

Ashfield Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116731
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	379289
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Mark Sims HMI

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	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lynne Barbour
Headteacher	Andrew Best
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
School address	Redhill Road Ross-on-Wye HR9 5AU
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Sanderson

Additional inspector

Christine Murray-Watson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. They observed 16 lessons taught by 16 teachers, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. This accounted for approximately 12 hours of inspection time in total. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the Governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers and two senior advisers from the local authority. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, the safeguarding and equality policies, and minutes of governing body meetings. Also, they analysed 75 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Ashfield Park is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average but there has been a significant increase of pupils from a White Other background since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school other than at the usual times is above the national average for primary schools. The school meets current government floor standards. It has the International Schools Award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is rapidly improving under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. Pupils are progressing well in their learning given their low starting points when they start school. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Most groups of pupils are progressing in line with their peers and where the school has identified gaps they are closing rapidly as a result of effective targeted support. Pupils who have recently left made less progress during their time in school as a result of previously identified inadequate teaching and behaviour.
- Teaching is good. In the best lessons pupils learn well because the work is challenging and exciting and they want to do well. Good marking informs pupils how well they are doing and what their next steps are. In a small minority of lessons the work is not sufficiently pitched at the right level for different groups of pupils, particularly for less able pupils, and occasionally girls are not as engaged as much as boys in whole class discussions.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils behave well around school and in lessons free from disruption. All parents and carers who expressed a view in the survey said their children feel safe in school and that behaviour is good. Attendance is above average and rising and exclusions are rare. Pupils get on well together and have good relationships with the adults who work with them.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders are very supportive of the headteacher and know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Their roles have been enhanced so that they monitor teaching and the performance of different groups of pupils effectively. The roles of some newly appointed subject leaders are less well developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is at least good and a higher proportion is outstanding by:

- consistently providing opportunities for girls to take part in speaking activities
 - enabling pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning
 - consistently planning to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, especially lower attaining pupils.
 - sharing the very best examples of teaching through peer observation, modelling and coaching.
- Ensure that leadership and management is consistently good at all levels by ensuring that all subject leaders:
- monitor teaching in their subjects
 - analyse in greater depth the performance and participation of different groups of pupils in their subjects.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils learn well as lessons are free of disruption and engage them to do well. They support each other through pair and group work, for example finding different methods to multiply numbers. Most groups of learners do well in lessons. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and/or disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, previously identified as doing less well than their peers nationally, are now rapidly closing the gap with the national average through the good support they are receiving. Pupils are making good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics across all year groups. Positive relationships between adults and pupils contribute to their effective learning. All parents and carers who expressed a view in the survey justifiably said their children are making good progress in their learning.

In a small number of lessons lower-attaining pupils are not making as much progress as their peers as they find the work set too challenging. Where occasionally teachers allow volunteers to answer only, girls are not sufficiently involved in whole-class discussions that can be dominated by boys. Learning is not as good in lessons that are too prescribed by teachers and do not give pupils enough choices.

Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 has been broadly average. Test results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have been broadly average but dipped last year for a cohort that had been disrupted by previously identified inadequate teaching. Pupils in Year 6 are making above the expected rate of progress with some making exceptional progress, particularly when given the opportunity to learn independently. Higher-attaining pupils thrive on challenging targets they have been set and the proportion on course to achieve the highest possible levels in English and mathematics are considerably higher than in previous cohorts. In the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils make good progress towards their learning goals in most areas including literacy and numeracy, having joined the school at below national expectations for their age. They have closed the gap with the national average by the time they join Key Stage

1.

Quality of teaching

In the large majority of lessons pupils progress well because of the good quality of teaching. Teachers plan lessons to be exciting and stimulating and get pupils working quickly so that minimum time is spent on teacher explanation or whole class discussion. Teachers show good subject knowledge and plan tasks for different groups of learners. Learning objectives are clearly communicated to pupils and in one instance pupils were encouraged to come up with their own success criteria. Pupils enjoy their lessons, most of which move at a lively pace with a variety of activities and styles of learning to keep everyone engaged, for example in a literacy lesson where some pupils were supported through guided reading while others planned their work as an independent group.

In the most effective lessons, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported to be fully integrated into the classroom and achieve well. The best teacher questioning targets pupils with and without their hands up and the level of challenge of the questions enable lower- and higher-attaining pupils to participate. All parents and carers who responded to the survey said their children are taught well. Inspection findings support these views.

