



Ashgate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131685
Local Authority City of Derby
Inspection number 293814
Inspection dates 8–9 January 2007
Reporting inspector Lynne Blakelock

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ashbourne Road
School category	Community		Derby
Age range of pupils	4–11		Derbyshire DE22 3FS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01332 343928
Number on roll (school)	271	Fax number	01332 343869
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Lisa Higginbottom
		Headteacher	Mr Robert Roche
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 8–9 January 2007	Inspection number 293814
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school situated in an area of high socio-economic deprivation and unemployment. The number on roll is falling steadily because of the changing nature of the neighbourhood. Children start school with levels of knowledge and skills which are well below those expected nationally. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, are above average. Most pupils are White British and their first language is English. Movement of pupils in and out of the school during the year is high. The school has been awarded the Silver Artsmark. In December 2006 it achieved Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors confirm the school's evaluation that this is a good school. Ashgate Primary school's motto is, 'Together we grow.' There is clear evidence that this school and its pupils are doing just that. The circumstances facing the school are not easy. Situated in a changing locality, the school continues to experience falling rolls and the instability of staffing which that creates. Despite this, the good leadership and management of the school and particularly that of the headteacher minimise the impact. Fundamental to the improved progress made by pupils and rising standards is the overhaul of the school's assessment practices and procedures so that the school knows accurately the levels at which pupils are working. Consequently, progress of all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 is now good. Tasks set in the Foundation Stage do not regularly match closely enough children's learning needs so that progress of these children is satisfactory. Boys are making less progress than girls as they go through the school, partly due to teaching styles which do not take enough account of boys' preferred ways to learn.

Standards at the end of Year 2 in 2006 rose slightly but remained below national expectations in reading and writing. They were above expectations in mathematics. Rising standards in Year 6 reflect the school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Results were above the nationally expected standards in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Although pupils' performances in English were lower overall than in other subjects, a large proportion of pupils reached higher than expected standards. This year pupils are on course again to achieve well.

The quality of teaching and learning is good from Years 1 to 6 because teachers know their subjects well. The best teaching brings learning alive so that pupils flourish. They enjoy increasing opportunities to learn in pairs and groups. All pupils benefit from carefully chosen targets which guide them in improving their work but there are not enough opportunities for all of them to improve their learning by assessing their own work.

Pupils are happy. Many come from disadvantaged backgrounds or have learning difficulties, but the care, support and protection that the school provides gives them the confidence to learn. Parents recognise this. An increasing number of pupils receive help from effective learning support assistants to reach their targets. The school provides good pastoral and academic care, guidance and support. The personal development of pupils is also good. They behave well because they enjoy school and are keen to learn. Even the youngest children thrive when they are given the chance to take on jobs and responsibilities because they develop an abundance of skills from such tasks. Healthy lifestyles have been embraced by the pupils because they understand, through an effective curriculum, the potential benefits to them. The good curriculum is enhanced by an imaginative and wide range of activities outside lesson times which add to pupils' enjoyment of school. The inclusion of music broadens the learning experiences of pupils and increases the spiritual dimension in learning. The continued absence of an outdoor area for learning restricts the range of children's learning experiences in the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in the Foundation Stage by ensuring that teaching and learning activities always offer appropriate challenge and relevance to all of the children.
- Improve the progress boys make in their learning by ensuring teaching closely matches their learning needs.
- Involve all pupils in assessing their own work so that they are fully involved in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage although standards remain well below those expected, particularly in language skills. Children's progress is satisfactory rather than good because the work they have is not routinely matched closely enough to their individual learning needs.

