

Ashton West End Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106202
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	377376
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Tolley

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	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Molly Sayer
Headteacher	Micah Cummings
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 19 lessons and 11 teachers. These included short visits to a range of phonics (teaching of letters and sounds) and guided-reading sessions across the school led by teachers and trained assistants, accompanied by the headteacher. They also sampled pupils' work and heard a number of pupils read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, the safeguarding policies, and the school's analysis of pupils' progress. They also analysed 98 parental questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff. They also considered the small number of responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

Ashton West End is much larger than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The overall proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is lower than average, but varies considerably from year-to-year. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school holds Healthy School status and the Bronze Eco Schools award.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Attainment has risen steadily over the last three years. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is below average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in acquiring a working knowledge of the language as a result of the effective support they receive. Although pupils achieve satisfactorily, their progress is weaker in writing and reading than in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory across the school. The school provides good quality support for pupils who join the school with little or no English, with disabilities and those with special educational needs, through additional programmes and individual support, tailored closely to their needs. The emphasis on speaking and listening skills across the school is effective in increasing pupils' confidence in speaking English, as well as in problem solving. Marking is regular and encouraging, but does not always give sufficient guidance to pupils about how to improve their work. Although pupils' progress is tracked closely, this information is not always used effectively in lesson planning, so that sometimes pupils find work too easy or too difficult. At present, the teaching of phonics is inconsistent across the school and this slows pupils' progress in reading, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. They typically behave well in lessons and say they enjoy school. They have positive attitudes towards learning, work well in small groups or with a partner and are courteous and polite. They know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and say they feel safe in school.
- The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body monitor the school's work closely and provide clear direction. Actions taken to raise pupils' attainment in mathematics and English since the last inspection have proved successful. Nonetheless, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their skills across the wider curriculum as they move through the school. Although subject leaders plan the curriculum for their own subjects and monitor progress, curriculum planning is not coordinated well enough by key stage and subject leaders. As a result, not enough is being done to ensure that pupils develop their skills and extend their knowledge systematically across the whole curriculum as they move through the school.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in writing by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are given the right amount of challenge and are provided with resources which enable them to complete tasks successfully and achieve their potential
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in a variety of contexts across the curriculum
 - ensuring that marking gives pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work, linked closely to their individual targets.
- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, by adopting a more systematic approach to the teaching of phonics across the school.
- Ensure pupils can extend their knowledge and develop basic skills in a systematic way as they move through the school by developing the role of key stage and subject leaders in coordinating curriculum planning to ensure continuity and progression across the whole curriculum.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The majority of parents and carers have positive views of the school and are pleased with the progress their children make. Inspection findings indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but that their progress in reading and writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is slowed by their lack of confidence in applying phonics (the sounds letters make) and the need for a large proportion of children to acquire English. Many children join the school with skills and knowledge that are well below that expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in their personal development and in their language and communication skills. Although many are still working towards the early learning goals when they enter Year 1, they are eager to learn and continue to make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory, but in reading and writing it is slower than in mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is well below average; this is because they do not have a secure enough understanding of phonics to decode text confidently and this slows their progress across all subjects. By the end of Year 6, however, most pupils' reading is broadly average; they read a variety of texts, including narrative and non-fiction fairly fluently. Most recount accurately in their own words what they have read and can empathise with characters in books, skim and scan for information and identify how authors use literary devices for different effects. Almost all pupils are on track to meet, and some to exceed, their targets.

A large proportion of pupils begin school speaking little or no English. Although they make swift progress in acquiring a working knowledge of English in the Early Years Foundation

Stage and in Key Stage 1, their progress overall is slowed considerably until they are confident in operating in English. By the time they enter Key Stage 2, they are confident English speakers and their progress accelerates so that they make the same satisfactory progress as their classmates. Less-able pupils, pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs also make swifter progress than others, particularly in their writing, because of the extra support they receive from teaching assistants.

In lessons, pupils make particularly strong progress in problem-solving and in mathematics. Their skills in writing in subjects other than English are less well-developed. They participate enthusiastically in activities, especially when working with a partner to explore ideas and solve problems. In a mixed Year 3 and 4 class, pupils used the information gleaned from pictures of artefacts to begin to imagine life in the Aztec culture and, as a result of discussion with a partner, were keen to explain their ideas to the rest of the class. Similarly, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were confident in explaining to others how they had identified parallel lines in a variety of two- and three-dimensional shapes because of their discussions in small groups.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers say that teaching is good. Inspection findings indicate that teaching is satisfactory across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilful in their use of questioning to support and extend pupils' thinking both in whole-class activities and in small group work. Pupils, including the youngest children, are frequently asked to share and explain their thinking to others. This is effective in developing their speaking and listening skills, in increasing their confidence and independence as learners, and in successfully promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In lessons, pupils are frequently given the opportunity to explore ideas for themselves in pairs and small groups and to solve problems. They usually listen carefully to one another and, by Year 6 are confident in asking questions and expressing their ideas clearly. There are weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of teaching phonics. As a result, pupils' progress in reading and writing is slowed because they do not have a good enough grasp of phonics to blend sounds for reading or segment sounds for spelling.