Teachers plan for pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural development through circle time and assemblies. The thematic curriculum offered by the school gives teachers the opportunity to plan for a wider range of experiences for pupils. This has enhanced subjects, such as, art, geography and history. Teaching assistants are deployed well in lessons to support pupils' learning and know when to step back to enable pupils to work independently. Marking is good and teachers consistently inform pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. They provide additional questions for pupils to think about which at their best take pupils on further with their learning. Some of the questions are too narrow or teachers do not check to see if pupils have responded appropriately. In the Early Years Foundation Stage all areas of learning are supported effectively with a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities that provide a good balance between teacher- and child-initiated activity. Assessment and identification of next steps is rigorous.

In the less effective lessons, while there are different tasks for different groups of pupils, at times the learning objective is the same for all and lower-attaining pupils struggle to achieve this. The pace of lessons is slower and a greater proportion of time is spent by teachers talking from the front or leading lengthy whole-class discussions that do not always engage all groups of pupils equally.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school's top priority since the last inspection has been to address the issue of behaviour and disruption in lessons. Pupils have responded well to the new behaviour policy to which they contributed and which they regard as being fair in the way it is consistently applied. The number of exclusions has fallen sharply and during the inspection no disruption was seen in any lessons. Pupils behave consistently well in lessons and around the school. They apply themselves promptly to tasks and

respond positively to instructions from teachers. A very small minority of parents and carers said that their children's lessons were disrupted by bad behaviour but inspectors did not see any evidence of this.

Pupils' social and moral development is fostered through team work and collaboration. The school's theme of family values reinforces in pupils the principle of mutual respect. Pupils get on well with each other including those from different backgrounds who feel confident to talk about their differences. In the playground older pupils act as play leaders organizing games for younger pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children respond well to activities based on their interests and this promotes good behaviour in children who are engaged and enthused in their learning. Attendance is above average and current rates of attendance indicate it is improving further.

Pupils say they feel safe and know who to turn to if needed. They know how to avoid potentially dangerous situations. They are confident that any reported incident will be dealt with effectively. A very large majority of parents and carers agree that any incidents of bullying are dealt with well by the school. The school responds rapidly and effectively to the few reported incidents of bullying. No racist incidents have been reported.

Leadership and management

The drive and ambition of the headteacher are outstanding in his pursuit of excellence for the school as seen in the rapid improvements in pupil behaviour and the quality of teaching and ensuring that pupils are making good progress. Senior leaders, the governing body and the local authority provide good support in implementing the school's priorities for improvement and monitoring and evaluating the outcomes. These priorities are based on a secure knowledge of the school's areas for development. The distributed style of leadership has provided many opportunities for a wider senior management team to take responsibility for the development of the school. Consequently the school has a strong capacity to improve further.

Senior leaders promote equality of opportunity well by analysing data robustly to look for trends in performance of individuals and groups of pupils. This analysis leads to specific interventions targeted at those pupils identified at risk of falling behind. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well which contributes to the good progress children make before they join Key Stage 1.

The thematic curriculum has successfully engaged the interest and engagement of pupils in their learning. The school's systems for the safeguarding of its pupils are rigorous and monitored regularly. Checks are made on all adults including volunteer helpers. The building, including the temporary classrooms, is fully secure. Leaders have successfully engaged with parents and carers to the extent that the responses to the survey were overwhelmingly positive. All those stating a preference said they would recommend this school to another parent. All of the staff who responded to their survey said they were proud to be a member of the school and the overwhelming majority thought the school was well led and managed.

Leaders plan well for opportunities for pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural development through a wide range of culturally enriching experiences including a very recent trip to France, as well as national and international links. Underpinning all of this is its programme of family values. Newly appointed subject leaders are developing in their role. They have identified accurately strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibilities but their impact is at an early stage of development as they are not involved in monitoring teaching and have not analysed performance of pupils in depth. Opportunities for sharing the best teaching practice are also limited.

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashfield Park Primary School, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5AU

As you know we came to inspect your school recently and I thought you would want to know what we said in our report. Thank you to all of you who spoke to us or told us your views through the questionnaires, which we read very carefully.

We think this is a good school which is improving rapidly. Almost all of your parents and carers who responded to the survey agreed with this and said you behave well and feel safe in school. You are making good progress in your lessons and an increasing number of you are on track to achieve the highest possible levels in English and mathematics by the time you leave at the end of Year 6.

Since the school was last inspected there have been many improvements, particularly in behaviour and in the quality of your lessons. Your headteacher and other senior leaders have done much to make sure you have every chance to succeed in lessons that are free from disruption and taught well. That is what we saw and why you are well placed to improve on the broadly average test results in English and mathematics in Year 6 over the last few years.

These are the things we have asked the school to do to help it improve further. The school's leaders must make sure that:

- every lesson is at least good and that more are outstanding by making sure you have more choice and responsibility for your own learning
- all your leaders are checking how good your lessons are and how well you are all doing.

I hope you will take up the challenge to take on more responsibility for your learning. I wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

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