

# Ashill Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	121026
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339833
Inspection dates	24 - 25 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Fulcher
Headteacher	Mrs K Scott
Date of previous school inspection	June 2007
School address	The Oaks Ashill Thetford IP25 7AP
Telephone number	01760 440403
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies on safeguarding pupils, the school development plan and a range of data relating to pupils' progress. Twenty-seven parent, 11 staff and 54 pupil questionnaires were analysed.

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

- Pupils' progress in mathematics and the steps being taken to improve performance in the subject
- Whether or not pupils in Key Stage 1, lower attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making sufficient progress
- The staff's skill in analysing pupil performance data in order to plan sufficiently challenging work.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools and serves a rural community in which there is no significant social and economic disadvantage. Fifteen children started their Reception year (the Early Years Foundation Stage) in September 2009; in Years 1 to 6, groups are small. The four classes comprise combined year groups of Reception year with a few Year 1 pupils, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils and those whose first language is not English is very low. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties, is about average, including those who have a statement of special educational needs.

The headteacher took up post in January 2009, following one term during which the assistant headteacher was acting headteacher. At present, two teachers have taken maternity leave which means two of the four classes have temporary teachers.

The school has the Healthy 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

## Main findings

The headteacher, approaching the end of her first year in post, has set out clearly some key expectations and has increased the ambition of staff across the school in regard to raising standards further. An improvement in results in 2008, largely repeated in 2009, indicates the positive impact of clear direction. The trend in English and science is upwards because the headteacher has started sharpening the focus on monitoring all pupils' performance. Teaching is satisfactory and new assessment procedures have recently been introduced to improve learning and enable challenging targets to be set for all year groups. Mathematics has lagged slightly behind the other subjects but standards are broadly average and the drive to improve has begun, although the strategy to achieve this is yet to be fully clarified.

Results at the end of Key Stage 1 dipped sharply in 2009. Pupils' progress was inadequate and all of the causes, including disruption to staffing, have not yet been fully analysed. While at present much of the teaching in Key Stage 1 is temporary until Easter 2010, it is effective and most pupils are making good progress. Children in the Reception year make satisfactory progress, and assessment identifies their capabilities. The provision made for them is satisfactory, although activities are not planned in sufficiently close relation to the national guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children do not always have enough independence indoors and out. The work and activities for Year 1 pupils, working alongside Reception children, show similar weaknesses. The planning is not well geared to meeting all of the pupils' needs.

Overall, pupils enjoy school and gain considerably in their personal development from good opportunities to contribute in school and more widely. They learn to keep safe and their development of a healthy lifestyle is outstanding, mainly because of excellent sports coaching and the way they take part in many sporting opportunities.

The capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. A system of monitoring and evaluation is in place which at present is focused mainly on teaching and pupils' progress. It is not comprehensive, although subject co-ordinators are being trained to take a more active part and thus widen the monitoring of lessons, pupils' work and their progress. Staff as a whole are becoming directly accountable and being more evaluative about their performance. The governors understand the weight of their responsibilities and work systematically on their statutory duties. The headteacher has supported their increased engagement in reviewing the school's data and they ask probing questions, agree appropriate targets and keep a track on

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the progress of the school development plan.

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?

- Raise standards and continue to improve progress by the end of Key Stage 1 by:
  - ensuring a close check is kept on every pupil's progress
  - setting challenging targets for achievement
- Develop provision in Reception by:
  - ensuring the planning of activities fully reflects the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework
  - systematically assessing children's progress towards each of the early learning goals
  - making effective use of indoor and outdoor learning resources
- Ensure the curriculum and learning activities for those Year 1 pupils in the Reception class fully meet their needs.

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average, although in 2008 and 2009 standards in English and science were above average. There is no significant difference in the performance of groups of pupils such as boys and girls or those with moderate learning difficulties.

The quality of pupils' learning and their rate of progress present a mixed picture. In class, learning and performance are satisfactory, but also have some strengths. While pupils in Years 1 and 2 made inadequate progress last year, current teaching is effective and the very large majority of pupils are performing well in the classroom. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress is satisfactory and most of those who lost ground last year in Key Stage 1 are steadily making this up. The learning of a few boys in this group is slow because they are sometimes inattentive and not positively engaged. The situation is much more settled in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is effective and learning and progress are good.

The great majority enjoy school and this is reflected in good behaviour and attendance as well as by the highly positive responses in the questionnaires returned by the majority of pupils. Pupils feel safe and pursue healthy lifestyles to an outstanding extent, especially through their enthusiasm and success in many sports.

