

# Ash Croft Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112771
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	338016
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Walker

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marie Howard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Brown
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Deep Dale Lane Sinfin Moor Derbyshire
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 764160
<b>Fax number</b>	01332 764160
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent about a quarter of the inspection looking at learning, visiting 12 lessons and observing seven teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, the School Improvement Partner, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school development plan, the tracking system to monitor the pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, work in pupils' books and questionnaires completed by staff, a sample of pupils and 49 parents.

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

- the rates of progress of all groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of teaching in engaging the pupils so that they make at least satisfactory progress
- the quality of the curriculum and the systems of care, guidance and support for the pupils
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage in promoting the development of the younger children
- the effectiveness of the leadership and management in driving improvements in the school.

## Information about the school

This primary school is smaller than average and is situated in the Sinfin area in the southern part of Derby. Half the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the remainder are from minority ethnic groups including a significant number from the Asian community. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average.

The school has received National Healthy School Status and the Active Mark award. The headteacher was appointed in January 2009 and a new Chair of the Governing Body was elected in January 2010. The school is part of the Improving Schools Programme in Derby.

**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?**

**4**

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

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' attainment and achievement as well as in the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is too low and indicates that pupils' progress, given their performance at the age of seven, is inadequate. There has been a significant decline in the attainment and progress of pupils at the school over the last two years. Achievement is lower than it should be in the school as a whole because in the past pupils' progress was not tracked carefully enough and the school did not sufficiently analyse its assessment data. As a result, actions were not sharply focused on what pupils needed to improve and what intervention was required to support those who were not making enough progress over their time in school.

A new system of target setting and tracking pupils' progress has been introduced so that underachieving pupils can be identified and supported. Assessment records provide evidence of some improvement across the school this academic year although a significant number of pupils are still not making sufficient progress to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils made adequate progress in the lessons observed during the inspection. However, the teaching is not strong enough to accelerate the learning of pupils to make up for their lack of progress in previous years, and its quality varies between classes. In some lessons, teachers do not use assessment information effectively to match the level of work to the needs of the pupils. In other classes, teachers do not set clear enough targets for pupils to meet, and there are times when some pupils, particularly the most able, are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.

The newly appointed headteacher provides strong leadership and has secured some important improvements in a short time. In so doing she has established a secure basis for future improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and the headteacher has a clear view of the key areas for future development. For example, she correctly identified the urgent need to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching. She has also introduced systems and support structures that are raising expectations amongst staff and pupils. As a result of the changes she has introduced, the quality of teaching is improving and there are signs that pupils are beginning to make better progress.

There is still much to do. As the school acknowledges, there is a lack of clarity in the

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roles and responsibilities of post holders, and subject leaders do not provide sufficient support for the teachers. The governing body is supportive but recognises it has not given enough emphasis to monitoring and evaluating the school's performance. The local authority is also supporting the school and helping it make the necessary improvements. In view of the improvements already visible, inspectors judge that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not effective. Children make too little progress during their first year in school and many, particularly boys, enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are well below average. Teachers are not using assessment information well enough to inform teaching so that it meets children's varying learning needs. Indoor and outdoor resources and support staff are not used well enough to help children make good progress. Procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the provision and planning for improvement are inadequate.

Care for the pupils is satisfactory and all staff treat each pupil as an important individual. The school is inclusive and pupils from all backgrounds are fully integrated. Pupils value being part of a caring community in which they feel particularly safe and secure.

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

- Improve the attainment and achievement of pupils across the school by:
  - making sure that all groups of pupils make faster progress in English and mathematics
  - using the tracking systems to identify and provide additional support for underachieving pupils
  - setting clear targets for pupils' progress and attainment which are based on previous performance.
- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that all teachers:
  - use assessment information effectively to inform their planning so that the work is matched well to the learning needs of individual pupils
  - ensure that pupils know and understand how to improve their work and make better progress
  - agree and share the best practice in teaching and learning.
- Develop the quality and consistency of leadership and management by:
  - reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team so that it is more effective in driving school improvements
  - developing the role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluation
  - developing the roles of subject leaders so that they provide effective support for teachers.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - monitoring and evaluating provision and implementing a plan of improvement

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- improving the progress of children, especially boys, in language, number and social skills
- making better use of assessment information to inform teaching so that it meets the different needs of the children
- ensuring that resources and staff are used more effectively to support children's learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****4**

Test results for the last two years show that pupils made inadequate progress while at the school, and the standards they reached were well below average when they left at the age of 11. Girls generally made better progress and gained higher results than boys in English, mathematics and science.

Inspectors found that attainment is still low. Improved teaching and support for pupils are beginning to raise standards and reduce underachievement. In most of the lessons seen by inspectors pupils' progress was at least satisfactory but, over time, pupils have made only limited progress and they have much to do to make up the gaps in their learning. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds were making progress in line with others in the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from individual support and make satisfactory progress. Strategies to boost the progress of boys are leading to improvements in their work, particularly in writing and mathematics. The atmosphere in most lessons is positive and the pupils want to do well. Where activities are well chosen, pupils display interest and sustain good levels of concentration. For example, Year 3 pupils made good progress in developing their understanding of shadows and conservation by making rain forest theatres for a puppet show. However, the pace of learning drops when work does not challenge pupils or capture their interest.

