

Ashford Oaks Community Primary School

Oak Tree Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 4QR

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors are united in their commitment to improve the school's performance in all areas and have successfully improved the school from its satisfactory position at the previous inspection.
- Achievement is good. Pupils' attainment has risen each year since the last inspection and is rising at a faster rate than that found nationally because pupils' progress is improving rapidly and exceptionally well in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They get on well together, have positive attitudes to their learning and are proud of their school.
- The headteacher and a strong team of senior and subject leaders rigorously monitor teaching and learning so they can identify strengths and weaknesses and provide effective support. As a result, teaching has improved and is now good, with some that is outstanding.
- The governing body effectively supports the school and holds it to account for its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching.
- Expectations are not always high enough for what pupils can achieve and so progress is a little uneven across the classes and year groups in Key Stage 2.
- On occasion work is not demanding enough for more able pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Achievement in writing is not as high as in reading. Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work is not always of a high enough quality and sometimes they are not clear about why they are writing or who it is for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons or part lessons. They talked to pupils about their work and listened to some pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers, other staff with key leadership responsibilities, groups of pupils, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress, monitoring information and the safeguarding procedures.
- Inspectors took account of 66 responses to the online Parent View survey and three written comments from parents and spoke to some parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 27 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Lewis	Additional Inspector
Carol Vant	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashford Oaks is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium), because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or are children of service families, is well above average. At Ashford Oaks, almost all the pupils eligible for the pupil premium are those entitled to free school meals.
- The school has an autistic spectrum disorder resource centre and is the lead school for autistic spectrum disorder in the Ashford area.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The school provides a daily breakfast and after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring there are consistently high expectations for what pupils can achieve in Key Stage 2 so that pupils in all classes make good or better progress
 - providing appropriately demanding work for more able pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing by:
 - ensuring pupils know why they are writing and who they are writing for
 - improve handwriting and presentation skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because the progress of all groups currently in the school is improving rapidly from starting points that are often well below expectations for their ages when they start in the Nursery or Reception classes.
- School data, lesson observations and pupils' work show that pupils are on track to continue the year-on-year upward trend of improving standards seen since the previous inspection although by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, overall standards are not yet at the level found nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with autistic spectrum disorders who benefit greatly from the specialist provision but are fully included in all aspects of learning, make similar progress to others.
- Pupils who join the school in different year groups, often at the very early stages of learning English as an additional language, do particularly well because of very effective support.
- Children get a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress, so that they enter Year 1 with attainment that is below average.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check (the linking of sounds and letters) in 2012, taken by pupils currently in Year 2, the proportion achieving the expected result was below average. The school responded to this by taking rapid action and introduced a teaching programme throughout the whole school that groups pupils by their ability, to ensure that phonic lessons are pitched at the right level. As a result, progress has accelerated and most pupils have a secure knowledge of phonics to help them read unfamiliar words and to help them with their writing.
- Progress, although good overall, is still a little uneven across Key Stage 2, particularly for more able pupils, who sometimes do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving because the school correctly identified that pupils' mental mathematics skills were holding them back and has taken effective measures to improve these, for example by providing training for teaching assistants to support mathematical learning more effectively and confidently.
- Reading is promoted well throughout the school and the school works hard to encourage reading for enjoyment, for example by awarding reading certificates in the weekly celebration assembly, ensuring that pupils are introduced to a range of quality texts and encouraging parents to support their children as readers. Pupils develop their understanding of characters and plots, their use of non-fiction to extract information and their ability to 'read between the lines' to gain a depth of understanding in what they read.
- Writing continues to be a focus for improvement across the school. The school provides pupils with meaningful experiences to write about and ensures they have lots of opportunities to talk together to develop their ideas and their vocabulary. There are lots of examples of imaginative, interesting writing and many pupils say they enjoy writing. On occasion, however, pupils do not have a clear purpose for their writing or an understanding of who they are writing for. Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work in all subjects are weaker aspects of writing.
- In the 2012 tests, the attainment of Year 6 pupils who benefited from the pupil premium was almost one year behind other Year 6 pupils in the school in mathematics but they made better progress than others. Their attainment was 16 months behind in English. The gap in English was bigger than that found nationally but the gap in mathematics was similar to that found nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' commitment, subject knowledge and good knowledge of their pupils means that most lessons engage pupils well. Pupils think their lessons are fun and so have good attitudes and are enthusiastic learners who want to do well.

