that pupils take their comments on board.

Teaching has improved, partly because of good professional development. For example, staff have had opportunities to observe good practice elsewhere. However, there are still some inconsistencies. The good teaching is characterised by brisk pace, good class management and engaging pupils in active learning. This was seen in a Year 3 class, in which pupils enjoyed doing practical measuring experiments in science. Inconsistency arises because sometimes teachers

have insufficiently high expectations of all pupils, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics. For example, sometimes topic work does not encourage a range of writing, and the tasks are too low-level for some pupils.

The school is well led and managed. Parents praise the high profile of the headteacher. He ensures that the school is clearly focused on improvement, and this is reflected in appropriate planning, which in turn is based on good monitoring and self-evaluation. Subject leaders work hard in monitoring planning and standards but, in observing lessons, there is too little focus on the quality of learning or strategies to iron out inconsistencies. The school recognises this, along with other areas for improvement. This awareness, combined with a track record of success in key areas such as improving achievement, ensures that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality and consistency of marking and the use of targets as a means of showing pupils how to improve their work.
- Raise teachers' expectations, particularly of the quality and presentation of writing, in subjects other than English.
- Refine the role of subject leaders to encourage a more rigorous approach to monitoring learning.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<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>	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### 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 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	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<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>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

04 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashley Junior School, New Milton, BH25 5BP

Thank you for welcoming me into your school and talking to me so willingly during my brief visit. I was impressed by your politeness and how well I saw you behaving, both around school and in lessons. I particularly liked the way you cooperated with each other when working in groups.

Ashley Junior is a good school. Both you and your parents believe this, and I agree. The school helps you learn well and gives you a good range of activities, which I know you enjoy. You also understand the importance of trying to live healthily, you enjoy helping others and your attendance at school has improved. Mr Rix leads the school well and works hard to make learning fun. Your teachers, who are very dedicated to helping you, teach you well, so that most of you make good progress. You are doing better now than in some recent years. The school also looks after you well and gives you lots of opportunities to take responsibility, although I know that some of you think that the school council could be more active.

Although most of you are doing well, occasionally you could do even better. I have asked the school to help you to improve standards by giving you more guidance when marking your work, and by using your targets more. I have also asked them to provide more challenging tasks in some of your subjects, so that you have to think harder and can improve your writing even more. I have asked your teachers to share ideas with each other on how to improve your learning. If you continue to work hard, you will help your teachers get you even better results.

Once again, thank you for your welcome and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Laver

Lead Inspector