

Ashfield Park Primary School

Redhill Road, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5AU

Inspection dates 2–3 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get a good start to school in the early years classes. Well planned activities and good teaching develop children's skills very effectively.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, standards rise as pupils move through the school.
- Teachers make sure that lessons are interesting. They use good subject knowledge to help them guide pupils to the next steps in their learning.
- Pupils behave well in and around school. They are pleasant and polite to adults and each other. They are enthusiastic about their learning and try hard in lessons.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know that there is always someone they can go to if they have a concern. They learn how to keep themselves safe beyond school, such as on the roads or when using the internet.
- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and is successfully driving improvements in achievement, behaviour and safety.
- Senior leaders check that the quality of teaching is improving and that pupils are making good progress. Any pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly helped to keep up.
- The headteacher has introduced new ways of teaching literacy and mathematics which have improved pupils' rates of progress in these subjects.
- Governors are very clear about their roles. They are supportive and challenge leaders to ensure continued improvement. Governors visit regularly to see for themselves how well the school is doing.
- The school's values of 'Be the Best you Can Be' provide a good base for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Respect, consideration and a desire to help each other 'be the best' underpin all the school does.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' guidance as to how pupils can improve their work in some subjects is not as effective as the helpful guidance they receive in literacy and mathematics.
- The very recently introduced way of teaching mathematics is not yet being used to full effect in all classes.
- While teachers receive high quality development opportunities to refine and improve their teaching skills, additional adults who help in the classroom are not so well supported.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 21 lessons, eight of which they observed together with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher and other staff, two groups of pupils, four governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 76 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, the school's own parental and pupil questionnaires and the 32 completed staff questionnaires.
- Half of the pupils in Year 5 were on a visit off site during the first day of the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and reviewed a range of documentation including: the school's checks on its performance; its analysis and tracking of pupils' progress; records of behaviour and safety; school improvement plans; records relating to classroom observations and the management of staff performance; safeguarding arrangements; and records of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors also looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Finnegan	Additional Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years start in a part-time Nursery class in the year in which they are four. Most then move to a full-time Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than in most schools and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The headteacher joined the school in January 2013.
- The Chair of the governing body took up post in September 2014. Since then, six new governors have joined the governing body.
- The school works closely with the Wye Valley Learning Network. This comprises a group of eight local schools who work together to share expertise and develop teaching and leadership skills.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to raise standards by:
 - ensuring that teachers give high quality guidance as to how pupils can improve their work in all subjects
 - making sure that all teachers use the new ways of teaching mathematics effectively.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that non-teaching staff receive appropriate support and training to develop their skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The clear vision of the headteacher is driving improvements across the school. New ways of teaching literacy and mathematics are raising pupils' achievement. The progress that groups and individual pupils make is rigorously tracked by senior leaders. Any at risk of faltering are quickly identified and helped to keep up. Senior leaders regularly check that teaching is good across the school and support teachers in improving their practice.
- The reorganisation of subject leadership into teams of staff is enabling all teachers to develop leadership skills in a particular subject. This means that, while senior leaders guide the teams, other staff are fully involved in driving improvements and supporting colleagues.
- The school has forged strong partnerships with other local schools, especially through the Wye Valley Learning Network. This enables staff to share expertise and make sure that their assessments are accurate in relation to other schools. The headteacher has introduced a project to the network around developing pupils' literacy skills through storytelling. Ashfield Park Primary School is leading the way in using these techniques.
- Local school partnerships also provide opportunities for pupils to work with, and compete against, those from other schools in sport and physical activity. The school uses the primary physical education and sport premium to support this effectively. A specialist swimming coach works alongside class teachers to provide high quality swimming lessons. As a result, pupils' skills have developed well and the school recently won the local swimming gala for the first time. Other specialist teachers support staff in developing their physical education teaching techniques and run extra clubs. The funding is enabling more pupils to take part in physical activities and develop strong sporting skills. The school currently holds the local trophy for tag rugby.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils and to help them achieve as well as their classmates. Closer checking of its impact over recent years means that any gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others are narrowing at a faster rate than previously.
- The school provides additional adult support for disabled and disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants help in the classroom on a one-to-one basis or in small groups as needed. This reflects the school's drive to ensure equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination so that all groups of pupils achieve equally well.
- The curriculum is exciting and interests pupils who are enthusiastic about their lessons. Teachers capture their enthusiasm in developing literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 used their learning about the Second World War to develop empathetic styles of writing when describing an air-raid.
- The school has simple values which underpin much of what it does. Under the heading of 'Be the best you can be' pupils are encouraged to respect others' views and beliefs which promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. They learn about other cultures from an early age. For example, children in the early years celebrate festivals from around the world, such as Chinese New Year, and take South African dolls home to share with their families. Pupils have first-hand experience of life in Uganda through the active link with Namatunba school.
- Pupils develop strong social skills by following the good role models of staff. Opportunities to take part in different social events help widen pupils' language skills. For example, pupils enjoyed talking to elderly members of the community who had been evacuated during the war while others took part in the more formal arena of a debate against other schools. Skills of constructing a balanced argument, such as 'Was *Fantastic Mr Fox* a victim or a villain?' help pupils understand the importance of listening to others, respecting their views and responding appropriately. Such skills equip them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. They meet statutory