Pupils are friendly and enjoy their time at the school. Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are confident that issues such as a rare case of bullying are addressed promptly and effectively. Attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average. Most pupils have a sound understanding of the need to eat healthily and take part in sporting activities. Pupils raise money for charities, such as the orphanage project in Uganda, but do not have many opportunities to make a contribution to the local community. They show considerable respect and empathy towards the different cultures and religions that are represented in the school. The school council is active in supporting school improvements such as the new playground facilities. Pupils' ability to work with others is developing satisfactorily although the low levels of basic skills means that they are not adequately prepared for their secondary education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning over the last year so that almost all the teaching is now at least satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of the pupils and plan a range of interesting activities that are matched to their learning needs. However, teaching is still not strong enough overall to ensure that all pupils remedy the gaps in their knowledge and skills. Teachers are not sufficiently sharing good practice to improve the quality of teaching and subsequently speed up the rate of pupils' progress.

The school rightly places a considerable emphasis on the development of core skills in literacy and numeracy. To that end, teachers are developing units of work that meet better the pupils' different learning needs. The other subjects are not always linked creatively to make learning more coherent for the pupils. A sound programme of personal, health and social education promotes pupils' personal development satisfactorily. All pupils benefit from the comprehensive provision in physical education. A satisfactory number of educational visits and extra-curricular activities enhance the pupils' enjoyment and experience of school.

Arrangements for pastoral care, guidance and support are effective in fostering pupils' personal development. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assisted well by support staff. Satisfactory working relationships between the school and external agencies benefit these pupils, ensuring their social and learning needs are met

<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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through effective programmes. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and for following up absences are satisfactory. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are adequately supported in their learning. Vulnerable pupils are supported well through the nurture group which helps them address their social and emotional problems. Satisfactory arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition to secondary school.

*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>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides enthusiastic and forward-looking leadership which is driving improvements. The key priorities for improvements have been shared with staff so that there is a clear agenda for raising standards. New systems to help teachers improve their practice have been introduced. As a result, the quality of teaching is now satisfactory and this is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. A recently introduced programme of interviews between teachers and individual pupils is used well to set targets and is helping to raise expectations. The school's development plans are comprehensive, with clear actions and targets that particularly focus on improving pupils' attainment and progress. The governing body is well aware of the urgent areas that require action and is actively developing its monitoring role. Adequate procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's caring approach. There is a clear commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities for all. Performance is now analysed and the school has started to monitor the progress of pupils from different backgrounds.

The school is developing positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents are given regular information about events at school and the attainment of their children. The school has satisfactory partnerships with external services, the local cluster of schools and the School Sports Partnership. Friends of Ash Croft have been successful in gaining significant funding for improvements in the school grounds and the local secondary school provides valuable curriculum support. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion although it has not fully evaluated the impact of this work in the local community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</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>3</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>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class provides a secure and welcoming environment which children enjoy and appreciate. There are warm and trusting relationships between the staff and children. However, many children, especially boys, do not make sufficient progress in developing skills and knowledge to enable them to catch up from their low starting points, particularly in language and number. Learning and social skills are not fully developed because some of the activities do not have sufficient structure or purpose. The key areas for learning are not fully integrated into imaginative schemes of work for the children. The children behave well and are developing in confidence. Most are interested in the activities and take some responsibility for choosing what they do. Teaching is inadequate because it is not sufficiently focused on meeting the different learning needs of the children. Staff do not consistently keep detailed records of the children's skills or use this information to inform planning and activities.

There is an adequate range of resources but they are not used effectively to fully engage children in their learning. There is limited use of role play to stimulate language development and there are few activities that encourage children to develop their writing. Staff do not sufficiently challenge the children to think for themselves or extend their learning opportunities. The extensive outside area is not used effectively to provide a range of activities and experiences. There is regular liaison with parents who speak favourably of the care and support their children receive. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is not evaluating the strengths and weakness of the provision and there is no plan of improvement to address the inadequate progress of the children.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

## Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire were positive about the work of the school. They emphasised the caring approach of staff towards their children. Many parents and carers commented that their children enjoy the experience of school. A small minority of respondents suggested the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors found no evidence to support this view and judged that the school deals effectively with pupils who display challenging behaviour.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ash Croft 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	61	18	37	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	27	55	22	45	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	51	23	47	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	51	21	43	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	53	22	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	45	24	49	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	43	28	57	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)	18	37	26	53	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	43	26	53	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	31	24	49	5	10	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	35	26	53	3	6	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	20	41	24	49	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	53	22	45	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"> <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.**



12 May 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ash Croft Primary School, Derby, DE24 3HF

Thank you for making us so welcome and for talking to us during the inspection. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to see you in assembly and during playtime.

We found some positive things about your school.

You told us how much you enjoy school.

You are friendly and show consideration to others.

You feel safe and secure in the school.

The staff care for you and treat you as important individuals.

You have an effective headteacher who is making improvements to the school.

However, we found that there are also some important things that need to be better and so we have judged that your school needs a notice to improve.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- help all of you make better progress in English and mathematics
- make sure your teachers challenge each of you and tell you clearly how to improve so you can move on quickly
- ensure that the governors, the leadership team and subject leaders are fully involved in plans for school improvement
- improve the provision in the Reception class so that the younger children make a really good start at school.

Other inspectors will visit your school in the future to see how it is improving. You can help by working hard. Keep enjoying the many things you do at Ash Croft Primary School. We would like to wish you success in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector

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