

# Ashford Park Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125113
<b>Local Authority</b>	
<b>Inspection number</b>	340721
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Marshall

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>	413
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Darren Buttigieg
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Tarrant
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Station Crescent Ashford Middlesex TW15 3HN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching and support staff, governors, parents and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's raising attainment plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils identified as more able or having special educational needs and/or disabilities and minutes of governors' meetings. They also read 126 parental questionnaires.

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

- the attainment and level of achievement of the current pupils, especially in English and mathematics
- the school's assessment and tracking procedures and what they say about pupils' progress in all classes
- the impact of the school's provision for guidance and support on pupils' personal development
- the effectiveness of teaching in enhancing learning and raising achievement
- after the many recent changes, how effectively the leaders and managers at all levels are enabling the necessary improvements.

## Information about the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. It is located in a busy suburban area on the edge of London and close to Heathrow Airport. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low, but is rising. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of these pupils have early language, behavioural or specific learning difficulties. There is a unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) on site, called the Acorn Centre. The school is part of a confederation of several local schools. It has the Activemark and Healthy Schools status.

There has been significant staff turnover since the last inspection three years ago. In particular, there were three interim headteachers last year. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher have only been in post for eight weeks.

**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**

**2**

### Main findings

Ashford Park is a satisfactory, but improving school. After a difficult and turbulent year with many staff changes, there is now a stable atmosphere of high expectations. The recently appointed, and highly effective, headteacher and deputy headteacher know the school's strengths and what needs to improve. They have carefully identified the priorities to develop and they are systematically, and speedily, tackling these issues. The school's increasingly positive reputation in the community and better pupil outcomes are due to the hard work of all staff and governors who share the headteacher's and deputy headteacher's values and ambitions for the school. Consequently, the school is very well placed to build on its strengths and has a good capacity to improve. As one parent, reflecting the views of many, observed, 'I feel the school has greatly benefited with the arrival of the headteacher. She has implemented greater safety of the children and I have seen many improvements around the school. She has great vision for the school in the years ahead.'

Pupils' attainment is rising because of an increased rigour in assessing and tracking their progress. Throughout the school, pupils make at least satisfactory progress and in some classes and subjects, good progress. Pupils are making particularly good progress in Key Stage 2, because teaching is consistently good. In the rest of the school, progress varies due to a legacy of underachievement and some inconsistencies in teaching. The recent, thorough attention paid to reading has ensured that pupils are now making good progress and achieving well in this discipline. However, the school realises that overall progress, although much improved, is still inconsistent, and more needs to be done to raise achievement in English and mathematics. All staff work hard to create attractive classrooms with imaginative displays and therefore provide a positive learning environment. Classes are well equipped and much use is made of interactive whiteboards as a motivational learning tool. In many lessons, teachers provide appropriately challenging activities, move the lesson along at a good pace to keep pupils interested and have high expectations of all their pupils. As a result, progress made by pupils in these lessons is good. As yet this is not consistent throughout the school and work is not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able pupils.

The curriculum covers all subjects adequately and is enhanced by a range of additional activities, visits and visitors. The school has recently introduced a range of initiatives, such as working with the Harlequins Rugby Club and Sports Focus, to make the curriculum more relevant and exciting. As a result, pupils increasingly enjoy the opportunities they are given. However, again these features are not always present in the teaching. As the school acknowledges, these initiatives have yet to be firmly embedded and are too reliant on the quality of the individual staff members for their

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implementation. There is more still to do to ensure that these curriculum changes are applied consistently so that pupils in all years are provided with activities that always challenge them.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated. There is purposeful collaboration in lessons and pupils work well together. The provision for vulnerable pupils, or for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good and leads to these pupils making good progress. Pupils benefit from tailored individual or small-group sessions that successfully help to plug the gaps in their reading and writing skills. The work of the staff in the Acorn Centre for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is outstanding, and their positive influence is felt throughout the school.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other schools, especially in the confederation, and agencies are harnessed very well. The need to expand their links through a national and global perspective is well understood by the school. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are rigorous and all members of staff are well trained.

