

Ashurst Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125929
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340871
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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

The registered childcare provision, 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs L Edwards
Headteacher	Miss A D Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2006
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Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2009
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including the school improvement plan, policies, monitoring records, governors' minutes, tracking data, local authority reports, and questionnaires completed by 39 parents, 58 pupils and 15 members of staff.

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

- pupils' achievement and progress throughout the school and how well teaching contributes to the learning of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of assessment to support learning and drive improvements
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels in raising achievement and standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning
- provision and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage and whether they are as good as the school indicates.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. All classes have pupils from two year groups. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Few are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, the main needs being speech, language and communication, and moderate learning difficulties. The school has an Activemark award and another award for its international links. An independently run pre-school is temporarily housed on the site.

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

Ashurst Wood is a satisfactory school. In recent years, the school's main thrust has been its development of a creative curriculum, which provides a good level of interest, relevance and enjoyment for pupils when they are learning. Topics such as 'Pole to Pole' and 'Africa' are carefully planned and designed to build on pupils' skills in different subjects. Staff engage pupils' curiosity in imaginative ways. For example, they wrote individually to all pupils, using a letter sent by an early polar explorer, inviting them to apply to take part in a polar expedition. This approach is helping to improve pupils' progress in different subjects, especially writing, information and communication technology, and art and design. Boys, particularly, have warmed to this approach and are becoming more engaged and creative in their writing. As a result, writing standards, which are average overall, are improving. New handwriting and spelling programmes have also contributed to this improvement. Standards in mathematics are also average, but pupils' progress in this subject, although satisfactory, is inconsistent. Daily reading activities and the involvement of parents and carers mean that standards in reading are generally above average.

Pupils' progress is assessed and recorded regularly. This is also helping to raise achievement and standards in writing, as teachers become adept at assessing progress accurately, and at planning the next steps in learning for pupils of different abilities, including the more able. Progress is not assessed as accurately in mathematics. Consequently, the work set for different groups of pupils is not always appropriately matched to their learning needs, and so progress is inconsistent. Although tracking sheets build up a record of pupils' progress across each year, they do not provide challenging end-of-year targets for teachers to aim towards and for which they are accountable. As a result, when progress slips, this is not always identified in time for effective action to be taken. Where underachievement is identified, however, pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are supported through well-planned intervention groups. Consequently, these pupils make good progress. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff are working to make the initial assessments of children's skills and knowledge more detailed, so as to provide a secure foundation on which to base future learning and improve progress.

The school has effective safeguarding procedures. Pupils feel safe in school and appreciate the high level of pastoral care. Staff go out of their way to listen to pupils' concerns and to follow them up. High priority is given to providing effective support for any vulnerable pupils, including those who have difficulty with behaviour. Pupils benefit from a wide range of popular and enjoyable after-school clubs and sporting activities, linked to a sports partnership. Their excellent understanding of what constitutes a

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healthy lifestyle and prowess in sport has been recognised through a national award. One pupil commented about shopping, 'We don't go through the sweet aisle; we buy lots of milk and fruit.'

The school is broadly accurate in its self-evaluation, identifying key areas for improvement. Actions to bring about improvement since the last inspection have met with some success, especially in raising achievement and standards in writing through developing the curriculum and accurately assessing pupils' progress. This shows that the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are accurate and used effectively to identify the next steps in their learning, especially in mathematics.
- Set challenging end-of-year targets for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics and regularly monitor their progress towards them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Given the relatively small year groups, there is some variation in standards from year to year. Nevertheless, assessments made at the end of Year 2, and the results of national testing in Year 6, show that standards are broadly average. Regardless of pupils' starting points or gender, different groups achieve satisfactorily in academic terms, and well in their personal and social development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, largely owing to the effectiveness of well-planned additional support. Action to raise achievement and standards in writing is meeting with some success following well-planned action by the school. The school recognises that it has more to do to raise achievement and standards, especially in mathematics. In the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils generally made satisfactory progress. A weakness in the use of assessment in planning meant that work was not always sufficiently appropriate to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. More able pupils were not always challenged soon enough and less able pupils were at times unsure about their tasks. Consequently, progress slowed. Pupils' recorded work clearly shows the impact of the school's creative curriculum on raising writing standards.

Pupils display good attitudes to their learning. They feel safe in school and know that there is always someone to turn to if they have any concerns. They enjoy school, and this is reflected in their good attendance. Although behaviour is good, small minorities of pupils and parents are concerned about the behaviour of a few pupils. Inspectors found that these pupils are effectively supported and that great care is taken to ensure that the learning of others is not disrupted. Pupils make a positive contribution to the life of the school and local community. For example, the school council sought opinions on playground apparatus and pupils took an active part in a recent community arts project. Their understanding of different world cultures, especially through the Comenius project

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and the links made with European schools, is good, and has been recognised through an award. However, their understanding of the diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom is no more than satisfactory.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory gains in their learning. Assessment is not always accurate enough to provide fully secure starting points on which to base pupils' learning, especially in mathematics. Lessons are well managed, with clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils. In the better lessons, where the pace of learning is good, pupils are reminded of these throughout and encouraged to discuss their different tasks and evaluate how well they are doing. In other lessons, where there is less urgency, pupils are at times slow to start work and teachers have lower expectations of the work they want pupils to complete. More able pupils are not always challenged soon enough in lessons, with extension work provided only when basic tasks have been completed. Pupils are given curriculum targets to help them improve their work. Younger pupils keep these in a 'help yourself' book, which also

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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contains other useful information for them when working. Some older pupils say that, initially, their targets help them but, over time, their impact is lost. Marking is mostly constructive and provides points for improvement. Teaching assistants generally provide good support for the groups they work with, although they are not always fully utilised throughout lessons.

