

Ashley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108685
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	337121
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Allan Lacey HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	481
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Dawson
Headteacher	Mrs Denise Todd
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Temple Park Road South Shields Tyne and Wear NE34 0QA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 15 teachers, observed 18 lessons and undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. They held meetings with staff, governors, parents and carers and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked in detail at the following: the school's development plan and safeguarding policies; the school's data on pupils' progress; assessment records and case studies and minutes of various meetings, including those of the governing body. The inspectors also analysed the 236 questionnaires returned by parents and carers of pupils at the school.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils make progress relative to their starting points
- how well the curriculum meets the learning needs of all pupils
- how well assessment is used to meet the needs of all pupils
- how effectively leaders at all levels realise an ambitious vision for the school, have high expectations of pupils and secure lasting improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is at the national average. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage. The remaining pupils are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is at the national average. The school holds a number of awards including the Healthy Schools award, Activemark, Eco-Schools Award and the International Schools award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ashley Primary School is a good school. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. Parents and carers are most positive about all aspects of the school and their views are summed up by the following comment; 'my daughter really loves this school, she has come on so well here! I feel very fortunate that my child is at such a lovely school.' Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels and knowledge that are often below those expected for their age. By the time they leave the Reception Year, their attainment is just above average. Pupils' good progress continues as they move through the school and attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, science and mathematics is above the national average.

Pupils' very positive attitudes and good behaviour are strengths of their learning. Pupils think about their actions and the consequences well, which is a reflection of the helpful guidance they receive from the caring adults around them. Pupils are very confident that bullying is rare and disagreements are quickly resolved. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take responsibility within the school and see themselves very much as part of a team working together. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community, with many very worthwhile and innovative links being made. Pupils' demonstrate an outstanding level of understanding about the need to eat healthily and take plenty of exercise.

Teaching at the school is good and some is outstanding. The best lessons, fully, motivate and engage the pupils in their learning. Pupils are actively involved in lessons and make good progress, although the pace of a few lessons slackens sometimes because, occasionally, teachers talk for too long. Teachers use assessment information effectively to match work to pupils' ability but this is not always the case, leading to a few lessons lacking the appropriate challenge. The school recognises that a sharper use of assessment is now required to tackle the variation in pupils' progress and secure further improvements in attainment. In some lessons, pupils are not always given sufficiently clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Work is marked promptly but marking does not always identify clearly what pupils need to do next to improve. Support staff make a very good contribution to learning because they are well informed about the needs of the pupils they support. The curriculum is well organised and imaginative and impacts positively on pupils' motivation and progress. It is enriched by the school's numerous links, partnerships and creative opportunities, which contribute very well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively through the curriculum. However, the detailed analyses of outcomes to ensure both equality and challenge for all are underdeveloped. The school engages with parents and carers well and they appreciate the steps which the school takes to make sure they are involved.

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The school has worked well to ensure that there are tracking and monitoring systems in place to evaluate the progress and well-being of all individuals and groups of pupils. However, they are not yet rigorous enough to allow the school to evaluate fully the impact of its work. The monitoring of teaching and learning is comprehensive. However, it focuses too much on what the teacher is doing and not enough on pupils' learning and achievement. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and provide satisfactory levels of challenge and support. In the light of the school's significant strengths, leaders and managers demonstrate a good capacity to improve the school further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the focus on improving teaching in order to increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons, by:
 - increasing the pace of lessons and striking a better balance between teachers' talk and pupils' activity
 - improving the use of assessment information to provide sufficient challenge to all pupils
 - developing marking so that pupils know better how to improve
 - improving the effectiveness of lesson observations by, consistently, focussing on the learning and progress of all pupils.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the progress and well-being of all individuals and groups of pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children start school with a wide range of skills but their overall attainment is below that expected. They leave Year 6 having attained above average standards in English and mathematics, following good progress. Scrutiny of the progress of individual pupils shows that all make at least the expected progress in English and mathematics and many make better than expected progress. This applies to pupils of all ages and abilities and to both boys and girls. The good support that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive ensures that their learning and progress are good and they are happy and secure.

Pupils feel safe in school and say that they are not concerned about bullying because they are confident that any incidents will be dealt with effectively. The pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour are strengths of their learning. One older pupil described the feelings of many when he said, 'This school is great! We are all work hard and have fun learning'. Many pupils benefit from the good range of opportunities to contribute to the school and wider communities, for example, as members of the very effective school council and by raising money for local and international charities. Older pupils provide excellent role models for younger pupils to look up to and emulate. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding about the need to eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. Attendance has improved to be broadly average but is still constrained by too many

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holidays taken in term-time and by a few pupils who should attend more regularly. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding is good. By the time that they leave the school, pupils have become mature and responsible young people who are confident and have high self-esteem.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In the large majority of lessons where teaching is of a good quality, high expectations secure pupils' good progress. In these lessons, detailed planning provides challenging work for all groups of pupils, as it is based on an accurate assessment of pupils' prior learning. In these lessons, progress towards learning objectives is regularly checked to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to extend their thinking and learning further. The school recognises that a sharper use of assessment in all classrooms is now required to tackle the variation in pupils' progress and secure further improvements in attainment. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work with adults and their peers and the use of specific targets using 'child friendly language' promotes learning and progress. Marking in pupils' books is completed regularly and often includes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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encouragement. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of advice it provides to indicate the next step in learning.