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Contributing in school and beyond is taken seriously and much good fund-raising takes place to aid projects in Africa. Cultural development, particularly pupils' understanding and appreciation of other cultures is a strength because of the lengths the school has gone in bringing multi-cultural awareness and experiences to pupils.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
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	3
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 <sup>1</sup>	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching, while satisfactory overall, is not consistent in quality across the school. The monitoring of lessons is beginning to raise the profile of the impact of teaching on learning and progress. Teachers have started to take progress data into consideration when planning pupils' work. In the good lessons observed this showed clearly in classes being broken down into smaller groups by ability, and each group being given the work and support to aid progress. Greater notice is being taken of the levels each pupil is working at. In Years 5 and 6 working in groups is used effectively as an opportunity for pupils to learn co-operatively and independently. Learning is also promoted effectively here, and in Years 1 and 2, by the quick pace of lessons, high expectations, questioning that engages all pupils and good explanations. The use of the interactive whiteboard sometimes makes a strong contribution to learning but it is not always used to show something that is important to see, such as the text being read out. Occasionally, in Years 3 and 4, when a few boys are not paying enough attention, they are not dealt with quickly enough to regain their engagement in learning.

The curriculum is planned well with an eye on promoting literacy skills as well as

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<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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making work and activities interesting, relevant and enjoyable. This is reflected in the positive things pupils say about their work and, in particular, their activities during theme weeks. They described the excitement they felt in the World War II theme, making gas masks and in the role play of an air raid. The whole school gets intensely involved and the work brings this part of history to life. The multi-cultural week is also a great success, involving visitors telling of the ways of life in other countries. The curriculum is enriched considerably by clubs and sports, for example the skills coaching provided by Norwich City Football in the Community.

Pupils are kept safe and are cared for well. Health and safety arrangements are robust - such as the risk assessments made for all trips away from school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given good support with the result, in some cases, of them making some exceptional progress in lessons. Pupils, who have come to this school not having settled in their previous school, are happy, well - behaved and coping because of good support in the classroom from the teaching assistant and teacher.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	3
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 headteacher has set in train a process and package of improvements, which is part of the satisfactory drive across the school to raise expectations and standards. Much of this is at an early stage of development. Results at the end of Key Stage 2, in 2009, indicate leadership is having a positive impact, although results in Key Stage 1 show there is still some way to go in strengthening teaching and learning. Wider improvements are hampered by the current temporary staffing arrangements and the limited scope of monitoring and evaluation. The strengths and weaknesses in the provision for Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have not been analysed in detail. Nevertheless, subject co-ordinators have been given a greater role in monitoring the teaching and results in their subjects; teachers have been asked to analyse pupil performance data for their classes and plan accordingly and this is beginning to take root; more rigorous assessment is being introduced to add weight to the data. These initiatives are set out systematically in the school development plan. The management of the safeguarding policy is good and, through strong links with the local community and projects abroad, the school is effective in promoting community cohesion. Good support and a developing analysis of progress of different groups mean that the school satisfactorily promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination.

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*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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress. A variety of satisfactory activities provide them with a broad range of experiences from which they develop appropriate communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal skills in particular. They are safe, contented and settled. Children have the opportunity to use indoor and outdoor spaces for learning, although they have few opportunities to choose where they would like to work and play. The curriculum does not reflect strongly enough the learning goals set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. This makes a rigorous assessment of children's progress towards each early learning goal more difficult to achieve.

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

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

Many parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and a large proportion of these have positive views of the school. They believe their children enjoy school and

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are kept safe. They feel the school listens to them and is being managed well. Where there is a hint of disagreement in the questionnaires it relates to whether parents and carers are being kept informed about the school's work and their children's progress. The school is aware of this and it is already working to do more so that parents and carers are kept better informed.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashill 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 96 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	67	8	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	67	8	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	52	11	41	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	48	11	41	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	56	11	41	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	41	14	52	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	41	15	56	1	4	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)	9	33	15	56	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	30	18	67	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	37	15	56	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	26	19	70	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	37	17	63	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	67	8	30	1	4	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 all 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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

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 pupils' 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.



28 September 2009

Dear pupils

Inspection of Ashill Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Ashill, IP25 7AP

I would like to thank you all for your warm welcome and helpfulness during the inspection team's recent visit to your school. I would also like to give special thanks to those who completed the questionnaire and the pupils who met with me to discuss what they thought about the school.

This letter is to tell you that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. There are clear signs that the standard of your work is getting better. Your headteacher is increasing the checks on your progress, which is helping to make sure you improve your work. The work and activities planned for you are interesting and enjoyable, especially through many sports and clubs. These help you considerably to live healthy lifestyles. Many of you made it clear how much you enjoy school and that you feel safe. Your contributions to school life and to helping others, especially by helping projects in Africa, are good.

Your school is improving already, but we have given the staff and headteacher some more things to work on. We are asking them to:

- Keep a close check on how well pupils in Years 1 and 2 are doing, aiming high for them. You can help by always trying your best.
- Give the youngest children activities that are more similar to those children across the country have, and check how well they are doing in these activities. For example, giving them more times they can make choices.
- Make sure children in Year 1 who work with Reception pupils get the right things to do too.

All the best for the future

Yours faithfully

Alan Lemon  
Lead Inspector

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