

Ashchurch Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115500
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379084
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2011
Reporting inspector	James Henry

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	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Blackburn
Headteacher	Richard Gibson
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited eight lessons and observed four teachers. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior staff and a group of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, teachers' planning, data showing pupils' attainment and progress, self-evaluation records and documents relating to the welfare and safety of pupils. In addition, questionnaires from 45 parents and carers, as well as questionnaires from pupils and staff, were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of girls across Key Stage 2 and of the more-able pupils in writing.
- The extent to which teaching, assessment and the curriculum meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.
- The progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1 in reading and writing.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders, including the governing body, in identifying and addressing weaknesses in the school.

Information about the school

Ashchurch is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Almost all the pupils are from a White British heritage and have English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times of the year other than usually expected is higher than the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed-aged class with some Year 1 pupils. There is provision on-site for pupils before and after school that is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school has a very positive and welcoming ethos. Its success lies partly in the fact that each pupil is known as an individual and the pastoral care, guidance and support are good. The school is particularly effective in including pupils who join the school at different times of the year. Pupils appreciate their school and respond with good behaviour and general courtesy to each other and staff. Pupils' attendance is broadly average. The school monitors attendance and has a positive reward system in place to celebrate good attendance. However, systems are not rigorous enough to reduce the number of pupils who are taken out of school during term time.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. That is because, from starting points that are broadly average, pupils make consistently good progress across the school resulting in high attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2. A key factor in pupils' high attainment is the good progress they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 in developing their reading and writing skills. Progress is good overall for all groups of pupils, including girls, across Key Stage 2. However, pupils' progress in writing, especially that of the more-able pupils in Key Stage 2, does not keep pace with their progress in reading and mathematics.

Teaching is good overall. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, with pupils keen to learn. There are occasions when teachers spend too much time leading lessons and, while pupils listen attentively, opportunities to involve them quickly in their own learning are missed. That means also that there is less time in lessons for more-able pupils, in particular, to become independent learners. There are good systems to track and assess pupils' progress across mixed-age classes. They are used to good advantage, when appropriate, to group pupils in lessons according to ability rather than age. The curriculum is based effectively on a two-year cycle to meet the needs of mixed-age classes and ensure that pupils cover a broad and balanced range of subjects.

The headteacher sets a clear vision for the school and promotes good teamwork in a supportive manner. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school has maintained pupils' high attainment and good progress consistently since the last inspection. Also, pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 2, identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection, has risen consistently and is now above the national average. That shows that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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The school is a welcoming and cohesive community that helps pupils gain a good moral awareness and good social skills. However, their cultural understanding, particularly of the diverse nature of British society, is less well developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly across Key Stage 2, by:
 - engaging pupils more quickly in their work in lessons
 - providing more opportunities for pupils, particularly the more-able, to take responsibility for their own learning
 - developing pupils' extended writing skills across Key Stage 2.
- Extend pupils' understanding of the diversity of different cultures and communities that exist in the United Kingdom.
- Implement more rigorous systems to raise attendance, particularly by reducing the number of pupils taken out of school during term time.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils feel safe and enjoy their time at school. As one pupil commented, 'School is fun, helps you to learn and you feel it's a safe place to be.' The vast majority of responses from the parents' and carers' questionnaires agreed with that view. Pupils achieve well because they make good progress in their lessons. For example, younger pupils were making good progress in language and grammar as they explored the use of different adjectives to describe the characteristics of a wood. Older pupils were developing their ability to include similes in their writing to make it more interesting and meaningful. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in their learning by teaching assistants and make good progress overall, given their starting points. However, often, they make better progress in reading and writing than in mathematics.

Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, cooperate well with each other in lessons and generally around the school. Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of being healthy. For example, younger pupils have healthy snacks and drinks at break times and older pupils take up the wide range of sporting and physical activities on offer after school enthusiastically. Pupils take on responsibilities around school sensibly. The school council makes a good contribution to the school community through suggesting improvements such as play equipment for the playground. Pupils make a good contribution also to the local community through activities such as singing in the local residential home for the elderly and taking part in the village Remembrance Day service. Even though attendance is no more than

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average, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education because of their high attainment, positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
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	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use effective questioning in lessons to extend pupils’ understanding and knowledge. They have high expectations, especially about behaviour in lessons, and this contributes effectively to pupils’ good attitudes and learning. Teaching assistants are generally effective in supporting groups or individual pupils, but, on occasions, they are not fully involved in supporting pupils’ learning during the introduction to lessons which can be too long. Generally, marking is done well, with comments which help pupils improve further. However, there is not a consistent approach to marking throughout the school, resulting in occasional missed opportunities for pupils to improve their work.

Topics in the curriculum are planned effectively to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. That ensures that different subjects are covered well, without topics being repeated. However, more-able pupils do not always have enough opportunities to develop extended writing skills across Key Stage 2. Older and more-able pupils are sometimes taught in separate age groups, especially in mathematics.