Results of national tests in 2006 showed that by the end of Year 2 pupils reached standards which were below national expectations in reading and writing and above expectations in mathematics. At the end of Year 6 standards were above national expectations in mathematics and science. Results in English continue to improve. They were a little below those expected nationally last year because a high proportion of pupils in that year had learning difficulties that affected their language skills. Nevertheless, a higher proportion of pupils than expected nationally reached the higher level 5 in English. Pupils exceeded their targets in English, mathematics and science. This improving picture owes much to the robust and regular procedures for tracking pupils' progress and to the good quality teaching. Girls perform better than boys throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. Their behaviour is good and pupils have positive relationships with their peers and with staff. They feel safe and enjoy school, which is reflected in the good attendance and punctuality of most pupils. The school is doing all it can to improve the attendance of a minority of pupils. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles, clearly understanding the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. They develop a strong commitment to racial equality, one pupil saying, 'You need to respect other people's religions.' Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is also good. They make good progress in developing the personal qualities that enable them to contribute effectively to the community and eventually to transfer to their working lives. These are made possible by opportunities in all year groups for pupils to take on jobs and make decisions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are attentive and responsive to the high expectations of their teachers and make good progress. Teachers know their subjects well and use good questioning skills that help to consolidate pupils' learning. They provide effective opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively and share ideas so that pupils' individual skills are extended. Pupils benefit and learn well from the good range of real and practical experiences offered to them although teaching styles do not always motivate boys as much as girls. Teachers assess pupils' attainment regularly and plan lessons that usually meet their differing needs, especially for literacy and numeracy. Marking often indicates what pupils need to do next to improve their work. In the Foundation Stage, work is not always matched closely enough to children's individual abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Learners are well served by the curriculum. Good provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) enable pupils to make good progress. Older pupils are well prepared for the future, which includes gaining an awareness of the range of job possibilities available. Education for safety and health is good, with pupils confidently talking, for example, about the need to eat 'five fruits a day' and eating at the salad bar 'because of the vitamins.' Well thought out curricular enrichment includes French, music, residential visits and popular activities, several of a sporting nature. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is wide ranging. Gifted and talented pupils have courses, such as philosophy, which allow them to develop different skills and broaden their understanding. The curriculum for Foundation Stage children is satisfactory and improving, with increasing opportunities for children to work independently. The lack of an outdoor learning area for young children prevents the curriculum from offering the broadest range of experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good health and safety and child protection procedures in place. Parents know this and are happy with the work of the school, but a small number feel that their views are not always taken into account. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, building confidence in those who need extra help. The good system for tracking pupils' attainment and progress is identifying underachieving pupils. Suitable programmes to help them to 'catch up' are used effectively. All pupils have literacy and numeracy targets that are beginning to raise standards further. In some classes pupils are taking responsibility for their own learning and are beginning to evaluate how well they have done in a lesson or piece of work. This is not yet consistently applied across the school.

Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with particular gifts and talents have good support to suit their needs. The school works collaboratively with external agencies to support pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, particularly of the headteacher, are good. He knows his school well. His effective strategic planning and implementation of good systems, including rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, continue to overcome the impact of staffing instability caused by falling rolls on pupils' progress. The work of the school is strengthened considerably by the able deputy headteacher, a strong wider leadership team and shared sense of purpose amongst all staff. The professional development of staff focuses fittingly on the school improvement plan and improving pupils' performances. Notably, the development of the role of middle managers to take more responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the performance of subjects is strengthening the work of the school. Thus, the school's capacity to improve is good. Value for money is good as seen in the good progress of pupils. Governors are committed to improving the school and some are actively involved in moving it forward. Committees do not meet often enough to fulfil all their duties.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Ashgate Primary School, Ashbourne Road, Derby, Derbyshire, DE22 3FS

We were very pleased to meet you when we inspected your school recently. Thank you for making us welcome and helping us to find out so much about your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing about all of the interesting things that happen here.

Your parents are pleased with your school. It is right that they are because your school is a good school. All of you in Years 1 to 6 are making good progress and working hard in lessons. You really enjoy learning for yourselves and make good use of learning through the interactive white boards and computers. You behave well and get on well with each other and with the staff, who work hard on your behalf. It was good to see you enjoying the delicious healthy lunchtime options and taking part in a good range of sporting activities. The school is giving you lots of chances to be leaders and take on responsibilities. You appreciate this. The school council is doing a good job in thinking of ways to make your school even better. Well done!

There are ways in which your school can be even better.

- Boys are not making as much progress as girls in English, mathematics and science. We have asked the teachers to look more closely at the ways boys like to learn to try to help them to achieve better.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are not making as much progress as they should so we have asked Mr Roche to make sure that the type of work they are given helps them to reach higher standards more quickly.
- Older pupils are judging for themselves or with learning partners how good their work is. We would like all pupils to be able to assess their own work so they understand the levels that they are working at.

Best wishes for the future.

Lynne Blakelock

Lead Inspector