Teachers track pupils' progress closely, but do not always use assessment information effectively to plan next steps for different groups in enough detail. On occasions, resources provided in writing tasks lack the guidance some lower-attaining pupils need. As a result, their progress slows and they do not always manage to complete the tasks in the time allowed and, on occasions, more-able pupils find some tasks too easy. Marking is regular and, although there are examples of very thorough and detailed marking which helps pupils improve their writing, this is not consistent across all year groups, nor is it mirrored in other subjects across the curriculum. Although pupils have frequent opportunities to practise their writing in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes, opportunities are missed to improve the quality of their writing in this way. Pupils track their own progress in English and mathematics, so that they know how they are getting on but they are not always certain what their next steps should be.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that poor behaviour is dealt with promptly and effectively. A small minority of parents and carers express concerns about behaviour and how effectively the school deals with poor behaviour. Inspectors found that pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good, and around the school it is satisfactory. Pupils

usually respond promptly to teachers' instructions. Incidences of bullying and exclusions are rare. Any poor behaviour is dealt with effectively overall but the school acknowledges that, on occasions, it could respond more swiftly to some parents' and carers' concerns.

Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside school, and they know how to stay safe and healthy. Attendance is below average and is adversely affected by extended holidays taken in term time. Persistent absenteeism has decreased over the last three years. The school works rigorously to improve attendance further.

Pupils display good concentration and, when working in groups, generally organise themselves well and without fuss. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility as school councillors, ambassadors and running the Eco group and the gardening club but, although their views are canvassed, are not always fully involved in decision making in the school.

The school uses the expertise of a range of outside agencies to provide support for pupils experiencing difficulties that affect their learning. Pupils in receipt of this support attend school regularly and most make satisfactory progress in their personal development and their academic work.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides clear direction, based on the analysis of pupils' progress and the regular monitoring and evaluation of the school's work. Underachievement is quickly identified and this triggers extra support, such as reading recovery sessions. Priorities are clear, but improvement planning lacks detail so that it is sometimes difficult to see how it is to be translated into classroom practice. Members of the governing body and subject coordinators play an active part in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes.

Safeguarding procedures and policies meet government guidelines. The school has a commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Gaps in the attainment and progress between different groups of pupils are closing, but there remain some differences in the rates of progress of different groups of pupils in writing. Since the last inspection, attainment has risen and progress has accelerated, particularly in mathematics. These are clear indications that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils satisfactorily. A focus on the use of questioning and collaborative working, ensure that there is a good level of consistency across the school in these areas, and is successful in raising pupils' confidence as learners, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. A range of activities and visits beyond the classroom broaden pupils' experience and are valued by the pupils, particularly sporting activities and the gardening club. Subject and key stage leaders take responsibility for their own specialisms, but they do not work effectively in collaboration with each other to fully ensure that pupils develop their skills in a systematic way as they move through the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



25 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashton West End Primary School, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL7 0BJ

I would like to thank you on behalf of all the inspectors for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you all and hearing some of you read. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. You told us how much you appreciated the help you get from teachers and we were impressed by the way the school provides the right help, for example, for pupils who are learning to speak English. You behave well in lessons and we were impressed by how courteous and polite you were. You do a lot to help improve the school, for instance, through the school council and as ambassadors, through the Eco Group and the gardening club.

You make satisfactory progress, but we think you could do better in your reading and writing. We noticed that some of you found tasks too easy or too difficult, so we have asked the teachers to make sure you get the right amount of challenge and the support you need to make sure you can all complete tasks successfully and do your best. Some younger pupils have difficulty with their reading; this is because they are not very confident in applying phonics (the sounds letters make) so we have asked the school to put this right. You work really well with a partner and in small groups to solve problems and this helps you to be confident in exploring new ideas and explaining your own ideas clearly. Teachers plan your work carefully for different subjects. We have asked them to work together to make sure that when you are doing topic work you are also able to build on your writing especially, and your mathematics and problem solving skills as you move through the school. We found that marking does not always tell you how to improve your work so we have asked your teachers to make sure you get good advice. You can all help by deciding how to improve it yourselves.

The headteacher and staff are working to make your school even better. You can help all by continuing to work hard and come to school every day. I wish you every success for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely
Judith Tolley
Lead Inspector

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