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

- Use the school's current monitoring systems to improve the percentage of good teaching by focusing on:
  - improving the pace of lessons in some classes
  - further strengthening day-to-day assessment and marking
  - extending opportunities for staff to observe the best practice in the school.
- Ensure that by July 2010 changes in the curriculum are embedded so that:
  - pupils are given the maximum opportunities to practise and reinforce their skills and learning in English and mathematics
  - the exciting and relevant activities that are linked across subject areas are present in all lessons.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse Britain and extend the provision for community cohesion by:
  - building on the findings of the recent analysis of community cohesion
  - implementing the plans for twinning with schools in other localities.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils generally join the school with attainment that is below expectations for their age. Observations of lessons showed that all pupils are now making at least sound progress. Pupils' achievement observed in Year 5, and in the current Year 6, is in line with expectations for their age and higher than last year. Across the school, pupils' rates of progress have improved recently, particularly in reading, which has been a focus of school development. In the 2009 national tests, results reflected the problems of the

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previous year and the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels for their age fell. School data show that this year more pupils are on course to reach the expected levels and achieve their challenging targets before they leave the school.

Although recent initiatives in assessing and tracking pupils' progress are leading to generally improved progress, there is some unevenness between classes. Sometimes in the lower junior classes, the most able pupils do not achieve enough in lessons because the recently introduced assessment systems are not used effectively and their work does not always challenge them sufficiently. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is linked to the high priority the school gives to meeting their needs and the very effective support provided for them.

Pupils are proud of their school and are enthusiastic about many aspects of its life. They thoroughly enjoy lessons and the extra-curricular activities, trips and visits that contribute well to learning and social development. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school ' even during a very wet playtime. Attendance is satisfactory and it is improving because most pupils really want to come to school. Pupils' contribution to the local community is good, particularly in their support for a range of charities and local activities. The school council has been responsible for important initiatives, such as the promotion of better sporting activities in the school. These efforts, and the healthy schools initiative, have ensured that pupils have a clear understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils assert that the rare incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are dealt with very well and they feel very safe in school. They say that there is always someone who will listen to them. Standards in literacy and numeracy are improving, as are information and communication technology (ICT) skills and pupils' ability to work in groups and teams. These aspects give pupils a good preparation for their next school and adult life.

*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>

<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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<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> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that throughout the school, pupils make sound progress regardless of their background or ability. In most lessons observed, pupils were well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and were keen to please their teachers and other adults. This was evident in an outstanding Year 6 lesson on war poetry where the pupils' responses were thoughtful and mature. As in most lessons, the pupils could hardly wait to share their thoughts and ideas.

Staff's higher expectations of pupils' progress are reflected in the challenging targets set for individuals and year groups. In the most effective lessons, the careful planning is implemented with enthusiasm and care. This was clear in a good mathematics lesson in Year 3. The pupils were enthusiastic and sensible as they solved and shared their solutions to fraction and decimal problems. The teacher's good use of praise was a reflection of the way the school constantly encourages good behaviour, attentiveness and hard work.

Throughout the school, positive relationships between staff and pupils contribute to the supportive ethos for study. As a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is caring. As one parent said, 'The school has a real community feel. It is friendly and actively involves parents in all aspects of their children's education.' The impact of the school's good support, guidance and care is evident in the pupils' good standards of behaviour and social skills.

The special educational needs coordinator has a very clear understanding of the individual needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. With this guidance, and the support of the exceptional teaching assistants, staff work hard to provide effectively for pupils who are more vulnerable or who find behaving well more difficult.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>
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## How effective are leadership and management?

The outstanding partnership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is sensitive to the needs of all pupils and staff. Their recent, but well-established, direction for the work of the school has already enabled significant progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, pupils now make better progress and attainment has begun to rise.

