

Ashford Church of England Primary School

School Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 2BW

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved substantially since its last inspection. This is because school leaders have successfully tackled the weaknesses which it identified. As a result, pupils' achievement is now good, because teaching is consistently good.
- The school provides a well-ordered environment in which pupils can thrive.
- The headteacher and her senior colleagues have introduced innovative and effective ways of checking on pupils' progress. This enables them to identify quickly any who are falling behind and make sure they receive the support they need. Governors have greatly improved their ability to hold leaders to account for improving teaching. They have a detailed knowledge of how well pupils are achieving and of the quality of teaching.
- Pupils enjoy learning and behave well in lessons. Pupils from different backgrounds work and play harmoniously together.
- Pupils feel safe and say that the school looks after them well. Most parents agree.
- Teachers make their high expectations clear to pupils. They know their subjects well. This leads to lessons proceeding smoothly and to pupils making good progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from good teaching and from plenty of activities which stimulate their learning and development.
- Pupils' achievement has risen in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and that of other pupils are narrowing.
- The school's curriculum, which includes a wide range of out-of-school activities and special events, strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The new systems which leaders have introduced to improve the quality of teaching have not yet had their full effect on raising achievement. This is because teachers are not implementing them as consistently as they could.
- Pupils do not always make as much progress as they could during lessons when activities are not swiftly adjusted to suit their needs.
- Teachers do not consistently check closely enough to see whether pupils are struggling with tasks or have finished them quickly.
- Pupils are not routinely required to respond and to act upon the comments teachers make about their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 16 lessons, observing 15 teachers. Five of these observations took place together with members of the school’s senior leadership team. The inspectors also made shorter visits to a number of other lessons and school activities. They attended an assembly, examined samples of pupils’ written work together with senior leaders, and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, the Chair, the Vice-Chair and three other members of the Governing Body, as well as members of staff, and representatives from the local authority and the diocese. Inspectors also held informal discussions with a number of parents and carers.
- Inspectors examined a number of school documents, including records of pupils’ attainment and progress, and records of attendance.
- Inspectors looked at safeguarding procedures, as well as the school’s self-evaluation, its processes for setting targets for teachers and monitoring staff’s performance, and a range of other school documents.
- As they planned and carried out the inspection, inspectors considered 112 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, as well as the school’s own most recent surveys of parents’ views. They also took account of 29 questionnaires which had been completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Chris Bandfield	Additional Inspector
Roger Fenwick	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage in one of the two the Reception classes. All the children attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- About one in seven pupils is eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional government funding provided for disadvantaged children who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, about one in eight pupils, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school hosts a breakfast and after-school club, which is managed by an outside body and is therefore subject to separate inspection arrangements.
- Since the school was last inspected, there have been a large number of changes in staffing, and a new senior leadership team has been put in place. There have also been several changes affecting the membership and organisation of the governing body. The school has also completed a substantial re-building programme.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that pupils can make consistently rapid and sustained progress, by ensuring that all teachers
 - check pupils' progress regularly during lessons and adapt activities if pupils find that work is too easy or too difficult
 - give pupils enough chances to show that they have benefited from the advice they have been given on how to improve their work, by responding to teachers' comments.
- Ensure that all staff consistently put into practice the school's new systems for improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Following the last inspection, the headteacher quickly put in place a new leadership team which has been very effective in helping her to make the necessary improvements. The changes that have been made, which include changes of staffing and of staff responsibilities, have helped the school to overcome the weaknesses which the last inspection report identified.
- Senior leaders work very closely and effectively together. They share a strong common purpose and have united the staff behind them in their drive for improvement. As a result, the school runs smoothly so that pupils are safe and can flourish.
- Those members of staff who have responsibility for specific areas of the school's work are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Although several of them are relatively new to their posts, they are already contributing strongly to the school's development.