requirements and staff apply them consistently throughout the school. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding issues and rigorously follow up any concerns about pupils' well-being.

- Governors and school leaders seek the views of parents through annual questionnaires and informal discussions at parents' evenings and other events. The headteacher holds regular coffee mornings to give parents further opportunities to talk with him. The vast majority of parents are very supportive and happy with the school. Where parents raise concerns, open meetings are arranged to discuss the issues.
- The appraisal system, which rewards teachers with a pay rise when their pupils achieve well, is contributing to the improving teaching in the school. During the inspection, teachers told inspectors that they receive excellent support to help them meet their challenging targets for pupil achievement. A significant minority of non-teaching staff, however, felt that they were not so well supported. They reported that they do not receive enough training and development to help them do their job as well as they could.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support for the school. It encouraged the school to develop links with other local schools and take part in projects which help leaders evaluate the effectiveness of their school.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is led very well by the recently appointed Chair. Established governors told the inspectors that, 'He has brought energy and focus to the governing body.' Despite a number of governors being new, they all fully understand their role. Governors are extremely supportive and challenge leaders to make sure that the school continues to improve. They make regular visits to talk to staff and pupils and to see for themselves how improvement is going.
- Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They use pupil performance data well to check that all groups of pupils are making good progress. Governors make sure that the appraisal system is robust and only rewards teachers when their pupils achieve well. They check that teachers receive appropriate training and support to make sure that any weaker teaching is improved.
- Governors manage the school's finances well. They make sure that the pupil premium is being effectively used to help disadvantaged pupils achieve at least as well as their peers. Governors also check that the primary physical education and sport premium is used to improve pupils' skills and opportunities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They move around the school in a calm, orderly manner and are courteous and helpful to adults and each other. During the inspection, pupils readily held doors open for adults and were overheard being polite and speaking kindly to others.
- Pupils told inspectors that everyone behaves well. They said that the card system, which warns those whose behaviour is slipping, is effective because it also rewards those who behave well. A large majority of parents who completed Parent View agree that pupils are well behaved.
- Older pupils enthusiastically take on responsibility. For example, pupils in Year 5 run 'Funky Maths' sessions for those in Year 2. Pupils also train as 'Young Playground Leaders' and organise playtime activities for younger pupils. The 'Pupil Leadership Team' provides opportunities for pupils to air their views about the school and make suggestions. For example, during the inspection the team were planning a meeting to discuss how they could raise money for their partner school in Uganda.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and generally concentrate well in lessons. They are particularly excited and keen to do well when lessons involve practical activities. For example, pupils in Year 1 focused extremely well on checking the comparative weights of different objects around the classroom using balancing scales.

