

West Ashtead Primary School

Taleworth Road, Ashtead, Surrey, KT21 2PX

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 has been too varied during the past two years and pupils have not made enough progress from their above average starting points in Year 2.
- While attainment in the Year 6 national test results in 2012 was above average in mathematics it was average in English.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to write extended pieces and to carry out investigations in mathematics in order to accelerate progress and raise standards.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Tasks are not always pitched right for the differing abilities of pupils, particularly the most able. This hinders their progress.
- Learning in lessons does not always move on at a fast enough pace.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' attainment and progress are not sufficiently clear and robust and consequently not all leaders and governors have a clear overview of pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in Reception have a good start to school and make good progress.
- Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and attainment is usually above average by the end of Year 2.
- The headteacher and staff are taking positive steps to raise achievement and improve teaching particularly in Years 3 to 6 and, as a result, pupils' progress is improving.
- The school has a positive and welcoming atmosphere.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils feel safe and very well cared for by adults.
- Attendance is consistently above average.
- Parents and carers hold positive views about the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, representatives from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 43 responses to the online survey (Parent View).
- Responses to an inspection questionnaire from 23 staff were analysed.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work and the school's development planning.

Inspection team

Marilyn Penman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Collins	Additional Inspector
Derek Watts	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A well below average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals or those with a parent in the services
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is one form entry from Reception through to Year 2. Thirty pupils, mainly from three local infant schools, join in Year 3 so there are two classes in each year in Years 3 to 6.
- The school federated with a nearby infant school in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better in all classes by:
 - ensuring that teachers always expect pupils to do their very best in lessons
 - making sure that teachers always set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils, particularly for the most able
 - ensuring that the learning in the lesson moves on at a quick pace.
- Accelerate progress in Years 3 to 6, particularly for the most able, and raise attainment to at least above average by the end of Year 6 by making sure that:
 - all pupils have plenty of opportunities to write extended pieces in English and in other subjects in all classes
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to experience investigative work in mathematics.
- Improve leadership, management, governance and the quality of the evaluation of the school's performance by:
 - strengthening the system for checking pupils' attainment and progress
 - ensuring that all leaders have a clear understanding of the progress that pupils need to make for achievement to be good and that information on pupil progress is used in judging teaching
 - making sure that governors have an accurate view of the school's performance and that they systematically check that the school is rapidly raising pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6, especially for the most able.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress in Year 3 to 6 has varied too much over recent years and they have not reached the standards they are capable of, particularly the most able.
- Pupils enter Year 3 with above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics but the school has not sufficiently built on these starting points. In national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2012, results were above average in mathematics and average in English.
- Leaders and staff are taking positive steps to raise pupils' achievement but pupil progress is not yet consistently good in all classes.
- The school's own information on pupil's achievement and un-validated information indicates that Year 6 results for 2013 may well be above average in reading and writing but closer to average in mathematics. However, national comparative data is not yet available to ensure accurate evaluation.
- Improving pupils' progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is a key priority for the school. Not enough pupils have attained the higher levels. This is in part because tasks have not been sufficiently demanding for the most able and there have been insufficient opportunities to apply numeracy skills.
- Almost all pupils attained the expected Level 4 or above in 2013 in reading and writing. While a high proportion of pupils attained the higher than expected levels in reading, this was not the case in writing and mathematics. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write extended pieces particularly in subjects other than English. Opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations in mathematics are being extended but this approach is not embedded.
- Children start in Reception with knowledge, understanding and skills above those expected for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching and the interesting range of indoor and outdoor learning activities provided.
- Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, attainment is usually above average in reading writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievement has been more consistent in the lower part of the school.
- Children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 and 2 benefit from the effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The results of the Year 1 reading check were above the national average in 2013.
- Pupils' write well in Years 1 and 2 and writing is improving in Years 3 to 6. For example, pupils in Year 3 made good gains in planning and writing an extended piece about the holidays. They used interesting vocabulary and their handwriting was clear, fluent and joined. However, in some classes, an over use of completing worksheets hinders the further development of pupils' writing skills.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils and from different backgrounds in their year groups.
- In the 2012 Year 6 national tests, the few pupils supported by the pupil premium attained lower standards than the other pupils. Recent additional support means that most pupils supported by the premium are now making faster progress and gaps in their achievement in mathematics and English are beginning to close.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through the school's physical education programme and the additional range of sporting activities on offer. For example, a group of pupils enjoyed improving and practising their table tennis skills in an early morning session by a visiting coach.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has not been consistent enough to ensure that most pupils make good

progress in all classes overtime.