Class and whole-school topics provide pupils with interesting and enjoyable learning opportunities. These are helping to raise standards by engaging pupils more in their learning and are designed to encourage pupils to develop their different skills at appropriate levels. This was clearly shown in the samples of work seen during the inspection, although it was not always evident in the lessons observed. In one lesson on the harvest, a common task took little account of the levels at which pupils should be working to make good progress in their writing. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, as exemplified in a lesson for younger pupils to promote healthy eating. It is well enriched with visits, including a residential visit for older pupils, visitors and events, which effectively promotes pupils' social development.

The care arrangements for all pupils are good and well organised. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are given extra support to help to meet their needs. Trained staff ensure that pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties are well catered for. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties are well supported, particularly in withdrawal groups, enabling them to make good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management of the school are effective in promoting the care and well-being of its pupils and equality of opportunity. Safeguarding procedures are effective. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved and the support for vulnerable pupils ensures their full participation in the life and learning of the school. Staff share a goal with the headteacher to seek further improvement, as shown in recent curriculum developments. Assessments made of pupils' progress are improving as teachers gain further understanding of the levels at which pupils need to be working, but these are not yet being used to set them challenging end-of-year targets for which teachers are accountable. The monitoring of lessons is focused more on the strengths in teaching than on the outcomes by way of pupils' learning and progress, and has not been rigorous enough to bring about

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sustained improvements to classroom practice.

The governing body carries out its statutory responsibilities well, and offers challenge to the school on its academic achievements, but it does not receive sufficient information about progress elsewhere to interrogate other aspects of the school's performance. Governors are involved in the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning and monitor any actions taken during regular visits to the school. A local exhibition about Ashurst Wood, organised by governors, is a testimony to their strong resolve to promote the school and share its curriculum developments. The school works hard to engage parents and carers in their children's education. Links with other local schools and agencies are strong. Community cohesion is promoted well, particularly at a global level, but the school recognises that action needs to be taken to develop further pupils' knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in Reception with, overall, the level of skills and knowledge expected for their age. Good links with the village pre-school and parents are helping staff to build up a clearer picture of these starting points so as to personalise learning, plan more appropriate learning activities and improve the progress made by children. Children quickly settle into classroom routines, behave well and help each other. In recent years, they have made satisfactory progress. By the end of the Reception Year, children are working securely within the different areas of learning, with a few fully meeting the expected learning goals.

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Planning provides a good balance between teacher-directed activities and opportunities for children to initiate their own learning through play and discovery. This has been helped by the recent move to a newly built classroom and outdoor area. These now provide a stimulating environment and enable a wider range of activities to be planned, which effectively draw on the different areas of learning. Staff interact well with children, using questioning to develop their language, knowledge and understanding. When changing for PE, children were asked why we do exercise; when counting leaves, children were encouraged to reflect on the world around them. Staff are vigilant and ensure the children's welfare at all times. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She has worked hard with her assistant to provide a good learning environment, but recognises that more has to be done to assess children's starting points accurately.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Just over a third of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Although a few are concerned about behaviour, the progress their children make and the support they receive, their views are generally positive and confirm the inspectors' findings that children are happy and well cared for in school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashurst Wood Primary 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	61	14	36	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	64	11	28	3	5	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	44	19	49	3	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	44	17	44	5	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	50	17	45	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	32	21	55	5	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	39	21	55	1	3	0	0
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)	16	41	21	54	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	49	17	44	3	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	38	18	46	4	10	3	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	31	24	62	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	51	17	44	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	56	15	37	2	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.



28 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashurst Wood Primary School, East Grinstead, RH19 3QW

Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all the things you take part in. Ashurst Wood is a satisfactory school.

These are the things that the school does well.

- It makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- It provides good support for those of you who need extra help.
- It ensures that you all know how to keep fit and eat the right things.
- It provides you with many school clubs and lots of interesting visits and visitors.
- It makes your learning interesting and enjoyable. Your work on the 'Pole to Pole' topic clearly showed this.
- It helps you to understand how different people live throughout the world.

We have asked the school to work on the following things.

- Teachers must keep a very careful check on how well you are doing, especially in mathematics, so that they can plan work that is just right for each one of you, not too easy and not too difficult.
- Teachers must be clear about the progress you need to make each year in reading, writing and mathematics.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector

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