

Ashfield Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116731
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	326434
Inspection dates	4–5 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Geoff Cresswell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	348
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Heggie
Headteacher	Andrew Best
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Redhill Road Ross-on-Wye HR9 5AU
Telephone number	01989 562738
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Ashfield Park is a large primary school with Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception classes and the Nursery. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils come from minority ethnic groups, about half of whom are learning English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils are eligible to claim free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The headteacher has only been in the school for two months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Pupils' academic achievement is good and their personal development is satisfactory. The children get an outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because provision is particularly successful in enabling them to make rapid progress. On entry to the Nursery, children's skills and development are mostly at expected levels, although below in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. By the end of Reception, standards are above average in all areas of learning.

Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are also above average, continuing an improving trend over the last three years. The achievement of pupils is good overall, but not as consistent in Key Stage 2 as it is in Key Stage 1. Progress in reading is very good throughout the school. Reading is managed well, taught effectively and is supported by very good reading resources. Pupils also have good skills in numeracy, although there is a relative weakness in pupils' use and application of mathematics in Key Stage 2, resulting in satisfactory progress. Pupils are gaining skills well in preparation for the future.

Teaching quality is good. The strongest teaching is in Years 4 and 5, where pupils make very good progress. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning due to the provision of a range of stimulating activities. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as pupils for whom English is an additional language. These pupils make good progress and their provision is managed well.

The curriculum is satisfactory. However, there is some inconsistency in making meaningful links between subjects. Pupils greatly enjoy the very good extra-curricular provision. There is a good emphasis on developing healthy lifestyles and the pupils demonstrate good healthy routines and very active lifestyles whilst in school. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

Pastoral care for pupils on an individual basis is good and pupils behave well in class. However, strategies for maintaining good behaviour outside lessons are not consistently applied and, as a consequence, there is a degree of inappropriate boisterous behaviour by a few pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils generally feel safe and know what to do if they are bothered by something, but the behaviour of pupils remains an issue for them, as it is for some parents. There have been a high number of exclusions in the last year. The new headteacher has acted quickly and decisively to address this issue, and there is clear evidence of recent improvement in behaviour and a reduction in exclusions.

The academic guidance provided for pupils is based on a thorough tracking system which provides data that are used well to set individual pupils appropriately challenging targets. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, marking is inconsistent, as some pupils are given excellent guidance but others are not given enough.

The headteacher has quickly obtained an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, involving the staff, governors, parents and pupils in this process, and providing much needed focus to the many initiatives ongoing in the school. The role of the subject coordinator has improved since the last inspection and is effective in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects it does not include sufficient responsibility for pupils' achievement, reducing the impact of the role. The governing body is knowledgeable, experienced and supportive, acting effectively as a critical friend.

The clarity, focus and rapid improvements the headteacher has brought to the school, the effective governing body, the proven effectiveness of the core subject leaders and the highly committed staff, give the school the capacity to deliver the necessary improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Effective home visits get communication with parents off to an excellent start and parents highly value the quality of provision for their children. Planning is particularly successful, giving children a rich experience of indoor and outdoor activities with imaginative use being made of every available space. Children move freely between activities that have often been based on their own ideas as starting points. Thorough systems ensure that each child's progress is carefully checked and recorded, and teachers use this information to support individual learning. In this environment children thrive. They make rapid progress in all areas of learning and in their personal development. Children's welfare is promoted very successfully and children for whom English is an additional language settle quickly and make speedy progress.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely effective, ensuring that there is very good continuity between Nursery and Reception classes. The leader models outstanding teaching and has used her example to ensure that there is high quality teaching throughout the Nursery and Reception. There is also a strong drive for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that effective strategies to manage pupil behaviour are consistently applied across the school so that exclusions are reduced and the overwhelming majority of pupils and parents are confident of good behaviour in the school.
- Extend the existing good practice in monitoring and evaluation to all subjects to ensure consistency in achievement, teaching and academic guidance, especially in mathematics at Key Stage 2.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The progress made in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently outstanding. Through the rest of the school progress is good overall. Progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is very good in reading and good in writing. Consequently, whilst standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above average in both reading and writing (an improvement on 2008 results), a much larger proportion of pupils attain higher levels in reading. This was also the case in 2008.

