

# Inspection of Ashford Oaks Community Primary School

Oak Tree Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 4QR

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This school has a joyful and welcoming atmosphere. From the highly nurturing early years environment to purposeful classrooms, the environment is safe, inclusive and happy. Staff share high expectations for all. Relationships are warm, and pupils are respectful.

Pupils are not worried about bullying. There are very few cases, but leaders take every concern seriously. Most pupils behave well. If pupils need help with managing their emotions, staff provide amazing pastoral care. Experiences such as art therapy and 'sand tray' time offer vital help to pupils who have experienced trauma.

School life is enriched with engaging experiences. Highlights include singing in a large arena and interviewing a Member of Parliament. Pupils love their camping trips and residential activity weeks. Leaders always help with funding to ensure that every family can access every opportunity.

Pupils are excited about their project to regenerate a local area of land. They are clearing the site and making improvements to contribute positively to their community.

Pupils thrive with 'leadership' roles. They lead assemblies every week, engaging their peers with discussions about human rights and environmental awareness. 'Diversity ambassadors' proudly uphold equality and challenge prejudice. Other pupils promote reading and online safety as their responsibilities.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Children make a wonderful start in early years. In Nursery and Reception, staff share impressive expertise and care, working tirelessly to support children with complex needs. Language development is rightly the top priority to help children communicate well. Staff promote independence very well. Children prepare their own healthy snacks and always wash up afterwards.

Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from strong support. Pupils from the SEND unit receive skilful support to help them access the full curriculum with their mainstream classes. Teachers adapt lessons to help every child to achieve success. Where needed, pupils use sensory equipment, such as ear defenders and individual workstations, to help them thrive.

New leaders have embedded improvements in reading. All staff have been trained in the new phonics programme. They identify gaps in pupils' knowledge swiftly and deliver focused catch-up sessions to make sure that nobody is left behind. Pupils read well-matched books which engage and excite them. Teachers read to classes daily. Pupils appreciate the diverse diet of books featuring a wide range of authors, cultures and philosophical issues.

Achievements in national tests for reading, writing and mathematics have been low. Progress was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, new leaders have prioritised rapid improvements and pupils are now reading and writing well. Work in books shows impressive language, composition and presentation. Pupils' mathematical skills are developing strongly. Pupils practise fluency and recall tasks to embed their knowledge, before solving investigations to stretch their abilities further. In early years, children learn number skills confidently, accessing a rich offer of practical opportunities.

The school's new curriculum approach is ambitious and well-planned across every subject, but not yet fully embedded in all areas. Pupils may not know and remember more in some subjects, such as geography. Assessment is effective in core subjects, but less precise in foundation subjects. In areas such as music, teaching is strong, but assessment is less developed. This means that teachers may not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. If pupils struggle to control their emotions, they receive effective pastoral care. Playtimes are fun and safe, although some staff are not completely clear about rules for behaviour. Leaders are providing training to ensure that everyone supports the behaviour policy consistently. Impressive pastoral work has helped to improve attendance for disadvantaged pupils.

Personal development is exceptional. Pupils know how to stay physically, emotionally and mentally healthy. They start the day with a popular pupil-led 'move and groove' session. Pupils proudly represent the school in a range of events, including netball, football and athletics competitions. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils are strongly represented in extracurricular opportunities. Everyone shows a strong sense of community, exemplified by the soup kitchen and food bank. Pupils support local church charities and enjoy visiting the local mosque. The school welcomes everyone. Leaders run English lessons for grandparents of Nepalese families. Teachers promote pupils' understanding of equal rights through the well-developed personal, social and health education curriculum. Pupils embrace different opinions and show maturity when challenging the views of others.

Leaders are inspirational. Teachers enjoy continual professional development. Most staff feel well supported, with few concerns about workload or well-being. Governors use their expertise to offer effective support and challenge. They fulfil statutory duties with diligence. Parents appreciate the strong support for pupils with SEND and the school's helpful communication. They say, 'The school has a small community feeling and always goes above and beyond.'

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are diligent when recruiting staff and volunteers. Staff know how to identify and share concerns about pupils. As a result of regular training, all staff understand and meet robust safeguarding requirements.

Leaders are tireless when following up serious concerns. They provide exceptional support for vulnerable pupils and their families, working with agencies such as social care, health services and specialist charities. Communication is strong and records are well kept.

Pupils understand healthy relationships and online safety. Assemblies and curriculum activities prepare pupils for modern Britain. As a result, pupils leave Year 6 with a well-developed awareness of how to stay safe.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new curriculum approach is ambitiously and precisely planned, but not consistently embedded in every subject. This means that pupils may not know and remember more in all areas of learning. Leaders must ensure that the intended curriculum is taught as planned to help pupils achieve more highly across all subjects.
- Assessment is not precise in some foundation subjects. As a result, teachers may not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers must ensure that assessment is used effectively to identify and address gaps in learning, to ensure that pupils achieve better.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135125
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256377
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	462
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rob Cook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phil Chantler
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ashfordoaks.kent.sch.uk">www.ashfordoaks.kent.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been significant changes at the school since the last inspection, including the appointment of new leaders and governors.
- The school has a resource-based unit for pupils with SEND, specialising in supporting pupils with ASD (autistic spectrum disorder), SLCN (speech, language and communication needs), BESD (behaviour, emotional and social difficulty) and MLD (moderate learning difficulty).
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, pastoral leaders, the SEND coordinator, teachers and support staff.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors studied documents and records, including the school's single central record and child protection referrals. Inspectors spoke with designated safeguarding leaders, staff, governors and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, history, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke to pupils, and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in English, religious education and geography.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read and observed catch-up interventions to evaluate how staff provide extra support to pupils.
- The lead inspector observed an assembly.
- The lead inspector met four members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.
- Inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school, and talked to pupils during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Scott Reece, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Cottingham	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Fisher-Pink	Ofsted Inspector

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