

# Ashford Oaks Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	135125
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	341620
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Sutherland-Harper

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	393
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Allcock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gerry D Cruz
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Oak Tree Road Ashford Kent TN23 4QR
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@ashfordoaks.kent.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 26 lessons and 19 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with staff, governors and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including the school development plan, the School Improvement Partner's reports, minutes of governors' meetings, policies and data about pupils' attainment and progress. The team analysed the responses to 90 questionnaires returned by parents and carers in addition to those completed by staff

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

- the quality of learning and progress in Key Stage 1 and in writing, mathematics and science across the school
- the progress of groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with English as an additional language, gifted and talented pupils, and boys
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, in driving improvement
- the impact of recent work in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

Ashford Oaks is a larger than average primary school formed by a recent amalgamation of two schools. The large majority of pupils come from White British families. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, although the number learning English as an additional language is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above the national average but the number with statements of special educational needs is below. The school hosts an autistic spectrum disorder resource centre and is the lead school for autistic spectrum disorder in the Ashford partnership.

**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 Oaks Community Primary School is a satisfactory school. The school aims for everyone to be happy in a fun learning environment. There is a deep emphasis on the individual but also on the notion of being part of a family. As one parent said, 'The support is immense and so valuable.'

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter with skills below, and often well below, typical expectations for their age. They settle quickly and make steady progress in most areas as they move through the school, thanks to increasingly focused support which has now been carried over into improved provision at Key Stage 1. The school's focus on progress in learning has resulted in improvements in reading and writing but slower progress in mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6, attainment is average overall. It is slightly above average for writing and reading and rising slowly in mathematics and science due to increased monitoring and interventions. Additional strategies, such as specialist outside support and increased staff training, have been put in place. Work is well matched to the needs of groups of pupils such as the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, teachers do not always use pupils' targets and assessment information to plan work that matches the ability levels of individual pupils. In addition, the use of target setting and assessment, so pupils understand where they are in their learning journey and what they need to do to improve, is not yet well developed. Strategies recently put in place have successfully engaged boys in writing and additional support meets the learning needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Teacher skills have developed through training, especially in mathematics. A strong team of teaching assistants provides additional pupil support. Teaching is satisfactory. There is insufficient variety in the range of methods and resources used in teaching. Teachers often talk for too long and opportunities for pupils to engage with their learning are limited. For example, calculation skills in mathematics need further reinforcement through increased practice. Use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils through different learning methods is insufficiently developed. Best teaching practice is only now being spread across the school through middle managers' increased monitoring. Outstanding pastoral care, guidance and support, which includes the most vulnerable members of the community and is highly valued by parents and carers, ensure pupils' sense of well-being.

Pupils are polite and helpful. Attendance and behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils feel safe and are ready to participate in whole-school events. Opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school are increasing. Pupils support each other, know the difference between right and wrong, and have good opportunities to share their

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different cultures.

The headteacher and his team are carefully focused on improving the progress of the school and meeting their ambitious goals through targeted development of teaching and learning. Governors contribute well to the work of the school through their experience and local knowledge. Community cohesion is good. The commitment of school leaders, accurate self-evaluation, increased role for middle managers, and staff belief in the value of their school ensure that capacity for further improvement is good.

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

- Improve attainment in all subjects across the school, particularly for mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2, so that all pupils reach or exceed age-related expectations by:
  - ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching through building on recently established practice in monitoring
  - embedding pupils' calculation skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all pupil groups make good or better progress by:
  - better use of assessment and target setting to inform planning so that tasks are closely matched to pupils' individual ability levels and help them to move forward more rapidly

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory. Pupils are positive and want to do well in lessons. The school is focusing its efforts on meeting their learning needs, for example through tasks which engage boys in writing, in its drive to eliminate any remaining underachievement. Current efforts are focused on mathematics to bring achievement in this area up to the level of other subjects and have involved close work with subject specialists and outside agencies. Boys are progressing as well as girls. The school's data show that the rate of increased progress evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now moving into Key Stage 1. Where learning is delivered via a range of methods with opportunities for pupils to take the lead, as in an excellent Year 4 lesson where everything related to pupils' previous experience, progress is rapid, but best practice in meeting learning needs is at an early stage of being shared across the school.

Pupils have a good understanding of safety and put this into practice around the school where they look after each other. Pupils' behaviour is orderly and allows learning to proceed at an appropriate pace. Low-level problems occur where teaching methods and learning materials do not fully engage pupils. The school encourages healthy eating, for example with the provision of fresh fruit and a healthy menu, and pupils respond well to these initiatives. Pupils have a number of opportunities to be involved in extra-curricular activities in addition to regular physical education, and uptake is good. Good

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opportunities exist for pupils to contribute as helpers, school council members and playground buddies but there is further scope for development of workplace skills through an increased focus on mathematical skills and chances to use ICT more in lessons.

*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	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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in most areas and the school has worked to develop their skills in mathematics. Teachers use a range of resources, including generally good use of the electronic whiteboard, to support learning, but lessons are often teacher-dominated and opportunities for pupils to use computers are limited. Best practice is inconsistently shared to develop teaching skills. Teachers' planning seeks to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met but the quality of provision for specific groups and extension activities vary from class to class and year to year, as does the use of targets and assessment information to develop learning. Some of the best practice is seen in the variety of teaching strategies for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers have made good use of scaffolding to

<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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support learning in many subjects but target setting and precise instructions about what pupils need to do to improve are insufficiently developed.

