

Ashford Park Primary School

Station Crescent, Ashford, TW15 3HN

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides effective leadership. She is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, governors and members of the senior leadership team. As a result, teaching is effective and continues to improve.
- Achievement has improved since the last inspection and good teaching and behaviour have been maintained. Pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There has been a steady, year-on-year improvement in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. In 2014, attainment at the end of Year 2 was the highest for five years, as a result of good teaching.
- Teaching is consistently good, with some being outstanding. For example, pupils in Year 6 make excellent progress because teaching in this year group is highly effective.
- The teaching of phonics (the sound letters make) is effectively supporting pupils' reading skills. The results of the Year 1 phonics check have been above average and improving for the past two years.
- Pupils in the Acorn Centre make outstanding progress because of high-quality teaching.
- Confident and lively teaching in the Reception classes ensures that children make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and feel very safe. They are polite, well mannered and proud of their school.
- The role played by the governing body has developed rapidly since the last inspection. Governors work closely with other leaders. They provide good levels of support and challenge for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils do not always make rapid progress and reach the highest standards, because teaching is not outstanding.
- Pupils do not apply spelling skills consistently in different subjects. Some pupils do not have a sufficiently sound grasp of basic spelling skills by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of information provided for parents and carers of children in Years 1 to 6 is not always sufficiently clear about how they can support learning at home.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons or part-lessons, including four joint observations with senior leaders. They also observed pupils working with adults other than their teachers.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers, members of staff, parents, carers and pupils. Discussions were also held with the vice chair of the governing body and an additional governor. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 89 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as a number of letters and emails. In addition, they considered the views expressed by parents and carers informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 44 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and considered a range of policies and documents. These included the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' progress, attendance records and safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work provided by the school, as well as in lessons. They also listened to pupils in Years 1 and 6 read.
- Inspectors visited the school's breakfast club, which is run by the governing body.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fiona Robinson	Additional Inspector
Robin Cruise	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- Children in the early years are taught in two Reception classes. All early years provision provided by the school is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a confederation of 20 local primary and five local secondary schools.
- There is a breakfast club run by the school. There is a pre-school and after-school club on site, both of which are privately run and inspected separately.
- The school has a specialist resource unit, called the Acorn Centre, for pupils with learning difficulties. All pupils attending the centre have a statement of special educational needs. Places are allocated by the local authority special needs panel. The centre can accommodate 16 Key Stage 2 pupils. Currently 14 pupils attend the centre.
- Pupils attending the Acorns Centre spend half of each school day in the centre and the other half in mainstream classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding levels.
- Ensure pupils use their spelling skills in different subjects so that they have proficient spelling skills by the end of Year 6.
- Strengthen communication with parents and carers of pupils in Years 1 to 6 so that they understand how to support their child's learning at home.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils and provide strong leadership for teaching. They are clear about the school's successes and about further improvements needed. The school's welcoming and positive atmosphere underpins good teaching and behaviour. As a result, staff morale is high.
- The leader of the Acorn Centre works closely with other senior leaders and plays a highly effective role in the school's development. She knows the pupils who attend the centre extremely well and ensures that teaching is carefully targeted to meet their individual needs.
- Subject leaders' roles have developed rapidly. They contribute well to the school's development. They regularly check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, including through lesson observations and discussions with pupils about their work.
- The school is strongly inclusive and equal opportunities are well promoted. Good relationships are evident throughout the school. Discrimination is not tolerated.
- Leaders and teachers have the same high expectations of all pupils, regardless of ability or background. Additional government funding is used appropriately to successfully support and improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The local authority has provided effective support for school leaders. For example, representatives have worked alongside senior leaders to see that checks on pupils' achievement are secure. Also, successful training has been provided to support subject leaders in their role. The local authority has been instrumental in ensuring governors play an effective part in the school's leadership.
- Procedures for setting targets for staff are robust and well established. Leaders set appropriate targets for teachers and salary progression is managed appropriately. Well-focused training is helping teachers to improve their practice.
- Subjects are planned well to ensure that pupils experience a broad, balanced and stimulating education. Visits and visitors are used well to interest and motivate pupils. Learning contributes well to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain is enhanced through a range of events, including thought-provoking assemblies on themes such as 'peace'.
- Leaders have recently updated the way homework is used so that it is more meaningful and enjoyable. Some year groups have already provided parents and carers with some good quality information about the changes. For example, the early years team has introduced a monthly newsletter. This provides specific advice about how parents and carers can help their children to learn at home, including, for example, key words and numbers the children are learning in school. However, the quality of information provided varies between year groups. Leaders recognise that a small minority of parents and carers are not yet convinced about the success of the new approach to home learning, and need further information.
- The popular breakfast club provides provides a secure and positive start to the day for those pupils who attend.
- The primary school sports premium is used effectively. The quality of physical education teaching is improving. This is because teachers observe lessons taught by specialist teachers and use this to improve their own skills and practice. The school has increased the number of clubs available and plays a more active and successful part in local sports tournaments than previously.
- The school benefits from its work within the confederation of local schools by, for example, sharing and learning from good practice within the group.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements have a high priority so that pupils are safe and secure. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorously maintained and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are more knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and about improvements introduced than at the time of the last inspection. They have a good grasp of how well the school is doing in relation to others nationally because they regularly consider and discuss information about pupils' achievement. The minutes of governors' meetings effectively record the regular and robust discussions which take place. There are more opportunities for governors to observe the work of the school than at the time of the last inspection. For example, 'Governor Days' have been introduced, when governors visit lessons, meet with pupils and discuss teaching and learning with leaders. As a result, governors are very clear about the strengths in teaching and learning and know the priorities for future development. They have been very actively involved in discussing and agreeing current procedures for setting targets

