

Ash Green Community Primary School

Mixenden, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX2 8QD

Inspection dates 4–5 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress overall and some do much better than this in reading.
- Pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding make rapid progress.
- The quality of teaching is good in its impact on pupils' achievement over time. Teachers ensure lessons run smoothly and this enables pupils to learn well.
- Teachers regularly check pupils' progress and any child at risk of falling behind is given additional support.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are unfailingly courteous and considerate of others. They settle quickly to their work and are eager to show what they have learnt.
- The headteacher is supported by an able deputy headteacher and middle leaders. They ensure all staff work as a team. Everyone shows a high level of commitment in wanting the very best for each pupil. This ensures that teaching is consistently good and that all pupils achieve well whatever their starting points.
- The curriculum provides pupils with many interesting activities that have a positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The governing body contributes well to the leadership and governance of the school. Its members are well informed about the quality of teaching and hold the headteacher to account for his actions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently outstanding.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in reading and writing.
- Pupils are not taught to form their letters correctly or write in a fluent joined-up handwriting style.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 parts of lessons. They listened to pupils reading in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, including subject leaders, the special educational needs coordinators and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. Inspectors met with five members of the governing body, pupils and spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- There were 21 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), which inspectors took into account.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and reviewed various documents, including the school's view of its effectiveness, tracking of pupils' progress, pupils' books and the appraisal of staff. Documents relating to behaviour, attendance, school development and safeguarding were also considered.

Inspection team

Robert Pye, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Baljinder Khela

Additional inspector

Mark Hilton

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or supported at school action plus is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Nearly all the pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to be outstanding overall in order to raise pupils' achievement further, especially in mathematics and writing, by:
 - teachers consistently re-enforcing pupils' basic knowledge of the value of numbers in order to develop a greater understanding of the importance of this in making accurate calculations
 - ensuring that pupils in Key Stage 1 learn how to form letters correctly and teachers in Key Stage 2 insist that pupils apply these skills in order to write in a joined-up fluent style.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils make good progress and achieve well from their different starting points.
- The high importance given to reading ensures that it is a particular strength throughout the school. Younger pupils use their knowledge of the letters and the sounds they make (phonics) to read words successfully. By the time they reach Year 6 they have become avid readers and can readily discuss the reading material they are using.
- Children join the school with skills and abilities that are typically well below those expected for their age. Aspects of numeracy and speech and language, especially for the boys, are particularly low. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because teaching is good. This means that by the end of the Reception, most children are closer to, although still below, the standards expected for their age.
- Standards reached at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved and are now generally close to those found nationally overall. Pupils make good progress up to this point.
- By the time pupils leave Year 6 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently close to the national average. The most-able pupils reach above average standards. This represents good progress for all pupils from their individual starting points when they entered Year 3, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding do well. Additional funding from the government has been used wisely to provide a range of catch-up programmes and family support. As a result, this group of pupils are making rapid progress and therefore closing the attainment gap in reading, writing and mathematics which at the end of Year 6 national tests in 2013 was more than three terms behind their peers.
- Although boys make similar progress to the girls they have not consistently reached the same level of attainment in the past. Data provided by the school indicate that boys' attainment is becoming much closer to that of the girls.
- Progress in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 2 is not as strong as that found in reading and writing. This is because pupils' deeper understanding of what numbers mean when making increasingly complex calculations is not always secure and this leads to errors.
- In writing, pupils learn new vocabulary and add this to their writing in order to create more interest and meaning to the reader. However, most pupils in Key Stage 2 do not possess sufficient skills to enable a joint fluent handwriting style to prevail.
- Pupils already enjoy a full range of sporting opportunities provided by the school. The primary sports funding has enabled this provision to be extended further. For example, the school staff are currently being trained to improve the quality of gymnastic teaching, while in the evening extended provision, pupils are able to join a wider range of activities including a boxing club.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding in its impact on pupils' progress and achievement over time.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and adults have good subject knowledge. They know the pupils well and provide a balance of teacher and child-led activities. They are effective at helping children explore and find out new things.
- Teachers prepare lessons that captivate the interest of the pupils. They expect pupils to make the utmost effort across a full range of subjects and activities. They set pupils of different abilities, including the most able, tasks that are just at the right level, organise collaborative investigations, and ensure pupils complete their work to a good standard.
- Teaching assistants are used well; they understand their roles within class and provide good support for learning.

