

Ashperton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116649
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	338852
Inspection dates	14–15 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Taylor
Headteacher	Chris Bandfield
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
School address	Ashperton Ledbury Herefordshire
Telephone number	01531670385
Fax number	01531670385
Email address	admin@ashperton.hereford.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and observed breaks and lunchtimes. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at data on progress, pupils' work, monitoring reports, policies and planning. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils and 101 parents, expressed in questionnaires.

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

- progress in mathematics, especially for the more able and in writing
- how well senior leaders analyse the impact of their actions on improvement
- the accuracy of the school's view of what constitutes 'outstanding' in several aspects of its work.

Information about the school

Ashperton is a small rural primary school where almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with very few pupils from other ethnic groups. There is a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has several awards, including the Woodland Trust Gold Award. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one Reception class.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Ashperton is an outstanding school where pupils make good progress in their academic work and outstanding progress in their personal development. It has a welcoming and delightfully happy environment in which pupils thrive and want to do their best. There are many strengths, including an outstanding curriculum and outstanding care, guidance and support. The school continues to improve due to considerable skills within leadership and management at all levels.

When children enter the school, their attainment is now below that expected for their age. This reflects a decline in attainment on entry, which was previously in line with expectations. By the time pupils leave Year 6, their attainment is above average. Good achievement is evident for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Rapid progress is especially evident in English due to improvements which have been made to pupils' writing. In mathematics, pupils make good progress overall, but not consistently so, and in some year groups more able pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in this subject.

Good teaching and well informed subject knowledge lead to strong progress in a wide range of subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT) and science. Teachers have a detailed and accurate understanding of pupils' attainment and plan lessons accordingly. The school recognises, rightly, that in mathematics pupils' targets are not linked sufficiently well to their individual needs and do not change frequently enough to let some pupils, especially the more able, move on more rapidly. Pupils would like to be more involved in knowing how their targets link to their levels, so that they can see how well they are doing overall. As one explained, 'We could then fix what we need to do, earlier.'

The very strong curriculum ensures that the school buzzes with activity as pupils grasp opportunities to contribute significantly to everything that happens. They take on many roles, which include recycling paper, composting their fruit peelings or acting as road safety officers. Most have a responsibility of which they are proud and their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are keenly aware of how to keep healthy and the take-up of sporting activity after school is very high. Pupils and their parents particularly appreciate that the school is an exceptionally safe place to be, with kind and considerate behaviour between pupils. The high quality 'forest school' activities and a well stocked vegetable garden are examples of how pupils are inspired by the wonders of life around them. The school community is one where respect and enjoyment of what others have to offer, regardless of their differences, is a core value strongly upheld by the pupils. This, alongside their beautiful art work and many performance skills, has led to excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Care, guidance and support are exceptional in almost

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

every respect, including the way it protects and supports pupils. Last year, however, attendance dropped from above average to broadly average due in part to illness, but also to a sudden increase in holidays being taken during the term. Senior staff realise that the links between progress and attendance may not be clear enough to parents and pupils.

School leaders, including governors and staff, operate very effectively as a team and, in the last two years, have raised the quality of every aspect of the school. Significant improvement to the way pupils' performance is monitored has led to a detailed and exceptional evaluation of where strengths lie and key areas for development. This has resulted in carefully researched strategies which have very effectively and securely increased progress. In writing, for example, attainment in 2009 was significantly improved in all age groups. These improvements are well embedded and results so far this year show a continuing increase in achievement in all subjects. As a result, the capacity to improve is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils of all ages make consistently good progress in mathematics, particularly the more able, by:
 - matching pupils' targets more closely to their individual levels of attainment and changing them as soon as they are securely achieved
 - involving pupils more closely in understanding what they need to do to move to the next level.
 - Increase attendance and reduce holidays taken during term time, in particular by demonstrating the links between progress and attendance more explicitly to pupils and parents.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils enjoy and value learning highly. Several parents testify that their children cannot wait to get to school. Lessons are full of lively debate as pupils are keen to take part and do well. Attainment in English for Year 6 leavers in 2009 was significantly above national averages, due largely to improvements in writing supporting already strong reading skills. Pupils of all abilities, regardless of gender or ethnicity, make good progress in all their subjects throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs outperform their peers nationally. Occasionally in mathematics, more able pupils mark time and make satisfactory rather than good progress. This is improving, particularly for older pupils, but it is not consistent. In ICT, pupils use a variety of techniques confidently to find out and display information. In one lesson, they designed delightful Christmas posters by exploring the use of shape tools. A good focus on practical science has ensured that progress is now securely good in this subject.

Outstanding behaviour is evident in pupils' politeness, kindness towards each other and in the concern they spontaneously show to visitors. Incidents of unkind behaviour are

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

very rare and pupils respond extremely well to the high quality support they are given to deal with their feelings. Pupils enjoy many physical activities such as orienteering, rounders, tag rugby and girls' football, to name but a few. They also contribute substantially by paying attention to protecting the environment, for example by making hibernation boxes and planting trees. Pupils have learned some sign language to include pupils from the deaf community and many act as playtime 'buddies', school councillors, house captains or fundraisers. They frequently represent the school by taking part in local events such as ploughing matches and poetry competitions.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Strengths in teaching include excellent relationships and planning for many interesting activities which help pupils take an active role. They are encouraged well to work productively in groups. Improved individual target setting in literacy is supporting pupils' more rapid progress. There is good use of technology to aid understanding, skilled questioning, and skilled, effective support from teaching assistants. In a few lessons, planning, and target setting to meet the needs of different ability groups, especially

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

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

more able pupils, are not sufficient to enable them to make good progress securely. The curriculum is tailored very well to meet the needs of different pupils and groups through extensive, effective mapping of how any particular needs can best be met. The development of key skills in ICT, literacy and numeracy is supported very well in all subjects. For example, pupils used computers to research Tudor life in history and others developed their skills well in measuring and using graphs during science lessons. Social and environmental awareness is a key thread of the enriched curriculum which is supported exceptionally well through activities such as 'forest school' and 'values' education. There are in addition, an extensive number of trips, visitors and visits to help bring learning to life.

