

Ashmead Primary School

Ashmead Road, Deptford, Lewisham, SE8 4DX

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress in Nursery and Reception. This good start is built on well so that by the time pupils leave in Year 6 they reach above average standards in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good across the school because it is engaging and teachers match the challenge of tasks to pupils' individual needs carefully. Pupils' attitudes are good and they respond well to the high expectations set by teachers.
- The marking of pupils' work in English and mathematics is detailed and the comments used well by pupils to improve their work. Pupils track their own progress and use their targets effectively.
- Recent enhancements to the curriculum, including educational visits, interesting topics in information and communication technology, and visitors to the school, have all helped to excite pupils' interest which has contributed to their improved achievement.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They express positive opinions about the improvements they have experienced over the last year. Pupils report that they feel safe and are very proud of their school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed a team of highly committed staff who have worked hard to ensure swift improvements in pupils' achievement and teaching.
- Governors are well informed about the performance of the school through regular visits. They are always ready to ask challenging questions and rigorously scrutinise the performance of different groups of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding to ensure that the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in each year group is increased, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by new phase and subject leaders is not always sufficiently rigorous and aspects of school improvement planning are not sharp enough to have the best possible impact on pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 teachers and visited 22 lessons or part lessons including four joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed assemblies, intervention programmes for the teaching of phonics and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics, the inclusion leader, representatives from the local authority and two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of the 73 responses to Parent View, two letters from parents delivered during the inspection and met informally with parents and carers at the start of the day.
- Confidential staff questionnaires were received and analysed.
- Inspectors scrutinised: pupils' work in their books, teachers' plans for lessons, the school's performance management of teachers; the school's own records on how it helps teachers improve the quality of their teaching; records of individual governor visits to the school, and minutes of the governing body's meetings.
- They also analysed the school's own records of the progress of pupils and the standards pupils reach, including the rates of progress for particular groups of pupils including those with special educational needs, and the effectiveness of support for pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the government's pupil premium.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's future plans for development and those plans which have contributed to the school's improvements since the last inspection.

Inspection team

Raymond Prentice, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Madeleine Gerard	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashmead is an average-sized primary school and currently has an additional class in Year 2 and in the Reception class.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school has a 'Forest School' in its grounds with trained Forest School staff.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs at school action is below the national average and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- Just under half of the pupils are White British and around one quarter of pupils do not speak English as their first language.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is comparable to the national average and 50 pupils are eligible for the pupil premium.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum levels for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates its own early morning drop off club.
- Over the last year, five new teachers have joined the school including three newly qualified teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise all teaching in the school to that of the best and thereby raise the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing and mathematics across the school by:
 - ensuring support staff contribute to pupils' learning throughout the entire lesson
 - increasing the range of opportunities for all pupils to contribute during any teacher-directed parts of lessons
 - increasing still further the level of difficulty and challenge for more able pupils within all lessons and across all subjects
 - developing higher levels of resilience in pupils when they are tackling challenging activities by allowing them to work together in groups to solve problems together.
- Further enhance the role of all leaders in raising pupils' achievement by:
 - sharpening the focus and quality of improvement planning, so that all staff and governors play an active role in drawing up priorities, and are fully aware of the timescales involved and of the criteria for judging when the school has been successful in reaching its targets
 - ensuring that new subject and phase leaders emulate the best practice in the school of providing more succinct and regular feedback to teachers on what they need to do to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start at the school with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this continues in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, attainment is broadly average. This good progress is attributable to the consistently good quality of teaching.
- This good start is systematically built on as pupils move through Key Stage 2 so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average.
- Pupils for whom the pupil premium provides additional support make good progress through effective and well-planned intervention strategies and targeted support, especially in phonics and reading, and make the same progress as other pupils through the school, achieving well by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils greatly enjoy reading. Recent initiatives to lift the standards reached in reading have been successful across the school and especially at the higher levels in Year 6. The levels reached by the current Year 6 are already above those reached nationally at the end of the year.
- Since the last inspection, assessment procedures for checking pupils' progress have improved. The monitoring of the progress made by individuals, groups and classes has resulted in decisive action to provide additional support for those who need it and this has contributed to improved achievement at all levels.
- The school's accurate assessment data, pupils' work and lesson observations all show that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including those at an early stage of learning to speak English, all achieve well.
- The previous underachievement of boys, particularly in reading, has been eradicated in all classes and they now exceed the standard reached by boys nationally.
- The school's accurate assessments of pupils' progress also show that progress in writing and mathematics has improved across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. However, as the school has recognised, achievement is not yet outstanding because more pupils do not achieve the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in these subjects

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils benefit from teaching which is consistently good. They are positive about their teachers and the enjoyable experiences they have at school because teachers match activities in lessons to individual interests and needs. A culture of high expectation and ambition results in pupils being challenged to consistently do their best.
- Time is well used and in the best lessons no time for learning is lost. During morning registration in Year 6, pupils were given an appropriate open-ended mathematical challenge which led directly into a good mathematics lesson. The teacher used the challenge activity to gauge what pupils already knew and re-shaped the rest of the lesson to advance gains in knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers provide clear feedback to pupils through good quality marking and questioning which lets them know what they have to do next. Effective training for new teachers ensures marking is consistent across all year groups.
- In an outstanding Nursery lesson, children settled confidently and grasped the opportunity to engage in high interest activities and made excellent progress as a result of the teacher's astute questioning and constant encouragement. Children relished the challenge of mixing the materials to various consistencies, collaborated well with each other and chose good descriptive words to describe their mixture such as 'squidgy'.
- Good links are made between subjects to develop literacy skills. In a highly engaging history lesson on the Egyptians, pupils discussed their visit to a museum and were bandaging dolls as

mummies and drawing up a list of instructions while drawing on a well-taught vocabulary by choosing words such as 'sarcophagus' and 'mummification'.