- Senior leaders have developed a highly sophisticated system for checking the progress of individual and different groups of pupils throughout the school. They make sure that staff are fully aware of the standards that pupils are reaching and of whether or not they are reaching their potential. Leaders also ensure that staff use this information to provide activities and support which are well tailored to pupils' different needs and abilities. This is one of the factors that have led to the rise in pupils' achievement.
- Leaders keep a close eye on the quality of teaching in all subjects and year groups. They have devised a rigorous set of standards which all staff are expected to achieve. When staff do not live up to these expectations, they are given well-structured and robust support, which has enabled, for example, newly-qualified teachers to improve their practice. Staff who are new to the profession or to the school speak highly of the support and encouragement they have received.
- The extent to which teachers meet the targets which have been agreed, including with regard to pupils' achievement, determines whether or not they receive increases in pay, or promotion.
- Both the local authority and representatives of the local diocese have made a significant contribution to helping the school to improve. They have done this by providing staff with high-quality training and support, and by enabling the school to benefit from the expertise to be found in other local schools.
- The school has developed its curriculum so that pupils benefit from the links that teachers make between, for example, writing, mathematics and science. They do this through the use of activities which are related to themes, such as crime and punishment, which pupils study. The school also provides pupils with a wide range of sporting and other out-of-school activities, and special events.
- Pupils are given a very good grounding in the fundamental British values of democracy and respect for others. Pupils gain an in-depth understanding of the different cultures and traditions represented within and outside the school, and in the wider world. This prepares them very well for life in modern Britain and makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes good use of the extra funding it receives for particular purposes. It has used additional money for disadvantaged pupils to good effect, for example by providing them with effective one-to-one teaching. Extra funding for sport and physical education has also been used well to widen pupils' opportunities to take part in different sporting and physical activities, and to increase their skills.
- The ways in which gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils have narrowed demonstrates the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because staff do not always put into practice the measures which leaders have introduced to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement and their behaviour are good rather than outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - By reorganising its committee structure and recruiting new members, the governing body have very much improved their capacity to steer and to accelerate the school's development. The newly-developed systems for checking pupils' progress have helped governors to gain a detailed and accurate understanding of pupils' achievement, and of how this compares to that of pupils nationally. Regular reports from school leaders, as well as frequent and well-focused visits to the school, enable governors to know how good teaching is and what leaders are doing to improve it further. Governors understand and support the ways in which leaders ensure that pay rises for teachers depend on meeting targets. Governors look after the school's finances well. This has enabled pupils to benefit, for example, from the improvement of the school's premises and its website. Governors also ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective and meet current requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say they enjoy lessons. They cooperate with their teachers and with one another in lessons, and usually work hard. On rare occasions, pupils slacken their efforts because the work they have been given is too difficult or too easy.
- Pupils behave with courtesy and consideration to one another around the school. They report that behaviour in the playground has improved since the school has introduced a greater range of supervised activities, including sports and games. Pupils from different cultures and traditions play happily together.
- School records show that staff deal thoroughly and effectively with the occasional incidences of poor behaviour and have reduced the number of pupils whose absences have caused concern. As a result, the behaviour and attendance of the small number of pupils who have not lived up to the school's expectations have improved significantly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All the pupils who met the inspectors said that they felt safe in school. Pupils know about different types of bullying, such as cyber-bullying. They say, though, that bullying is not a big issue, although it happens occasionally. When it does, their view is that staff deal with it promptly so it does not recur.
- A small minority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey did not agree that their children feel safe in school and that the school deals effectively with bullying. However, none of the parents who spoke to inspectors raised any concerns about their children's safety.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when they are online. Pupils benefit a great deal from talks given by outside speakers representing charities whose aim is to improve children's safety.
- Pupils say that staff take good care of them and that pupils look after one another.