- The school works closely with parents to encourage good attendance and punctuality. As a result, the attendance of pupils whose attendance in the past has been poor, is improving.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that the teachers and other adults look after them well. Almost all parents who completed Parent View agree that their children feel safe in school.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including cyber- and physical-bullying. They told inspectors that there is very little bullying in the school and they try to resolve disagreements themselves when possible. Nevertheless, pupils said that they could go to any adult in the school to report more serious incidents which are always quickly sorted out.
- Pupils have a good awareness of what constitutes safe and unsafe situations beyond school. For example, they know how to keep themselves safe when walking to school, crossing the road, and when cycling. During the inspection children in the Nursery class were excited about the visit by firefighters with their fire engine. Children are able to talk about basic fire safety and people who help to keep them safe.
- Pupils understand the potential dangers of using the internet. They appreciate why precautions should be taken and confidently told inspectors what they could do to make sure they do not access inappropriate websites or put themselves at risk of communications from unknown people.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this effectively to move pupils on to the next stage of their learning, enabling them to make good progress. Teachers ask probing questions to check pupils' knowledge and help deepen understanding. For example they follow up initial questions with further queries such as 'How do you know?' 'Can you prove that?' and 'Explain your thinking'.
- Lessons are interesting because teachers use imaginative ways to develop learning and encourage pupils to offer their own ideas. During the inspection, pupils in Year 5 practised working with negative numbers by playing 'crazy golf' and calculating how many strokes were over or under par. The teacher asked their thoughts on how they could decide the overall winner, considering different games were taking place, and then acted on the pupils' sensible suggestions.
- Teaching assistants work alongside teachers to support different groups of pupils, either in the lesson or in individual or small group situations. Good communications between the teachers and additional adults ensures that they are clear about the learning that is to take place. This means that pupils, such as disadvantaged, disabled or those who have special educational needs, are well supported. While some teaching assistants feel that they do not receive adequate professional development, during the inspection additional adults were seen to be very effective in supporting pupils' learning. They asked pupils searching questions and followed the good practice of class teachers.
- Reading is taught well. From the early years, the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters represent in words) is good and pupils use these skills well to read unfamiliar words. The results of the most recent check on how well pupils in Year 1 understand phonics were broadly average. As pupils get older, they are taught to think about what the authors of texts are implying, or hinting at, in the way they write and the words used.
- Literacy is taught equally effectively. Teachers are becoming very proficient at using storytelling techniques to help pupils construct pieces of writing for different occasions. Correct terminology and grammatical constructions are taught from an early age. For example, pupils in Year 2 were able to identify how the addition of the suffix 'ful' changes a noun into an adjective, and the further addition of 'ly' changes the adjective into an adverb.
- Mathematics is taught well and is improving. A new way of teaching mathematics, which builds on pupils' different stages of learning, has been very recently introduced. Where this is being used well, pupils are

making rapid progress. In some classes, however, teachers are not yet fully conversant with the new approach so it is not as effective.

- Teachers give helpful guidance, especially when marking pupils' books, as to how pupils can improve their literacy and mathematics work. Guidance in other subjects, however, is not so helpful. This means that the good achievement in literacy and numeracy is not always built upon in other subjects.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics through Key Stage 1. In 2014, standards at the end of the key stage were below average but this represented good progress from low starting points. Standards of pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are still improving and are broadly average.
- Good progress continues through Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 left with average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014. Standards in mathematics had risen considerably from the previous year. School achievement data shows that pupils throughout the school made good progress and pupils in Year 6 and Year 5 made exceptionally good progress in 2014.
- Pupils currently in the school continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and standards are steadily rising. As a result, higher proportions of pupils are on track to make better than expected progress in all subjects by the time they leave Key Stage 2. Almost half of the pupils currently in Year 6 made much better than expected progress, since leaving Key Stage 1, in reading and writing. A third made equally good progress in mathematics.
- In 2014 tests at the end of Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils were a term behind other pupils in mathematics and reading and nearly three terms behind in writing. In relation to other pupils nationally, they were one and a half terms behind in mathematics and reading and almost three terms behind in writing. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make good progress and those in Year 6 are working at the same level as other pupils in all subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported. Their needs are quickly identified, sometimes while they are still in the early years classes, and appropriate support provided. This enables them to achieve well from their different starting points.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. Teachers make sure that work in lessons is the right level for them to make good progress and build on what they already know. Increasing numbers of pupils are working at the highest levels by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2.

The early years provision is good

- The early years classes provide a safe, vibrant environment in which children enjoy playing and learning. Exciting activities, both indoors and outside, encourage children to be inquisitive and develop a love for learning from an early age. They behave well and readily co-operate with each other, sharing ideas and toys. For example, during the inspection children in the nursery were very excited about the impending arrival of the fire engine. They dressed as firefighters in readiness and a group worked well together to build a fire engine out of a cardboard box, with a cardboard tube 'fire hose'.
- Children start in the early years classes with levels of skills which vary from year to year. However, their language, personal, social and emotional skills are generally weaker than other skills. Well planned activities and good teaching help children develop these, and other skills, well. In 2014 the proportion of pupils who achieved a good level of development was just below average. This was an improvement on the previous year, and the proportion of children currently in the Reception class achieving at this level is average.
- Teachers have high expectations of what children can do. During the inspection, children in the Reception

classes showed that they understood what a trigraph was and that they could successfully use their new knowledge of the trigraph 'air' in words such as 'pair' and 'hair'.

- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The leader ensures that assessments of children's progress are accurate and thoroughly recorded. Rigorous tracking makes sure that all children are developing strong skills. Growing numbers of children achieving a good level of development, and their positive attitudes to learning means that children are effectively prepared to move on to Key Stage 1.

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	116731
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	461816

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	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Bennett
Headteacher	Geraint Mills
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2012
Telephone number	01989 562738
Fax number	None
Email address	admin@ashfieldpark.hereford.sch.uk

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