

# Ashbrook Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112688
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	337989
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Doris Bell

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	125
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Margaret Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Angela Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	0 March 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with the Chair of Governors, staff, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation records, assessment records, individual educational plans, minutes of meetings and the termly reports of the school improvement partner. The responses from the pupil and staff questionnaires were analysed as were the responses from the 53 parents' questionnaires.

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

- attainment on entry to Reception as well as to Nursery to gain a true picture of progress in both Nursery and Reception
- achievement in reading and mathematics for pupils currently in school to determine whether actions taken have improved it
- pupils' understanding of how to keep safe, fit and healthy, their contribution to the community, their understanding of cultural diversity, and what the school does to promote it
- how well all leaders and managers check and improve teaching and learning, and what impact this has on pupils' progress.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average sized school admits children to the Early Years Foundation Stage in September and January each year. Its Nursery caters for 38 children, who attend either a morning or an afternoon session. Children in Nursery and Reception are taught separately, while pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in three mixed age classes. Privately run breakfast and after school clubs operate on the school site.

The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, 17.5%, is also average, although in Year 2 it is 37% and therefore well above average. Virtually all pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school holds a Healthy Schools Award and an ECO Schools Bronze Award. The headteacher took up her post in September 2007.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It is nevertheless improving as a result of the clear educational direction provided by the headteacher. All staff and governors are firmly committed to achieving her vision of making the school outstanding. Leadership and management, aspects of which were key issues at the previous inspection, are satisfactory. Leaders and managers, including governors, understand their roles and responsibilities and have made a good start on fulfilling them, including through observing teaching and learning. It is too soon to assess the full impact of this work on standards, but it has led to good progress in writing, and assessment records show that progress is improving in reading and mathematics. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2.

Children make better progress in Reception than in Nursery. Learning intentions are not always clear enough in Nursery activities, and adults do not interact enough in child selected activities to move children's learning on. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, often reaching expected standards in Year 2. However, not all pupils capable of reaching higher standards in reading and mathematics do so. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what more-able pupils can do, and they are very cautious about assessing pupils at the higher level. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory, although some good and outstanding teaching was observed during the inspection, and the curriculum promotes pupils' health, safety and well-being effectively.

Attendance is above average, pupils enjoy school, and they behave well. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe, fit and healthy. They feel safe in school, stating confidently that 'none of the teachers in this school would let anything happen to any of us'. Safeguarding requirements form an integral part of the good care, guidance and support provided for all pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Its good partnership with them and with external agencies contributes effectively to the pupils' improving progress and good personal development.

Governors have a policy for promoting community cohesion but they do not have an action plan to support its implementation. Formalising the work the school already does in this area, including in promoting pupils' understanding of cultural diversity, is a priority in this year's school improvement plan. The school's track record of improvement since the previous inspection, although satisfactory, has been slower than it would have liked. This was because of instability in staffing, which has now been resolved. Recent improvements in leadership and management, and in reading, writing and mathematics, show that, while the school currently has satisfactory capacity for

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further improvement, this too is improving.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Achieve consistently good teaching throughout the school by:
  - increasing the pace and challenge in lessons, especially for more able pupils
  - raising teachers' expectations of what all pupils can do, particularly in reading and mathematics.
  - Improve provision and progress in the Nursery by:
    - ensuring all activities have a clear focus for learning, and staff interact more frequently with children to ensure they are learning
    - checking more rigorously that agreed actions are being implemented.
    - Complete and implement the action plan for community cohesion.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

The quality of learning, and standards seen in lessons during the inspection, confirmed that relative to their starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards have fluctuated between average and above average in recent years but overall, they are average. The proportion of pupils, especially boys, reaching the higher levels in reading and mathematics has fallen. However, progress in writing is good and standards in writing are above average because the school has successfully improved writing since the previous inspection. In the past year, it has worked consistently well with staff, parents and volunteers to halt the decline in reading and mathematics and its efforts are beginning to pay off. All pupils, including boys, say they now enjoy reading. They use phonics effectively to read and spell new words, and have an increased understanding of what they read. In mathematics, pupils are beginning to use and apply their number skills effectively in problem solving activities because these skills are being honed in snappy mental and well planned practical activities.

Pupils understand the importance of behaving well, saying 'cos it helps you to learn'. They respect and value each other, fully appreciating that some pupils need more help than others to behave well. When restlessness does creep in, it is usually because they are itching to begin their tasks, and the teacher has kept them too long on the carpet. Pupils say they feel safe in school and report that there is no bullying or any other form of harassment because staff are 'brilliant' and would never allow it to happen. They work well together and have a good sense of belonging to the school and local community. They relish responsibility, for example, as school councillors and mini-leaders, and understand the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They participate wholeheartedly in the many clubs and activities available to them.

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Pupils gain a good awareness of the needs of others through raising funds for charities at home and abroad. They also learn to appreciate the world around them. Through visits and visitors, and specially themed weeks, they develop an awareness of other cultures in this country and abroad. However, this is the weakest aspect of their otherwise good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because it is not sufficiently well planned. Pupils' satisfactory achievement and their improving basic skills mean they leave the school adequately prepared for their future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan work at different levels for their pupils, basing new work on learning that has gone before. The objectives for each lesson are clearly stated in the planning and shared with the pupils. However, not all teachers have a firm enough grasp of what constitutes good progress for all pupils in this age group, and their expectations of pupils, particularly the more-able, are therefore not always high enough. This is compensated for in outstanding lessons because more-able pupils, supported by well briefed teaching assistants, sometimes leave whole class sessions early to get on with

<sup>1</sup> 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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their work. This excellent practice is not consistent across all three classes, and occasionally leads to restlessness in whole class sessions. However, staff usually assess pupils' learning satisfactorily during lessons, providing additional challenge or support as necessary to keep it moving forward. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning and progress, working with different ability groups at different times. They make an effective contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teachers mark pupils' written work satisfactorily, discussing it with them and making sure they understand how to improve it. Pupils have target cards for reading and writing, written in language they understand. Targets are shared with parents and the increased parental involvement they have engendered contributes effectively to the good progress now evident in writing and the improving progress in reading. Pupils do not yet have targets for mathematics but plans are under way to introduce them later this year.