The quality of teaching is good

- A very large majority of parents who completed the on-line survey agreed that their children are well taught and that they make good progress.
- Teachers know pupils' strengths and weaknesses and have high expectations of them. They have established good routines, for example, which ensure that pupils know when it is time to stop what they are doing and listen to the teacher.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge of different subjects, including English and mathematics. They explain tasks and topics clearly. This enables pupils to gain an accurate understanding of what they are learning.
- The teaching of phonics (the links between sounds and letters), which the last inspection identified as a weakness, is now a strength. Good teaching enables pupils to gain a good grasp of the basics in the Reception classes. Older pupils, including those who find reading difficult, are helped to apply their knowledge of phonics to good effect in reading increasingly complex texts.
- Pupils' written work in both key stages shows that teachers help them to improve their handwriting, and make sure they have plenty of opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. This also represents an improvement since the last inspection.
- Teachers have benefited from training which has improved their ability to teach pupils how to solve mathematical problems. This was evident in two Year 6 lessons on the same topic. The teachers made sure that pupils understood the advantages and disadvantages of adopting different approaches to measuring the perimeter and area of rectangles and other shapes.
- Teaching assistants and other adults make a good contribution to pupils' learning, both in and outside the classroom. This applies especially to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and the small number who are learning English as an additional language.
- Teachers plan activities during lessons which are well suited to pupils' abilities and interests, and make sure that pupils know what to do when they start them. They do not always ensure that lesson time is used as well as it could be. This is because, on occasion, teachers do not check thoroughly enough to see that no pupils are finding the work too hard, or are not being stretched sufficiently.
- Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and at regular intervals. They make sure that pupils understand what they have done well and what they need to do to make their work even better. Not all teachers, however, routinely expect pupils to respond to their comments in ways which show that they have fully taken them on board.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has risen over the course of the last few years. Although test results in Key Stage 1 have fallen slightly, leaders know why this happened and have made sure that teaching has improved. As a result, standards in this area, especially in writing and mathematics, are also rising.
- Key Stage 2 test results show that pupils make good progress from their starting points. This includes pupils who come from a range of different backgrounds, as well as those who speak English as an additional language. Where there have been variations, leaders have identified their causes and have succeeded in remedying them.
- Pupils' progress in a range of subjects is good. This includes in French, and in using information and communication technology, where pupils learn the basic elements of programming computers. This ensures that they are well prepared for secondary education.
- The most-able pupils benefit from activities which provide them with a good level of stretch and challenge, and enable them to achieve well. These pupils show that they enjoy and are capable of finding solutions to problems for themselves, and of exploring different ways of reaching them.
- Leaders carefully monitor the progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They make sure that these pupils receive the help and support they need, including from outside organisations. Teachers work well with teaching assistants and other adults to make sure that they have work which is well matched to their abilities, and that they participate fully in classroom activities. As a result, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is because school leaders make sure that teachers understand these pupils' needs and do what is necessary to meet them.
- The results gained by disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2014 national tests indicated that they were just over three and a half terms behind other pupils in the school. These results also showed that disadvantaged pupils were just over a year behind other pupils nationally. However, the equivalent group's attainment in 2012 had been almost four terms behind that of other pupils nationally. The gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school remained about the same. Records of the achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently at the school, however, show that most are catching up with their classmates. This demonstrates the school's current success in narrowing the gaps between disadvantaged pupils' achievement and that of other pupils.
- Pupils' learning and progress in most lessons are good. Pupils do not, however, always make as much progress in all lessons as they could. This is because teachers do not adapt tasks quickly enough when pupils make slower or faster progress than they had expected.

The early years provision is good

- Children, according to their parents, settle quickly into school routines because staff take care to find out about children's interests, preferences and any additional needs before they start school.
- Children gain confidence in working and playing on their own and with others, learning to share and to take turns in using equipment. They benefit from a good range of activities, both indoors and outdoors, which enable them to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills. For example, children gained a good grasp of counting and tallying as they showed great curiosity in examining a collection of live snails. Children are well prepared to move on to Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff treat children and adults with courtesy and respect. Adults make sure that children know how they should behave in school. Staff assess children's progress carefully and in detail, and use the information they gather well to plan the next steps in children's learning.
- Early years leaders show a well-developed understanding of the particular features of this age group. They keep parents well informed about their children's progress and have ambitious plans to develop the provision still further. Leaders make sure that arrangements for keeping children safe are fully in place.
- New measures designed to improve the effectiveness of systems for assessing children's progress still further have not yet had time to have their full impact in raising children's achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125228
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	453482

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Wells
Headteacher	Caroline Dyer
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 January 2013
Telephone number	01784 253310
Fax number	01784 240381
Email address	info@ashford-primary.surrey.sch.uk

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