Breakfast club is typical of the warm, stimulating, high quality care given to pupils and provides a very good start to the day. Attention to health and safety is exemplary. Procedures to support pupils as they move from one year to the next or on to the next school are very thorough and help them pick up confidently where they left off. The school is usually effective in encouraging good attendance despite the recent increase in a few parents taking term-time holidays. Parents who came in to speak to the inspectors described the very high standard of support and care provided when children experience learning and other difficulties. This was supported by case studies, where high quality, robust procedures and careful follow-through ensured pupils were able to make as much progress as their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding in embedding ambition and driving improvement. Pupils' personal development has become outstanding and achievement has moved securely from satisfactory to good. This has been brought about by an excellent focus, from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, on developing a thorough and effective system to assess and monitor the progress every pupil is making. Governors are fully involved in this work. The senior leaders use this information rigorously to investigate what needs to be improved and very thoughtfully research the best approaches to create change. This has resulted, for example, in significant improvement in teaching and increased attainment for more able pupils in science. Staff at all levels use this information effectively to evaluate their own performance.

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

Safeguarding procedures are exemplary in the way they are monitored and analysed. They have had a demonstrable impact in protecting children. Partnerships with parents, which include useful workshops in supporting literacy and numeracy, are good. The way pupils' targets are shared is not always frequent enough, however, to enable parents to help in a more focused way, for example with homework. Outstanding promotion of equal opportunities results from regular investigation of how different groups are doing and immediate and effective action being taken. Boys' achievement has improved significantly as a result of this work. The school's work to promote community cohesion is good, resulting in pupils who have great regard for those who are different from themselves. Links to support pupils understanding of different cultures within Britain are not fully developed although strong links locally and internationally support this work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Excellent links with pre-schools and parents allow children to settle quickly. By the time they leave Reception, their skills are broadly average, having built well from a low baseline. An enticing environment is effective in helping children learn and in encouraging very strong personal skills. For this reason, children quickly understand how to behave very well, take an active role in keeping healthy and begin to do more things for themselves. One boy explained, when washing his hands before making cakes, 'It's to get rid of the germs that might make me ill.' They take on responsibility enthusiastically, as members of the school council for example, and sharing their ideas about what they should learn. Excellent leadership and detailed analysis of what children can already do, means that staff have a very good understanding of how to keep

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

improving outcomes. Care and guidance are outstanding and parents are given regular information about their child's individual targets. This has led to clear improvement in writing skills for example, which are on target to be above average this year. Well planned sessions enable children to explore productively for themselves as well as experiencing high quality teaching from staff. In one session, some children were hunting for presents that Santa had lost in the outdoor area, while others were skilfully supported in writing Christmas cards. The curriculum is very rich and there are seven acres of forest attached to the school where the children gain a number of skills and a great deal of understanding about the natural world: this makes an exceptional contribution to their development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They are particularly appreciative of how well the school keeps their children safe, how much their children enjoy school, the quality of teaching, the provision to support healthy living and leadership. Forty-four parents took the trouble to write a positive comment, a typical example being, 'Ashperton is a superb school; the teaching staff are extremely professional and caring.' A very tiny minority of parents expressed different concerns which were followed through and, where supported by inspection findings, are reflected in the report. As some questionnaires represented more than one child the response rate is exceptionally high, giving a very secure picture of parents' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashperton 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection which is a very high return. In total, there are 159 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	75	22	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	83	17	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	59	58	36	36	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	56	3	36	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	75	74	24	24	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	67	27	27	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	75	74	25	25	1	1	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)	61	60	35	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	60	38	38	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	64	34	34	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	58	40	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	73	72	26	26	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	79	78	20	20	2	2	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">■ 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.



16 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashperton Primary School, Ashperton, HR8 2SE

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons. Ashperton Primary is an outstanding school with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Senior staff work hard to keep developing the school and, for this reason, your work is getting better each year. However, a few of you take too much time off and we have asked the school to look at ways of helping you to attend more often.

Skilful teaching ensures that you make good progress in your lessons. As a result, you do well, particularly in reading and writing. We like the way you really enjoy your lessons and always try to do your best. You told us that your teachers make lessons fun and interesting. We have, however, asked them to make sure that the targets they set you are more individual, linked clearly to your levels and change as soon as you need them to. This is so that you all make at least good progress, especially in mathematics. You suggested that you would like this to happen and so we are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas.

The very wide range of activities provide many opportunities for you to make an outstanding contribution to school life and the community. The responsibilities that you take on are heartening, for example the way you look after each other, and act as road safety officers or buddies in the playground. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you very safe and looks after you very well. It is, therefore, very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking a great deal of exercise and eating such a healthy diet. Your behaviour is outstanding, especially in the way you value learning and play such an active part in lessons. You show a very considerate and mature understanding and respect for others, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living.

We think that this, alongside your excellent attitudes to working with others, helps you to be well prepared for your next school and future lives.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.