Progress made by pupils in mathematics is good in Key Stage 1 and standards at the end of Year 2 are above average, again an improvement on the 2008 results. In Key Stage 2, progress in mathematics is satisfactory, slowing in Year 3 and Year 6. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are average, rather than above average. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their numeracy skills. Pupils make good progress throughout the school in science. Standards in Year 6 in science are above average, which is similar to the

previous two years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils collaborate well in class and the behaviour in lessons is good, contributing to their good progress. However, there is not enough consideration or respect for others shown at playtimes, so the development of moral and social skills is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils enjoy school, although a few are not as enthusiastic. All, however, really enjoy the many after-school clubs on offer and have an almost universal appreciation of swimming. Pupils are developing well in their understanding of cultures from other parts of the world, helped by positive links with India and Africa. Pupils also contribute well to the local community, for example, running stalls at the local Christmas and summer fetes. The school council makes a positive contribution to school life, working together with the Eco committee to produce a school travel plan. Spiritual development is satisfactory. This aspect is not much in evidence during the school day, although pupils do have some sense of their individual worth and contribution.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Whilst there are numerous examples of good practice in teaching, the good and sometimes outstanding features are not always present, particularly in Key Stage 2. This accounts for the slower progress in mathematics in Years 3 and 6. There are examples of outstanding teaching in the use and application of mathematics in Year 1, yet the use and application of mathematics is not as strong in Key Stage 2. In contrast, the teaching of reading is consistently very good throughout the school, partly due to teachers' good subject knowledge. Teachers' planning often provides activities that capture the children's imagination, such as outdoor drama for Year 5 pupils exploring pollination. Most lessons progress at a good pace. Teaching assistants are deployed well to give all pupils full access to the activities planned.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum, whilst being satisfactory overall, is rapidly improving due to new initiatives this term. A whole-school project on India supported by a visit to Bristol Zoo has engaged pupils very effectively and resulted in some high-quality work from Year 2 to Year 6. This new approach, linking subjects through first-hand experiences, is not yet a consistent feature of the curriculum, but there is evidence of increased involvement and enjoyment of pupils when working on the project. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used powerfully in the homework set, to inspire pupils in Year 5 to produce work of a high quality. This good use of ICT skills is not consistent in all classes, some pupils being given less experience of using ICT in other subjects. There are good opportunities provided for the pupils to learn musical instruments, and many pupils take advantage of this. Similarly there are many after-school clubs with a good range of sporting opportunities that are popular with the children. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and takes due account of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties/disabilities as well as those for whom English is an additional language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school successfully involves a wide range of agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are being met. Those with particular needs are identified early and appropriate support provided. Safeguarding requirements are met and staff are thoroughly trained in this area. The school is working to ensure that there is consistently good behaviour outside of lessons. Some of the new measures are already helping pupils to play harmoniously together at break and lunchtime.

The progress of individual pupils is tracked carefully using half-termly and termly assessments, and this is used effectively to provide extra support for those who need it and to set challenging individual targets. The quality of academic guidance given on a daily basis is not consistent. The best practice, where pupils are given detailed feedback and a clear way forward, contributes well to their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The very recent self-evaluation led by the headteacher and involving the leadership team has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in the school. Immediate and well-focused action has resulted in improved behaviour and reduced exclusions as well as ensuring appropriate action regarding persistent absentees. The curriculum has been restructured in a way that has given increased vitality to teaching, raising its quality and bringing more engagement and enjoyment for pupils. Many parents express confidence in the new headteacher who has won the trust and respect of governors, staff and pupils in a very short space of time.

Despite the clarity and focus of the headteacher, self-evaluation is only satisfactory because subject leaders do not all have enough information to identify what needs to be done to improve pupil progress. This is because they have had insufficient opportunities to check the quality of provision and pupils' achievement in all classes.

The promotion of community cohesion by the school is satisfactory. Whilst pupils' understanding of other countries and cultures is developing well, and the school has begun a good initiative to provide language lessons for parents in the local community, plans for further improvement are not precise enough in stating what pupils will know and understand.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 June 2009

Dear Pupils

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

My colleagues and I would like to thank you for making us feel very welcome on our recent visit to your school. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and knows what it needs to do to improve.

You are making good progress in your work, and you are reaching above average standards, especially in reading. The staff in the Nursery and Reception help the children to learn very quickly and they have a lovely time in these classes. The rest of the staff give you a lot of interesting and exciting lessons and this helps you to make good progress. Those of you who need extra help, including those who are learning English as an additional language, are doing well and the staff are good at helping you.

You enjoy swimming, learning musical instruments and going to the many after-school clubs. A lot of you are interested in your topic on India and like learning by studying a topic in this way. You join in well with events like the summer fete in the town.

You do a lot of exercise in school and know which food is good for you. You feel safe in school but are worried about a few of the older children who do not behave well enough at playtime or lunchtime. You behave well in class and this helps you to learn more quickly.

Your new headteacher has quickly found out what has to be done to make the school better and we agree with him. In order to help the school to improve further, we have asked the staff to:

- improve behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes so that you and your parents feel happy about what happens at these times
- make sure that all the teachers who are responsible for different subjects have the time to find out how well you are doing, especially in mathematics.

You can help your school to improve by suggesting ways to improve behaviour and joining in well in all your lessons.

Yours faithfully

Geoff Cresswell

Lead inspector