

Ash Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125116
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315153
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Olson Davis

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr G Smith
Headteacher	Mrs L A Richards
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Ash Church Road Ash Aldershot GU12 6LX
Telephone number	01252 328589
Fax number	01252 333228

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost four out of ten pupils are eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The next largest group are of Gypsy Roma/Traveller heritage. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is much lower than the national average. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with statements of special educational need are much higher than in most schools. A children's centre is currently being built on the site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Ash Grange Primary provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The headteacher has established a positive ethos, in which pupils are happy and enjoy learning. The caring approach of all of the adults fosters a calm and supportive atmosphere. They know the pupils' pastoral needs well. There is a strong understanding of the cultural heritages of the pupils and the school makes significant efforts to ensure that pupils from all backgrounds feel valued, safe and secure. The school makes good use of outside agencies to support pupils and their families. There are good links with parents, who are very appreciative of the work of the school. As one wrote, 'The school not only teaches my children academic skills, but also some core values of life to help them grow into decent and responsible human beings.'

There are many positive aspects to pupils' personal development. Pupils are keen to adopt a healthy lifestyle and recognise the importance of nutritious food and exercise. The school council and the school newspaper give pupils a strong voice within the school community. They are proud of the school facilities and the playground that they helped to design. Pupils are also concerned for the less fortunate in the wider community and raise money for charity.

Standards are low in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 but they are improving. Given the particularly low starting points and learning needs of many pupils, this represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils make steady progress in their learning because the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers assess pupils' progress to find those who need additional help and those capable of reaching the higher levels. However, they do not always make the best use of this information when planning learning activities, particularly for more able pupils. A satisfactory curriculum is enhanced by a good range of activities linked to the creative arts. Pupils are encouraged to develop talents in art and sport which have a positive effect on their personal development.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although there have been improvements, there is more to do to ensure that initiatives are having a full impact on standards. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Subject leaders offer sound support and advice to colleagues. However, they are not fully involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. This limits the effectiveness of the advice they can give to colleagues to help them raise standards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the nursery with standards lower than those expected for their age, particularly in language skills and in social skills and confidence. Recently children have started to enter the nursery at an earlier age. This additional time, together with good teaching, is leading to good progress. However, only a small but increasing number of children reach the levels expected for pupils entering Year 1. Teachers have high expectations and children are constantly challenged, praised and supported. Consequently, they achieve well. There is a good balance between adult directed activities and those chosen by children. The Foundation Stage leader provides clear direction with a strong focus upon achievement and the children's personal development and well-being. The parents are rightly supportive of the provision. As one parent wrote, 'Both of my children enjoyed every aspect of their time in the Foundation Stage.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Make sure that teachers make better use of assessment information to plan learning activities that meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able.
- Develop the monitoring role of subject leaders so that they can support teachers more fully in raising standards.

A small proportion of 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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, given their low starting points and learning needs. The high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or with statements of special educational need means test results tend to be low. Standards at the end of Year 2 rose significantly in 2007. Pupils attained broadly average standards in reading and mathematics. This reflected the higher starting points of this group at Year 1 and the school's successful work in developing pupils' phonic skills.

Pupils make steady progress but the more able should do better. Too few pupils reach the higher levels in the national assessments at Year 2 and Year 6. In 2007, standards in Year 6 were low in English, mathematics and science but they are rising. School assessment data shows that the current Year 6 pupils are making satisfactory progress and are set to reach suitably challenging targets. Pupils identified as Gypsy Roma/Traveller heritage make satisfactory progress because they are well supported in school. The good additional support for pupils with learning difficulties allows them to make the same progress as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies successfully reinforce the moral and social values of the school community but not all pupils show respect during opportunities for reflection. Pupils help each other and work well together. One pupil said, 'Our school is special because of the friendships, everyone is really close.' Behaviour is satisfactory and most pupils demonstrate good attitudes to their work. A small minority of pupils require the skilled intervention of adults to ensure that their behaviour does not interfere with their own learning and the learning of others. Attendance is only satisfactory because of the prolonged absence of a minority of pupils. Pupils' sound progress in acquiring basic skills means they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage the pupils well and have established very good relationships. Pupils enjoy lessons, particularly when they involve practical activities. Teachers explain tasks well so that pupils know what to do. They make good use of resources, such as the interactive whiteboards, to enliven their teaching. The school has worked effectively to improve the teaching of reading

and this has led to improved standards and enthusiasm from pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but comments, though often encouraging, do not always clearly show pupils how to improve. Teachers are making increased use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and to identify weaknesses. However, in some lessons this information is not used well enough to match work to the needs of more able pupils. Consequently, these pupils find some of the work lacks challenge and the pace of their learning slows. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to provide good support to individuals and small groups who need additional help.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils learn to lead healthy lives and to adopt safe practices through a well planned personal, social and health education programme and opportunities to take part in physical activities. Recent improvements to the Year 1 curriculum ensure that pupils build on the good start they make in the Foundation Stage. Although teachers make links between subjects to make learning more interesting and meaningful for pupils, they sometimes miss opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills in other subjects. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the additional needs of pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties and statements of educational need. National guidelines are followed in mathematics and science but opportunities for problem solving and practical investigations are not fully exploited. A wide range of visits, visitors and special projects contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school and their good cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are robust. The home-school link worker and school counsellor provide a high level of support to the more vulnerable pupils, improving their self-esteem, behaviour and attendance. Measures to promote good attendance are beginning to have a positive impact but more needs to be done to dissuade some parents from taking their children out of school during term-time. Parents appreciate the nutritious start to the day offered by the breakfast club. One wrote, 'My children have developed a much more positive attitude towards school by being part of this early start group.' The school works well with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of pupils of Gypsy Roma/Traveller heritage are met well. Although academic guidance is satisfactory, not all pupils have targets that tell them precisely what they need to improve. As a result, pupils are not always clear about the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior management team have forged a strong sense of purpose and teamwork within the school. Although the school has overestimated some aspects of its performance, school leaders have accurately identified the areas in need of development, recognising the need to raise standards. Self evaluation is satisfactory. Recent initiatives have led to an improvement in standards at Year 2 and in mathematics at Year 6. The pupil tracking system enables school leaders to have a clear view of pupils' progress. More remains to be done to ensure that teachers are making the best use of assessment information to quicken the progress made by pupils, particularly the more able. Teaching is monitored regularly by school leaders. However, subject leaders do not yet have sufficient influence on improving the quality

of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support the school well. They increasingly challenge the school and hold it to account for the education it provides.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
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 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	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

7 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ash Grange Primary School, Aldershot, GU12 6LX

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you about your work and the things you enjoy doing. This is what we found out about your school.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. These are some of the things your school does well.

- The staff take good care of you which makes you feel happy and safe.
- The children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to school.
- You enjoy your learning and the other activities the teachers plan for you.
- The school listens to you when you suggest how things could be improved and you like being given responsibilities.
- You are making satisfactory progress in your learning.
- The headteacher and governors have clear plans on how to improve the school.

To improve further, we have asked the school to improve three main things:

- to help you do better in English, mathematics and science lessons
- to make sure that teachers give you work that is at just the right level for you, especially those of you who can do harder work
- to encourage teachers to visit each other's classrooms more often to see how well you are learning.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy school. We also hope that you will help your teachers as they work hard to make your school even better for you.

Yours sincerely

Olson Davis

Lead Inspector