for staff. This means they have a good understanding of how salary progression is used to reward and support teaching. Governors monitor and evaluate the impact of additional government funds on pupils' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils of all ages behave well in lessons and move around school sensibly and maturely, including in the Acorn Centre. They are very positive about learning, keen to do their best and most are quick to settle to tasks.
- Pupils in Year 6 are very well prepared with the skills and attitudes needed for the next stage of their education. They provide very strong models of how to behave for younger pupils and their attitudes to learning are impressive.
- The school's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are consistently applied, from Reception through to Year 6. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of adults' expectations and consider the school's rules to be fair. Pupils respond quickly to adults' instructions. They demonstrate good levels of respect for adults and for each other.
- Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View consider pupils to be well behaved.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally, in a very few cases, pupils lose concentration and chat. This detracts from their learning and slows progress.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a sensible view of everyday risks and speak confidently about how they can help to keep themselves safe. For example, they know about the dangers of cyber bullying and offer reasoned views about what they can do to reduce the risks.
- Pupils know what bullying is and feel that they are well informed about what to do through assemblies and lessons. They consider bullying to be rare. This view is supported by school records, which indicate that there are very few incidents. Pupils are confident that adults in school follow up any concerns.
- A few parents and carers expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour and about how well the school deals with bullying. Records indicate that leaders respond promptly and seriously to any incidents of bullying.
- Attendance has improved and is in line with national averages.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good quality teaching is ensuring that pupils achieve well. Teachers use confident subject knowledge to plan interesting tasks. The classrooms are attractive and positive places for pupils to learn.
- Teachers skilfully use questions to explore pupils' understanding. This enables them to keep a close eye on how well individual pupils are learning. They ensure that work is set at the correct level so that all pupils are equally involved in class discussions and activities.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of all pupils, including the most able. A number of gifted mathematicians in Year 6 attend mathematics lessons at a local secondary school twice a week. This is providing valuable additional challenge.
- The teaching of phonics has been consistent and well established for some time. Further developments in the past year have strengthened pupils' use of phonics in reading and writing tasks. Pupils regularly put their skills into practice by reading to an adult, so that they become proficient readers.
- There is a consistent approach to the teaching of writing. Pupils write for a range of different purposes and practise their writing skills in different subjects. This ensures that pupils develop a broad range of writing skills and contributes to their good progress. The teaching of grammar and punctuation skills has improved. Leaders and teachers are now focusing on improving the teaching of spelling skills at Key Stage 2 to accelerate pupils' progress in writing.
- There has been a successful whole-school focus on developing pupils' understanding of number. For example, teachers give pupils challenging tasks which make them think hard about how they can use their knowledge of number to investigate and solve problems. As a result, pupils tackle mathematical tasks with increasing confidence and relish the challenges the work provides.
- Teachers check and discuss pupils' progress more often than at the time of the last inspection. This means

that they can respond more quickly to pupils' needs. They meet with individual pupils every half term to discuss their work. As a result, pupils know how well they are learning and what they need to do to improve. Pupils say that they find these meetings helpful.