- Phonics is taught consistently and the teaching of reading is strong. Additional support for those pupils not reaching the levels they are capable of, and those supported by the pupil premium has resulted in a significant improvement in the proportions of these pupils reaching and exceeding national standards by the end of Year 6.
- Sometimes, support staff do not help pupils progress as well as they could during teacher-directed parts of lessons because they are focusing on asking pupils to be quiet rather than effectively targeting individuals and groups to engage them and meet their learning needs.
- Occasionally, in lessons, teachers' explanations are too lengthy and there are not enough strategies used for all pupils and groups to contribute. The best practice of highly challenging work for the most able and opportunities for pupils to work together to solve demanding problems is not fully replicated in all lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The staff are positive role models and pupils say that behaviour in the school has improved over the last year.
- Pupils are largely attentive in lessons because lessons and activities are well planned to meet the needs of each individual. They take care of each other and are taught to solve disputes themselves or, if required, with the good support of adults. Pupils are polite to each other and to adults.
- Behaviour around the school and at break times is good because the playground and outdoor areas are well used and appropriate play equipment engages pupils' curiosity and helps them learn to play well with each other. Behaviour at the school's early morning drop off club is also good and pupils enjoy attending. Pupils with specific behavioural challenges are well supported by staff and the school has rightly identified the need for some staff to have additional training to help them deal with incidents of challenging behaviour.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, take calculated risks and know how to avoid danger. This is enriched by visitors to the school from the local fire brigade and road safety team.
- Pupils know about the various types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, as a result of effective teaching in class and assemblies. Staff and pupils agree that behaviour is good, bullying is uncommon and that the school deals well with any incidents which do occur.
- Attendance has improved significantly, is now average and is continuing to rise following the implementation of an effective policy and the school's procedures.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because leaders need to organise and analyse behaviour logs more thoroughly to help improve behaviour even more.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have led the push to raise pupils' achievement in every year group by focusing on improving teaching. With appropriate support and challenge they have succeeded in ensuring that teaching is consistently good. They have also recognised the need to ensure that new subject and phase leaders play their part to the full in helping to improve teaching and learning further by providing precise and telling feedback to teachers on what is needed to improve their practice. Leaders have a clear vision for the school which is shared by the whole community.
- The headteacher has a passion for improving the school and an awareness of what the school is doing well and what it needs to do better. He has ensured a rapid rate of improvement with his senior team. However, some improvement planning needs to be sharper so that all staff understand what the school needs to do next, by when and what the success criteria are.

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- The improved curriculum underpins the positive attitudes to learning seen across the school. Leaders have injected a sense of fun into the planned topics to ensure that most pupils make good or better progress in most subjects.
 - The impact of the headteacher's rigorous monitoring of teachers' work and pupils' progress, which is detailed and focused, has resulted in dramatically improved achievement. Together with other senior leaders, he has recognised the need to ensure that new subject and phase leaders play their part to the full in helping to improve teaching and learning further by providing precise and telling feedback to teachers on what is needed to improve their practice.
 - Procedures for child protection and safeguarding meet requirements.
 - New staff are given clear guidance on the school's procedures and expectations and benefit from the mentoring and support of weekly meetings with the deputy headteacher and inclusion leader. An example of this is how well new staff apply the school's marking policy when providing feedback to pupils. Performance management of staff is rigorous through clear targets linked to pupils' performance, and governors are fully involved.
 - Local authority advisers have supported leaders to assist improvements in English and mathematics.
 - Parents and carers speak very highly of the school and two letters received during the inspection endorse the views that the school has undergone a rapid transformation and parental satisfaction is high.
 - Attendance of pupils at school has improved and continues to improve because of the school's clear procedures on authorising absence.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - is good because of the governing body's astuteness in appointing skilled leaders who have ensured rapid progress in a short period of time.
 - supports the school and has challenged previous underachievement and the school's systems for performance management. It supports the school's vision for high standards and holds back to appoint the best staff. In one case, governors advertised a post three times before appointing.
 - has an appropriate awareness of the pupil premium. The governing body is part of the decision-making process to direct additional resources to support particular groups. Governors are rightly developing a more astute awareness of the school improvement planning process to further sharpen their ability to hold the school to account.
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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	100716
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	404731

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	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Carolyn Mumby
Headteacher	Mr Sean O'Flynn
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 February 2011
Telephone number	020 8692 6081
Fax number	020 8692 6632
Email address	headteacher@ashmead.lewisham.sch.uk

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