- Teaching is improving but some weaknesses remain and there is not enough outstanding teaching. In a few lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and produce are not high enough.
- Activities and tasks are not always at the right level of difficulty for pupils. In particular, tasks are not always demanding enough for the most able. In some cases, the most able tackle easier activities rather than being moved on to the more demanding extension work straight away.
- The pace of learning declines when pupils spend too long listening to the teacher or consolidating learning that is already secure.
- Throughout the school, teachers and support staff have developed strong relationships with pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. As a result, pupils are cooperative, show consideration for others and work well in pairs and in small groups.
- In the Reception class, children are provided with a wide range of interesting indoor and outdoor activities. They receive well-focused teaching from adults. There are also good opportunities for children to explore, be creative and learn independently. As a result Reception children achieve well.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good in Years 1 and 2. It is improving in Years 3 to 6 because increasingly tasks and support are more regularly closely suited to pupils' learning needs.
- Small-group teaching to accelerate the progress of those eligible for the pupil premium is working well and as a result the gaps in their achievement are closing.
- The marking of pupils' work and target setting have improved. Pupils find teachers' marking helpful and individual targets are set in literacy and numeracy to help tackle the next steps of their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and carers who responded to Parent View stated that their children are happy, feel safe and well looked after at school. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for learning and when given the opportunity, participate well in the activities provided. Some pupil comments to the inspectors included, 'learning is fun', 'there are good clubs' and 'I like art and topic work'. However, occasionally pupils can be passive learners when introductions to lessons go on for too long or they are not moved on to challenging task soon enough.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The school's records of incidents show that behaviour is typically good over time and that effective steps are taken to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils feel safe at school and very well looked after by adults.
- Discussions with pupils reveal that they have a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including persistent name-calling, physical bullying and cyber-bullying. They informed the inspectors that bullying did not happen in the school. Pupils have full confidence in the staff in sorting out incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils are responsible citizens who take pride in their school. Those on the school council represent the pupils well. Pupils show a good understanding of different cultures and faiths.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have not been consistently good in Years 3 to 6. While, leaders and managers are aware of the need to raise achievement in Years 3 to 6, they have not been sufficiently aware of the implications of the underachievement on the school's overall effectiveness. As a result, leaders believe the school's overall effectiveness is good.
- Leaders have concerns about the accuracy of some of the assessments of pupils joining Year 3.

However, the school's own systems to checking pupils' attainment are not robust enough to support their case. Not all leaders are sufficiently aware of the progress that pupils need to make through Years 3 to 6 for achievement to be good.

- Positive action is being taken to raise achievement in Year 3 to 6 and to strengthen the teaching. The quality of teaching is regularly checked and helpful feedback is given to staff. However, in judging teaching, the school is not always taking sufficient account of the progress that pupils make and this has previously led to some generous evaluations.
- Leaders and managers have promoted good achievement and good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. They are effective in ensuring that the school is a positive and safe environment for pupils to learn and develop.
- There are appropriate procedures for checking the performance of staff. Targets to improve teachers' practice and skills are linked well to the school's priorities for improvement. Staff promotion and salary increases are correctly based on responsibilities, staff performance and the progress that pupils make.
- The pupil premium funding has been properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional support and learning opportunities. The progress of pupils supported by the premium is improving.
- There is an appropriate range of subjects and topics to promote pupils' learning. The range of additional clubs, visits and sporting opportunities are appreciated by the pupils. Action is being taken to strengthen learning opportunities in writing and investigative work in mathematics.
- All pupils have access to the full range of learning opportunities provided. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support in improving teaching and the curriculum and as they federated with another local school. However, the local authority's assessment of the school's overall effectiveness is too generous. As a result, the school and governing body believe that the school is better than it is.
- The school has established good partnerships with its parents and carers. The results of the Parent View survey indicate that they hold positive views about the school and that concerns are few.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are enthusiastic and supportive in their role. However, they do not have a sufficient understanding of the school's published performance data and the implication of underachievement in Years 3 to 6. As a result, governors believe that the school's performance is better than the findings of the inspection. Governors are kept informed about improvements to the quality of teaching and understand recent requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases being linked to pupil progress. However, judgements about teaching are not sufficiently linked to the progress that pupils make to accurately support them in making these decisions. They ensure that pupil premium funding is properly spent and have checked the improvements being made in this area. The governors have ensured that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	125026
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	426615

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debra Beer
Headteacher	Jane Douglass
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2008
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