- Teaching is consistently good in the Reception classes and at Key Stage 1. This ensures that pupils make good progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Effective teaching in Key Stage 2 builds well on this good start. As a result, pupils' improved achievement is extending through the school.
- Teaching in the Acorn Centre is a particular strength of the school. Teachers constantly assess and review pupils' responses to learning and their academic progress. This information is used to set work which is matched extremely accurately to pupils' individual needs.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make consistently good progress across different classes and year groups. Current information about pupils' performance shows the improving trend in achievement is set to continue.
- Improved attainment at the end of Year 2 means that pupils' starting points at the beginning of Key Stage 2 are rising. In 2014, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics was average at the end of Year 2, while attainment in writing improved to levels close to national averages.
- Pupils successfully develop and use a range of strategies to support their reading, including phonics skills. As a result, pupils learn to read confidently and with expression. Younger readers use phonics knowledge well to help them read unknown words and have a good understanding of the way books are structured. Older pupils talk with enthusiasm about favourite authors and the types of book they like to read.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. However, their weaker spelling skills at Key Stage 2 are hampering their progress. Pupils do not consistently apply their spelling knowledge when writing in different subjects.
- In 2014, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was average at the end of Year 6. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2014 to below average levels. This was due to several factors. A number of pupils did not perform as well as expected on the day of the national tests. This was despite the quality of their work during the year indicating they were on track to achieve at least average standards. School information indicates that pupils currently in the school make good progress in mathematics and that current standards in mathematics are higher.
- In the past, teachers' expectations of pupils have not been high enough, particularly of the most able. Rapid improvements in teaching, including increased expectations of pupils of all abilities, mean the most able pupils in the school make good progress in English and mathematics.
- In 2014, the proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels were average in reading and writing but lower than average in mathematics. The school is on track to maintain the proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading and writing in 2015 and to increase the proportions in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Some pupils with a statement of special educational needs make very rapid progress.
- Pupils who attend the Acorn Centre make excellent progress because the high quality of teaching, care and support they receive. Pupils rapidly develop effective learning skills, such as determination and resilience, and quickly grow in confidence.
- In the past, there has been a gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Leaders have addressed this gap robustly in the past year. As a result, the gap in attainment narrowed in 2014. In 2014, their attainment was about a year behind that of their classmates in school in reading and mathematics and about 10 months behind in writing. When compared with pupils nationally, this group attained about a year behind their peers in reading and writing and about 10 months behind in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make good progress, in line with their classmates.

The early years provision is good

- The early years classrooms are well organised, attractive and safe. Adults provide a wide range of good quality activities to support pupils' learning, both indoors and in the well-equipped outdoor area. Children's work is widely displayed so that they feel valued and rapidly grow in self-esteem.
- Children are friendly, keen to learn and well behaved. Regular routines and good relationships mean that children settle quickly and feel secure. They enjoy working and playing together and get on with each other very well.
- Children's starting points when they join Reception Year are lower than those typical of their age. Adults

get to know the children well. They skilfully assess children's progress and use this information to plan stimulating activities which support children's learning. As a result, children of differing abilities make good progress, including the most able children. Attainment by the end of Reception Year is increasing and most children are well prepared for Year 1.

- Leadership of the early years is good. The early years leaders have effectively developed a team of confident and skilled practitioners. They regularly meet to review which aspects of provision are working well and to plan further improvements. This ensures that the quality of teaching and learning continues to improve.
- Leaders have improved links with parents and carers. They have responded to parents' and carers' requests for more information about what children are taught in school with a number of initiatives. These have included reading workshops for parents and carers and helpful information about how parents and carers can support their children at home.

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	125113
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	449091

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Down
Headteacher	Sarah Tarrant
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 December 2014
Telephone number	01784 250305
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