- Reading is taught effectively throughout the school. Younger pupils are taught phonics skills and soon learn to read successfully. Older pupils are actively encouraged to read at home and within school for pleasure and purpose. Consequently, most pupils enjoy reading and achieve very well.
- Although pupils in Key Stage 2 do not know how to form a joined-up handwriting style, the teaching of writing is good overall. Teachers provide many opportunities to introduce pupils to new words to enable them to write at a higher level. An example of such a lesson was seen in Year 4. Through role play pupils responded to a Second World War air raid siren and the sounds associated with 'the Blitz'. The teacher introduced them to words such as 'devastation', which they were then able to apply successfully to their work. Spellings, punctuation and grammar skills are taught successfully alongside this approach.
- In mathematics the quality of teaching, while good is not as consistent as that of reading and writing. This is because in some lessons teachers do not reinforce the basic knowledge of the value of numbers well enough to enable all pupils to understand how this is central to accurate calculations. Consequently, the pace of learning in these lessons slows.
- Teachers regularly check pupils' progress. The school provides a range of purposeful interventions designed to improve reading, writing and mathematical skills. These have a very positive impact on the progress of pupils at risk of falling behind or those who are identified as disabled or having special educational needs. These programmes are tailored to the individual and led well by a team of trained teaching assistants.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils relish the opportunities provided during lessons, rising commendably to the challenges put before them. Parents are very positive about behaviour in the school.
- The school's own rewards system reflects the ambitious expectations for behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils thrive in the nurturing and enabling environment where there are multiple opportunities to share learning with friends and support each other in and around the school. To illustrate this pupils in Year 6 spoke passionately about their reading and the many opportunities provided by school to encourage them to read. In addition, they understood how reading would help them achieve their high aspirations; one wanted to be a musician, while another, a doctor, for example.
- Teachers and other adults display excellent classroom management skills. This is complemented by many other initiatives within school that support exemplary behaviour and attitudes to school; one initiative, for example, offers classes the chance to win the 'Golden Coat hanger' award, given weekly for the tidiest cloakroom.
- Pupils develop excellent social skills. They settle quickly in lessons and work well together in pairs or in groups. Older pupils help look after younger ones in the playground. All pupils take a pride in their work and their smart school uniforms.
- Pupils understand the forms that bullying can take and are aware of safety issues with the use of modern technology. They say they have no concerns about such things and have complete confidence that staff would sort out any problems that any pupil might have about experiences in school or beyond.
- The breakfast club provides a warm welcoming start to the school day with older pupils playing happily alongside younger ones.
- The school has gone to great lengths to involve parents in the work of their pupils. The curriculum provides many interesting talking points for pupils. Consequently, pupils want to attend the school and attendance rates including those at 100% have risen consistently over three years to be above average.

The leadership and management are good

- Resolute leadership of the school is untiring in striving for the best. Leaders and managers share

a clear vision and well-formulated plans for development. The aspirations of the headteacher are supported by an able deputy and assistant headteachers. Together they provide substantial support to other local schools. The school enjoys very strong support from the parents.

- The headteacher and team of leaders monitor the quality of teaching effectively. They regularly watch lessons, examine pupils' work and accurately check data on pupils' performance. Information gathered is used to improve teaching and resolve weaker aspects although issues remain in teaching mathematics. Teachers are set targets as part of the annual procedures for reviewing their performance. Success is linked to promotion up the pay scale.
- Leaders work to promote equality of opportunity and make every effort to ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils are addressed. They keep an accurate track of the progress that individual pupils are making. The progress of different groups, for example, those entitled to the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are checked regularly. Where there is a suggestion that a pupil is at risk of falling behind, appropriate help is arranged. This has been most effective in ensuring all pupils make good progress.
- Leadership of the curriculum is good overall. It has many strengths including providing a broad range of experiences through a thematic approach. Pupils learn how to care for each other, develop interpersonal social skills and reflect upon events around them, thus making a positive contribution towards their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in school life and raise the profile of the importance of school to the pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements.
- The local authority has provided very 'light touch' support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**

The governing body contributes well to the management of the school. By reviewing data about pupils' progress, governors have a clear view about how well the school is performing and rigorously hold the school to account. Governors measure the impact of new initiatives, such as interventions using the pupil premium money. They help formulate plans for school improvement and link this to their robust management of the headteacher's performance. The school currently has a healthy financial balance. Finances are managed and take full consideration of the grant to promote physical education and sports. There are plans to use a specialist from the local high school to work alongside staff in order that new sporting arrangements can be sustained.

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	107534
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	425975

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	463
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Collins
Headteacher	Mungo Sheppard
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2007
Telephone number	01422 244613
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