

Ash Manor School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125271
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340750
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1038
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Velcic
Headteacher	Mr David Garrido
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
School address	Manor Road Ash Hampshire GU12 6QH
Telephone number	01252 353900
Fax number	01252 353904
Email address	info@ashmanorschool.com

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time looking at the quality of learning. They observed 31 lessons taught by different teachers and also visited an additional 14 lessons and two house assemblies. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff, governors and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including policies, data and analyses, records of the school's monitoring, governors' minutes and questionnaires completed by staff, students and 223 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the current attainment and quality of learning and progress, for all groups of students and subjects
- the impact of all aspects of provision in promoting equally strong outcomes for all students
- the contribution of the technology specialism
- the school's capacity for improvement.

Information about the school

Ash Manor gained specialist Technology College status in 2005. The majority of students are of White British heritage with small numbers of others coming from a wide range of backgrounds, some of whom are learning English as an additional language. The mobility rate is low. The proportion of students with identified special education needs and/or disabilities is high. The school has achieved a number of awards including International Schools Status and Sports Mark. The headteacher has been in post since September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Ash Manor is an inclusive school that is rapidly improving and provides good care, guidance and support for its students. The new headteacher is providing inspirational and determined leadership and he is skilfully empowering leaders at all levels to drive improvement across the school. Ambitious plans are now in place to raise students' achievement based on an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The impact of some of these plans is already apparent, showing the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained? improvement. Most notable is the rise in the quality of teaching and learning as a result of the new but robust and accurate monitoring systems. A well-targeted but personalised programme for teachers' professional development has been put in place. As a result, whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, an increasing proportion is now good. There is a purposeful atmosphere in most classrooms, but teaching does not always promote good learning because lessons are not as consistently lively or challenging as they could be. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is not always fully exploited to raise interest, and opportunities are sometimes missed to get students learning more independently. Students support these views although they say they enjoy most lessons. Attainment has been rising steadily. It improved significantly in 2009 so that the number of students gaining five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics was broadly average. Whilst this represented satisfactory progress for the majority of students, some did not achieve the grade they were capable of. Students' progress is now being rigorously tracked, any underachievement identified and well targeted intervention and support put in place. The large majority of students are making at least satisfactory progress towards their new and challenging targets. However, students are not always clear about how to improve and move to the next level.

The satisfactory curriculum is broad and balanced, and is tailored in some subjects to meet the learning needs of all students. The school is actively improving it. For example, Year 7 teaching has very recently been restructured and alternative courses offered for a few students at Key Stage 4. However, it is too early to see the full impact of these changes on students' outcomes, and some courses do not yet meet students' learning needs.

Students are increasingly becoming involved in the school's decision making, including the appointment of the new headteacher and most recently considering how to provide sheltered social areas for break and lunchtimes. Students value the good facilities and many opportunities offered to them.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to ensure it is more consistently good or better through:
 - using more active and practical approaches to teaching so that all lessons are more lively and interesting
 - making more effective use of ICT to promote learning, both in whole class teaching and in the activities that students undertake
 - providing more opportunities for students to be creative and become more independent in their learning
 - ensuring that teaching supports and challenges all groups of students.
- Improve the consistency of both verbal and written assessment, so that students are clear about the next steps of their learning.
- Develop the curriculum so that it matches the learning needs of all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

All specialism targets were met in the school's improved results in 2009. It has put in place new and rigorous systems to track the quality of learning across the curriculum. The progress students are making is steadily improving. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers. School tracking data suggests that the trend in attainment is being sustained and that current Key Stage 4 students are on track to exceed national averages. Standards seen in the classroom support this picture.

Students say they feel safe in school and that they are generally confident they will receive effective help and support when needed. They are polite, friendly and courteous and behaviour is satisfactory. They enjoy lessons, and behave well in many, but they do not always participate actively nor take full responsibility for their own learning. When given the opportunity they listen to each other and support each other. When they are challenged they show they can work at pace.