Curriculum planning is focused now on progression in development of pupils' skills. Areas of weakness have been identified in writing, calculation and problem solving, and have resulted in changes in timetabling and curriculum emphasis. The curriculum is enriched by themed weeks like multicultural week and residential visits, but provision for science is in an early stage of development and is less well resourced than English or mathematics. Opportunities to develop basic skills are strongest lower down the school. Best practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been pushed up into Key Stage 1 where early intervention has had an impact on attainment and leaders are working on further extension of opportunities. Support for pupils is very well targeted and highly effective in ensuring their well-being and personal development. The special educational needs team and staff associated with the autistic spectrum disorder centre have a very good understanding of pupils' needs and teaching assistants are well used to support their efforts. The school works closely with parents and carers and outside agencies to support pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with individual education plans. The school is working to address a few concerns with punctuality. Parents and carers are involved from the start of their children's education, including in the good transition arrangements.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and his team have a shared commitment to improving the school through tackling key areas of weakness and embedding a culture of high expectations. As a result, attainment is beginning to improve throughout the school, although not yet consistently. Middle managers have been given time to develop planning and assessment procedures and to support the work of their teams, and are excited by the opportunities increasingly available to them. Tracking systems are now used more rigorously to evaluate pupils' progress and provide appropriate support. Leaders and managers are now focused on ensuring the development of teaching by more thorough monitoring, lesson observation and scrutiny of the data. Governors make a good contribution to the work of the school because they bring considerable experience in education and a good range of skills to their work. They have a clear understanding of where the school is on its journey and provide both challenge and support. The school

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emphasises the value of the individual as well as a sense of belonging to a family. As a result, it shows good commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities and elimination of discrimination in any form. Procedures for safeguarding are good with regular review of policies and arrangements. Child protection procedures are robust and meet all current requirements. The school promotes community cohesion well, especially at the local level where links are strong. It is working to raise pupils' awareness of their national context to tie in with developing global links. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources to meet the needs of pupils and ensure value for money.

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children develop well from starting points which are below typical expectations on entry to reach average standards by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Very detailed assessment on entry flags up early learning concerns. Good levels of support for children, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, ensure that everyone learns to work and play independently and cooperatively. The work of the teaching assistants is a strength, as is the sense of family created in this area of learning. There are many opportunities for children to be active learners because of the well-resourced outdoor area provision. Work is under way to develop the consistency in provision for indoor/outdoor learning. The curriculum on offer has been modified in innovative ways to engage the children in development of their skills, especially boys in writing. Focused staff approaches develop communication, literacy and numeracy skills. Children show a clear understanding of



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staying safe. They are encouraged to be active and to eat healthy food. Good opportunities are offered for exercise. Adults have a good knowledge of children's learning, development and welfare, resulting in very strong pastoral care and support. Assessment, based on thorough observations and the careful use of data, informs planning which is child-centred to ensure challenging, enjoyable experiences. There is a clear vision and a sound action plan for the future development of this area of the school. Relationships between adults and children are good. Leaders are focused on improving achievement and the learning environment. Resources are well managed to ensure good progress. Best practice in this area is now being rolled into Key Stage 1 to ensure continuity of development.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

The very large majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. Approximately a quarter returned a completed questionnaire. Parents and carers are particularly pleased about their children's enjoyment of school and its promotion of healthy lifestyles. Inspectors agree with these views. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about how the school helps them to support their child's learning and how the school deals with behaviour. Inspectors shared these points with the school. They found that there is scope for further clarity in the use of assessment procedures to help parents and carers to understand how to help their children progress. Inspectors found that behaviour around the school and in lessons was generally satisfactory and better where pupils were fully engaged by the teaching and learning opportunities on offer, and that behaviour was generally appropriately dealt with.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashford Oaks Community 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 393 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	69	26	29	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	66	27	30	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	58	28	31	5	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	58	32	36	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	63	30	33	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	52	32	36	11	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	47	44	50	3	3	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)	39	43	44	49	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	52	34	38	7	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	51	33	37	7	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	52	36	40	2	2	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	62	69	24	27	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	66	26	29	4	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 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.**



16 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashford Oaks Community Primary School, Ashford, TN23 4QR

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education. Here are some of the things your school does well:

- you make good progress in the Nursery and Early Years Foundation Stage
- you enjoy school because everyone works carefully to support you and make your school a happy place to be
- staff take very good care of you and keep you safe
- you understand how important it is to be fit and healthy, and to eat well
- you are valued as individuals but there is a strong sense of community.

The headteacher wants to make your school even better so we have asked him and the staff to do two things which will help:

- to make sure that lessons always help you to reach the right level for your age, especially in mathematics
- to make sure that target setting and marking are used to match tasks to your ability, and to make further use of computers in helping you to do your work

You can help by letting your teachers know when you are stuck or have completed all your work.

We wish you every success and thank you again for welcoming us to your school

Yours sincerely

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Lead Inspector

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