Considerable thought and effort has gone into providing an interesting curriculum that ensures basic skills are practised and used well in a broad range of subjects and experiences for pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, as well as educational visits and visitors to school. Pupils of all ages, also, have access to a wide range of sports, along with the opportunity to take part in a number of artistic and musical activities. The school is aware of the need for teachers and pupils to use information and communication technology more effectively, in order to promote pupils' interest and to enhance their learning.

The good quality of care and support provided ensures pupils' good personal development and good behaviour. Pupils are given a clear moral framework and understand and follow the school and class rules, which are supported with rewards rather than sanctions. They are encouraged to consider the needs of others and do so extremely well. The excellent relationships they have with staff mean that they are confident in going to them if they are worried about their work or more personal matters. The school has a realistic and proportionate approach to safety and safeguarding permeates all aspects of the school's life.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The determination, vision and commitment of the headteacher have created a welcoming and harmonious ethos, which permeates the school. As a result of the high degree of care and trust, staff support each other well. Staffing has been reorganised, weaker teaching has been tackled well and there is a clear ambition to make sure that all lessons are of a high standard and that pupils achieve well. The leadership team have worked well in ensuring that there are tracking and monitoring systems in place to evaluate the progress and well-being of all individuals and groups of pupils. The school recognises that its analysis of the resulting information to evaluate the impact of teaching and other aspects of the school's work needs to be more fully developed. The leadership team monitors the quality of teaching regularly, however, the quality of lesson observations is varied and focuses too much upon what the teacher is doing rather than on what the pupils are learning and achieving.

Parents and carers appreciate the steps that the school takes to make sure that they are

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involved, saying, for example, 'we know what our child is doing at school and we have been shown by the school how to help her when she needs it '. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and provide satisfactory challenge and support, however, their role in planning and evaluating school improvement actions is limited. The school has good links with other schools and outside agencies that support pupils' learning well.

The school has achieved success in removing any barriers to learning experienced by individuals or specific groups of pupils. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively through the curriculum. However the detailed analyses of outcomes to ensure both equality and challenge for all are underdeveloped. The school's promotion of community cohesion, both in the school and the wider locality, is developing and it has a good understanding of the community it serves.

Safeguarding arrangements are good and both staff and pupils state that they feel safe and secure in school. The school manages its finances well and ensures good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly effective in establishing firm foundations for good personal outcomes. Children feel safe, are confident, happy and settled and enjoy activities in all areas of learning. They share their toys, work together happily and behave well.

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The school provides an attractive, well set out and vibrant learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, in which children flourish. A range of healthy snacks, constant access to drinking water and many opportunities for exercise, help children to develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy. All staff ensure that requirements regarding children's safety are met. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the, very skilful, teachers in the Reception classes have an extremely clear understanding of how children learn. There is much useful information about children and their progress and observations and assessments are very well used to inform day-to-day planning. There is a strong team ethos amongst the many adults who, skilfully and sensitively, support children with a wide range of diverse needs. There are highly effective partnerships with parents and carers that enable children to settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes and there are good arrangements for transition into Year 1. The well-led and well-managed Child Development Centre provides a good start to school life for its children. The outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage leader and the, very skilful, teachers have an extremely clear understanding of how they will improve the provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers that responded to the inspection questionnaire are happy with the provision for their children. Almost all parents and carers believe that their children enjoy school. The very large majority feel their children are making sufficient progress and that teaching is good; the inspectors agree. One parent/carer summed up such views by commenting 'I think this is a really good school, the children love it and the Headteacher has done an outstanding job.'

A small minority of parents and carers raised issues regarding the school keeping them informed about their child's progress. Evidence gained during the inspection indicated that there is good provision in this area. A small minority of parents and carers raised issues regarding how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Evidence gained during the inspection indicated the school had good procedures and strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and inspectors judged behaviour in the school to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashley Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 236 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 481 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	144	61	84	36	6	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	153	65	82	35	1	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	123	52	100	42	11	5	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	132	56	98	42	5	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	145	61	87	37	3	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	113	48	113	48	8	3	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	127	54	104	44	5	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	118	50	112	47	1	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	133	56	96	41	5	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	118	50	97	41	14	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	115	49	106	45	7	3	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	135	57	99	42	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	151	64	78	33	4	2	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashley Primary School, South Shields, NE34 0QA

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspectors during our visit. You helped us a great deal by talking to us and filling in the questionnaire.

We enjoyed very much talking with you about your school. You should be very proud because you are very polite and your behaviour is good. You say you feel very safe and appreciate the care that all adults show to you. You told us that most of your lessons were fun and we agree with you.

Your headteacher leads your school well, with the support of all her staff. They make sure you are happy and you learn well. Your school provides you with a good education. You make a good progress throughout the school because you are usually taught well and you work hard.

Your headteacher, all the other staff and governors are determined to make things even better. We have asked them to make sure that they watch carefully how you are doing in lessons and how the teaching is helping you to learn. We have also asked them to think of ways to make your lessons even more interesting and how they can help you understand your next steps in learning when they mark your work. You can help the teachers by continuing to follow their advice on improving your own work, always trying hard and having fun.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Allan Lacey

Additional Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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