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils in mixed age classes satisfactorily. It is under review to ensure that as greater links are forged between subjects, the skills pupils are expected to learn in each are clearly defined. The work to improve reading is a good example of how this is moving forward, with reading having been redefined to include whatever pupils read at home or in school, including when they use a computer. A good range of visits and visitors enriches the curriculum and contributes effectively to pupils' learning and personal development, including their health, safety and well-being.

Good relationships throughout the school mean that staff and pupils share a mutual respect for each other that benefits pupils' learning and personal development. The school works closely with parents, carers, external agencies and other schools to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable, for whatever reason, receive the help and support they need. Parents are very positive about the school and they appreciate what it does for their children. Good links with the junior school ease transition to the next stage of pupils' education, although pupils say 'we wish we could stay at this school for ever'.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has a very clear and accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve. Working closely with the deputy headteacher, she has systematically evaluated provision and outcomes against the inspection framework, and used this to reach her

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judgements and to inform the priorities in the draft school improvement plan. Subject leaders for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) have time to evaluate teaching and learning and to implement strategies for improvement. So far, this has improved writing and ICT, and established well considered strategies to improve reading and mathematics. Senior staff and key subject leaders regularly observe teaching and learning. However, the observations focus more on teaching than on learning and are therefore limited in their impact on pupils' progress. Leaders and managers of other subjects are beginning to take a greater role in leading and managing their subjects, as part of the curriculum review.

Governors support the school well and ensure that safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, are robust, but have not yet established their role as a 'critical friend'. They are currently undertaking training to do this, and the headteacher is helping them. Governors do not have a coherent action plan to support their policy on community cohesion, or to ensure that such learning is an integral part of the curriculum. Overall, the school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and there have been no reported incidents of racial harassment or discrimination.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with the skills expected for their age, although writing and some aspects of personal development are relatively limited. Children settle well, aided by the school's good partnerships with their parents, and they make satisfactory progress. Parents very much value the time they spend in school each morning. They enjoy their



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involvement in their children's learning at school and at home.

Children are polite and well behaved. They talk confidently to adults and are proud of their work. In Reception, they go about their tasks with purpose and concentrate well, whether working with staff or independently. Staff interact with them well at all times to extend their learning, and they record children's progress carefully. This good practice is not a regular feature in the Nursery. Here, children are sometimes left too long without adult intervention and therefore opportunities are missed to assess and record their learning, or to grab the moment to move it on. Overall, teaching is satisfactory in this age group, as are the assessment systems and their use in planning.

The curriculum contains many exciting activities for children indoors and out across all areas of learning, and phonics work is establishing sound early reading and writing skills. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are checked regularly, but not enough is done to ensure learning is promoted equally well at all times in both classes.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires were entirely positive about the school's work and the efforts of the staff. Comments such as 'the staff are enthusiastic', 'the school is very supportive' and 'the children are happy, well-behaved and engaged in their learning' typify the responses on the questionnaires.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashbrook Infant 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 125 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	87	7	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	81	10	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	58	21	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	66	17	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	83	8	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	77	11	21	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	85	8	15	0	0	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)	30	57	20	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	66	17	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	62	17	32	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	58	18	34	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	70	13	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	81	10	19	0	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Ashbrook Infant School, Derby, DE72 3HF

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about what you do there. It was a joy to see how eager you are to learn, and how much you want to share what you like about your school. You certainly enjoy being there, and told us you 'never want to leave it' because it is 'brilliant'. You are right in thinking that you are safe and well cared for. The school takes your safety and well-being seriously and you therefore have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy. You get extra help when you need it, and it was good to hear that you feel confident enough to ask any member of staff, including the headteacher, for help if you are worried about anything.

We found your school to be satisfactory. That means it does some things well and there are some things it could do better. For example, we found that those of you who are good at reading and mathematics by Year 2 have not always reached high enough standards. We have therefore asked the school to help you to learn faster so that you can do so. We found that those of you who find learning difficult, for whatever reason, make good progress because you get lots of help and support. We also found that sometimes children in the Nursery work and play on their own for too long, and we have asked the school to make sure staff check on them more often and help them to learn better at all times.

Those of you who are school councillors or mini-leaders do a good job helping to improve the school and supporting other pupils. It was good to see how well all pupils work together, and that you are learning more and more about the local community and about different cultures in the wider world. However, we found that this work is not as well organised or as good as it could be because it is not yet well enough planned. We have asked the governors to complete the work they have already started in this area. Your headteacher is very clear about what needs to be done to make the school better for all of you. She is helping the governors and all of the staff to understand how they can help in this. You can help too by listening carefully to what you are asked to do and by continuing to work hard. We hope that by doing so, you will make even faster progress and continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, for the rest of your

lives.

Yours faithfully

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

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