All adults involved in the school value the senior leaders' open-door approach through which they consistently give an exemplary lead and relate effectively with pupils, parents and the local community. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are given great support by the hard-working staff team. Teamwork is of a good quality and all staff now play a valuable part in moving the school forward. The school administrative staff are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned.

There is a clear understanding of strengths of the school and areas that need more development. The school's self-evaluation is very effective due to the rigorous work of the senior leadership team and governors. This results in a comprehensive, and fully shared, raising attainment plan (RAP) that sets out the school's very challenging targets and provides clear guidance for raising standards. The governors bring a wide range of skills to their role as critical friends. They hold the school to account by challenging decisions and requesting explanations. Although many teachers are acquiring new challenges, the staff's enthusiasm and the better systems that are in place to monitor pupils' progress are enabling improvement at all levels. The rate of these improvements, with the support of the local authority, shows the school's good capacity for continued development.

The school takes its duty to promote equal opportunities seriously and is effective in this. It values the opinions of parents and pupils and acts upon these. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are rigorous and all members of staff are well trained. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very well. The need to expand its links to provide a national and global perspective is well understood by the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>



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<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>2</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

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The area is led and managed well and the school has identified and begun to implement clear priorities for improvement. These have not yet had time to have a great deal of impact, although children are adjusting well to the new systems. All staff are now involved in planning and in the assessment of children's learning.

Children play together well and are very well behaved. They enjoy their learning. Data show that children's attainment when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage is usually below expectations for their age. Overall, they make satisfactory progress and at the end of Reception the majority reach the levels expected for their age. The progress that children make is regularly reviewed, but currently the tracking of the progress made by different groups of learners is inconsistent. Although the teaching of letters and sounds has improved, learning is not always sufficiently well linked to what children need to learn next to enable them to make maximum progress in these areas.

Staff provide well for children's welfare. The outdoor area is well laid out to promote children's physical development and children respond well to the opportunities it affords. Both inside and outside, children can access a varied and stimulating range of activities that support their personal development as well as their communication and language skills, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Construction toys are used sensibly. The balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities is not yet effectively organised. Although adults generally support children well, their explanations are not always clear and children are not sufficiently encouraged to move effectively from one activity to another.

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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>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**

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are happy with the school. They feel that the school has improved recently and welcome the changes being made. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and that the new headteacher is leading and managing the school very well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and that their children are making better progress. Inspectors fully endorse these views. A small number of criticisms were offered constructively. There were no particular trends in the very few negative comments received by inspectors.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashford Park 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 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 413 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	59	49	39	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	52	59	47	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	26	75	60	14	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	37	64	51	12	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	40	74	56	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	40	66	52	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	47	62	49	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	28	79	63	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	35	67	53	9	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	24	68	54	17	14	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	20	81	64	9	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	39	62	49	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	62	56	44	3	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"><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.**



13 November 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ashford Park Primary School, Ashford, TW15 3HN

I am writing to thank you for your help when we inspected your school and to let you know what we found out.

We spent time in some of your lessons and talked to some of you. We also looked at the work of the school and talked to many of the staff and some of the school governors. We were interested in what your parents think of your school, and we particularly enjoyed listening to what you had to say.

The staff at the school work hard and the headteacher is doing a good job. The work of the school is satisfactory; these are some of the things it does particularly well.

- The way the school works with parents is good.
- The way you behave is good and you work and play well together.
- You feel safe at school and you know how to be healthy.
- You help your school to be a happy and better place to play and learn.
- You have a good understanding of right and wrong and look after each other.

We have agreed with your school that there are a number of things that will help it to become better. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that you are all given the best opportunities to learn no matter which class you are in. We know your teachers are all working hard to be the best they can be and we want them to learn from each other as well. We have asked the staff to look at how they plan, carry out, and link the subjects in your lessons to make sure they are as interesting as they can be. We have also asked your headteacher and staff to make sure you are given the chance to look at and understand about how children and adults live in places that are different from where you live. You can help by continuing to listen carefully and take note of what they say.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead inspector

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