- Most lessons are well planned and so all groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are fully included and have equal access to the same learning opportunities.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers ensure learning progresses at a good pace and the teachers' good questioning skills keeps pupils on task and involved. Teachers focus well on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching of reading is good. Extensive training and on-going monitoring and evaluation have ensured that teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in teaching the school's phonic programme and so pupils learn well.
- In a few lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2, teachers do not expect enough of the pupils, especially the more able pupils, because they do not give them work that makes enough demands on them to enable them to achieve as well as they might.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in providing additional support for groups.
- Marking of pupils' work is generally informative, giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and reach their targets.
- Children start school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage with positive learning experiences. They enjoy a variety of engaging, stimulating play opportunities that are well planned, for example engaging in role-play at the 'Boot Fair'. Children learn to play together well, taking turns and sharing and working together as a team.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes towards learning and clearly enjoy coming to school. Lots of pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that one of the best things about the school was that teachers made learning fun. They also spoke of the friendly and caring atmosphere where they feel safe and secure and can learn and play without fear of discrimination. Pupils are polite and friendly. Attendance is average.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, for example in assemblies and on the playground, and records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. The school has recently changed its behaviour policy to reflect the high expectations of behaviour as the 'norm' and giving opportunities for all pupils to 'shine by moving from the rainbow to the sunshine'. Pupils appreciate this and want to do their best. Staff provide strong role models for the pupils and mutual respect and trust are embedded throughout the school.
- In a small number of lessons, where pupils' attitudes are not as focused as they might be and teaching does not fully engage them, pupils can become distracted and inattentive. These are dealt with effectively by staff, who make sure that learning is not disrupted.
- In discussions, pupils say they are not aware of any bullying in school but are confident to speak to adults if they had a problem or need to confide in someone. They have a good awareness that bullying can take different forms, including name calling, physical bullying, cyber-bullying and prejudiced-based bullying and said they were secure in the fact that if any incidents did arise, staff would deal with it quickly and fairly.
- The pastoral support team makes a significant contribution to pupils' well-being and social and emotional needs and the strong care and support provided for pupils and their families who may be vulnerable.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe, for example when using computers to access the internet. Pupils from all backgrounds learn and play together well and show consideration and care for each other. In lessons, they help each other out and respect and understand that different pupils may have different needs.
- Pupils are keen to take an active role in school life and take on a variety of responsibilities that they enjoy and take seriously, such as house captains and playground buddies. Year 6 pupils

efficiently organise and manage the daily 'move and groove' session that all pupils participate in and look forward to every morning.

- The breakfast and after-school clubs provide a good start and end to the day for those pupils who attend and they are appreciated by pupils and their parents.
- Most parents feel that pupils behave well and that the school keeps their children safe and cares for them well.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides highly effective and positive leadership and has the confidence of staff, governors, pupils and parents. Staff and pupils are inspired by the headteacher's drive and motivation to provide the best possible experiences for pupils.
- The expertise and experience within the school is acknowledged and valued by other schools in the area; for example, schools that have benefited from the expertise of the leader of the autistic spectrum disorder centre are very positive in their evaluations of the support. The headteacher is leading an initiative to support schools to include pupils with specific learning difficulties in mainstream education.
- The school has a very strong ethos of inclusion and care and reaches out to its community to help overcome barriers to learning and demonstrates its commitment to securing equal opportunities for all. Parents are very supportive of all aspects of the school's work.
- Key leadership roles are well defined and leaders at all levels, although some are relatively new, make a positive contribution to whole-school improvement as well as providing skills and expertise in their particular areas of responsibility. The school is working with the local authority to provide training to further extend the skills and leadership of subject leaders and middle managers.
- Senior leaders observe teachers' work and make judgements relating to the quality of their teaching and the progress pupils make. This information is used to set targets for teachers and to decide teachers' pay and internal promotion within the school. There are clear links with performance and pay progression.
- Accurate self-evaluation alongside a strong staff team with a culture of support and coaching has successfully seen the quality of teaching improve and a year-on-year rise in achievement. This demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.
- The range of subjects and topics taught is well matched to the needs of the pupils, with a wide variety of extra activities available. In all classes, there is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well and underpins all that the school does.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet statutory requirements and are well known and implemented by all staff to ensure that pupils feel very safe in school.
- An independent adviser supports the school on behalf of the local authority and provides 'light touch' support and effective challenge to the school, based on its performance data.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well and are committed to improving it further. The governing body has revised its structure and way of working which has enabled governors to both support and challenge the school and hold leaders to account for the effectiveness of the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and how the school's standards compare with those of other schools nationally. The governing body knows what the school is doing to reward good teaching and how it tackles any underperformance. Some governors are regular visitors to the school which benefits from individual governors' expertise and experience in education. Governors have a clear understanding of how the pupil premium funding is spent, for example on training, resources and additional staffing to provide additional support for pupils in literacy and numeracy, and its impact in improving

levels of pupil attainment. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and also attend training so they can fulfil their roles more effectively. They ensure that the school meets all statutory obligations, including those relating to safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff.

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	135125
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	402671

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Crampton
Headteacher	Gerry D'Cruz
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 June 2010
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