The school has extensive grounds that contain resources, such as an allotment garden, that allow different aspects of the curriculum to be taught outdoors. That

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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adds to pupils’ enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning. The school has established good partnerships with other schools to enrich its curriculum. The partnerships result in specialist sports coaches providing a good range of extra-curricular activities, such as football, netball and athletics. There is also a school French club. There are good links with the local army base and visits from forces personnel help pupils understand the demands of army life. The good use of visitors and local and residential visits adds to pupils’ enjoyment and motivation.

Pupils are known well by staff because of the relatively small numbers in school, helping staff to have a good understanding of individual pupils’ needs. There are also good links with outside agencies to support pupils when necessary. Through working and planning effectively together, teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully involved in lessons and school life. The school uses a positive approach to persuade parents and carers and pupils of the importance of attendance. That has a certain influence in improving the attendance of most, but not all, pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 headteacher has high expectations. He supports and motivates staff effectively, who exhibit a strong commitment and common purpose in maintaining pupils’ high attainment through good teaching and caring pastoral support. The governing body is supportive of the school and provides suitable challenge. Governors visit lessons on a regular basis and provide feedback that is questioned at governing body meetings. A recent initiative by a member of the governing body focusing on developing pupils’ understanding of employment is an example of their involvement in the school.

The school is an inclusive community where all pupils are valued. The school’s commitment to equality of opportunity is shown in the helpful care and support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Variations in the progress of some groups in some areas, such as the more-able pupils in writing and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities in mathematics, prevent the promotion of equal opportunities from being outstanding.

While pupils mix well together and learn about different communities and cultures

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through the curriculum, the promotion of community cohesion is no more than satisfactory. Although the school has good links within the local community, for example, with the local parish church, and some links abroad in Jamaica, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to experience the range of different cultures and communities in Britain today.

There are good arrangements to safeguard pupils. Staff are appropriately trained in child protection procedures, which are applied rigorously. Members of the governing body fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities well and all staff are vetted fully before working in school. The school has good links with outside agencies to help protect potentially vulnerable pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Even though children come to school from a wide range of different settings, they settle well in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to good induction procedures. Relations with parents and carers are good and children feel happy and safe in the pleasant learning environment. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, but particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, and leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities above the levels normally expected. Children develop good social skills through cooperating well together, especially when learning through play. They explained confidently about working together to paint an outside wall with water, so that ‘Humpty Dumpty could not sit on it’. They know how to play safely and understand why they eat healthy snacks and the importance of drinking water.

Staff assess children’s progress regularly and accurately through direct observations

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during activities. The strategy is used to inform planning and staff are able to focus their good teaching on meeting the needs of individual children. Children’s learning is supported effectively through a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, although there are a few occasions when opportunities to link outdoor and indoor learning are missed.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Its self-evaluation is accurate, all safeguarding and welfare requirements for the children are met, and staff work effectively together to ensure that children receive the appropriate curriculum in a mixed-age class.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

All those parents and carers who responded are happy with their children’s experience at school. Also, the overwhelming majority thought that their children enjoy school, that the school keeps their children safe and that teaching is good. A few parents and carers felt that they are not kept well informed about their children’s progress. That is mainly because they felt that the first parents’ and carers’ formal meeting with teachers is held too late in the school year. While inspection evidence found that the school did have regular meetings to inform parents and carers about their children’s progress, the school acknowledged that an early formal meeting would be beneficial.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ashchurch 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 125 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	84	6	13	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	80	8	18	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	18	40	18	40	7	16	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	73	9	20	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	73	10	22	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	27	60	13	29	3	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	67	14	31	0	0	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)	31	69	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	34	76	6	13	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	67	12	27	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	56	16	36	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	69	14	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	82	6	13	0	0	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashchurch Primary School, Tewkesbury GL20 8LA.

I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and watching you work with your teachers in lessons and around the school. All the staff work hard to help you learn and enjoy school. Ashchurch gives you a good standard of education and cares for you well. Here are some of the other good things that we found out about your school.

- You enjoy school and like being with your friends.
- You are keen to learn and to do your best, reach high standards, and make good progress.
- You behave well, treat each other with respect, and are always willing to help around school.
- You enjoy taking part in the activities that the school has to offer, especially sport and special events such as Remembrance Day.

To help the school get even better, we have asked that the adults in charge of the school to:

- improve your learning by allowing you to begin your work more quickly in lessons and giving you more chances to learn for yourselves, especially in writing
- help you to learn about different communities in Britain, through developing links with a school in a different setting than your own
- improve attendance by reducing the number of you who are taken out of school during term time.

All of you can help, too, by continuing to work hard, listening to your teachers and helping each other in lessons and around the school.

Yours sincerely

James Henry
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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