Whilst a high proportion of students eat healthily in the school's canteen the number who participate in the many sporting activities offered is average. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the life of the school as school councillors or prefects and in the local community as junior sports leaders or for example, painting a local underpass. Students' cultural development is satisfactory, but they have strengths in their understanding of other countries. For example a group spent three weeks in Morocco helping in a school which led them to appreciate the difference between education in this country and in a less well developed one.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

During the inspection over half the teaching observed was good or better. However, despite recent improvements there is too much variation within and between departments. Where teaching is most effective, lessons are interesting, well-paced, use a range of different activities and teachers use questioning effectively to extend understanding. Less progress is made when lessons are too teacher led or lack creative opportunities. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and there is reasonable access to computers and laptops, but they are not always effectively used. Teachers are increasingly making use of data to plan lessons to meet the needs of the students they teach. However, students rightly feel that they are not always challenged in lessons or supported to achieve as well as they would like. The quality of verbal feedback and marking is also inconsistent and at times lack both specific guidance about how students can improve their work and how they can? move to the next level.

Science provides a good example of how the curriculum has been adapted so that achievement is raised. As well as combined science there are single sciences for the more able and a vocational course for those who prefer a more practical approach to learning. Effective partnerships with businesses and local schools enhance provision, for example, alternative work-based provision for some students. Pupils from local primary schools have access to the school's specialist technology facilities which is leading to higher standards at Key Stage 3. A wide range of trips, events, visitors, clubs and activities further enrich the curriculum and impact well on students' social and cultural development.

Students are particularly well supported on entry to the school as well as being guided

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for their next steps when they leave. The house system is a strength. Knowledgeable staff ensure that every student, particularly those who are most vulnerable, receives the care and support they need from both within school and with outside agencies. Improvements have been made in the way the school manages issues raised by students. It is now systematically and rigorously monitoring attendance. A range of effective actions have reduced the number of students who are persistently absent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has high ambition for its students and there is new energy and enthusiasm developing across the school that is driving improvement. Senior and middle leaders have a good understanding of teaching and learning and a clear vision of how to systematically improve its quality. This is already impacting in the classroom.

The school aims to ensure equality of opportunity for all students. New systems now provide good knowledge of the academic progress both for different groups of students and individuals. Many partnerships enhance resources and provide unique opportunities to broaden students' horizons as well as mentor individuals and support their well-being. However, these and other opportunities are not currently evaluated in relation to equality or student outcomes.

Governors now have an accurate understanding of the school. They are highly supportive, committed to making use of their expertise for improvement and beginning to act as effective critical friends. The school has sound systems in place to ensure the safety of students, and staff are well trained in issues relating to child protection. The school's promotes community cohesion through a range of planned actions, evaluation of the work is patchy.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers received the inspection questionnaire shortly after a very similar one was sent to them by the school's governors. The results of the Ofsted inspection parent and carer questionnaire analysis show that the vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with the school. A very small minority raised concerns about the progress of students and poor behaviour in some lessons. Inspection evidence judged that behaviour was satisfactory in lessons. Several parents and carers commented on improvements since the arrival of the new headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ash Manor School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 223 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1038 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	19	166	74	9	4	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	45	20	165	74	9	4	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	21	157	70	17	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	18	156	70	19	9	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	34	15	164	74	9	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	15	159	71	19	9	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	9	159	71	30	13	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	24	11	162	73	8	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	16	157	70	12	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	15	138	62	25	11	8	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	12	161	72	13	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	19	164	74	1	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	20	160	72	11	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



29 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Ash Manor School, Ash, GU12 6QH

We enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for completing the student questionnaires and sharing your views with us. We think that Ash Manor is a satisfactory school. We hope that you will take the time to read the full report, but I have highlighted the key points through the bullets below.

- You enjoy school and value the opportunities offered to you.
- Most of you attend well but this is not the case for a few of you.
- Most of you make at least satisfactory progress so the standards you achieve by the end of Year 11 are average.
- Most of you know your targets.
- The quality of teaching varies both in and across subjects.
- You are well cared for through the house system and provided with good guidance for what to do after you leave.

Your new headteacher is determined that the school should improve, and he is being supported by senior leaders and other staff in the school to do this. These are the things we have identified to help the school improve further. They cover improvements to teaching, curriculum and assessment.

- Give you more opportunities to use ICT and learn independently in lessons, and make your lessons more lively and challenging, as you yourselves suggested.
- Improve the consistency of both verbal and written assessment (marking), so that you are clear about how to improve your work.
- Give the curriculum a better match to your learning needs.

You can help by being actively involved in your lessons, making the most of the opportunities offered to you and, for a few of you, improving your attendance.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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