

Ash Green Primary School

The Lea, Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST4 8BX

Inspection dates 28–29 April 2015

| 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.

- Ash Green Primary School is a happy, hard-working and inclusive school.
- The school's core values are widely promoted and understood, leading to very strong relationships between staff and pupils.
- Pupils behave well and are safe. They are courteous and polite, and respectful of each other and adults.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers. Teaching assistants provide skilful and effective support.
- The governing body now plays an effective role in supporting and challenging school leaders. They bring a determination to their role to secure the school motto of 'Achieving the best ...Together'.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school. She has an accurate view of the school's performance and knows precisely what to do to move the school forward.
- Leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils, and provide strong role models. They have secured important improvements in aspects of teaching and pupils' achievement in a very short space of time.
- The quality of early years education is good. Children are enthusiastic and embrace the learning opportunities provided for them and make good progress.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The impact of teaching over time does not enable pupils to make consistently outstanding progress and demonstrate a love of learning and thirst to know more.
- Leaders have not shared well enough with parents the changes they have made to their systems for assessment and the approaches taken to embed the new national curriculum.
- The quality of marking across the school is variable and teachers do not always provide pupils with the most appropriate prompt for improvement.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills across subjects are limited.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed pupils' learning in lessons and part lessons, several of which were joint observations with the headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- The inspection team looked at examples of pupils' work in folders and books, and listened to pupils read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of 54 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered recent questionnaires undertaken by the school. They also considered 27 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspection team examined the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress, the school's evaluation of how well it is doing. They looked at the school's records of monitoring the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Diane Buckle, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Prydwen Elfed-Owens | Additional Inspector |
| Simon Dyson | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Ash Green Primary School is a much larger than average-sized primary school and numbers on roll have remained steady since the last inspection.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who are supported through pupil premium, is below the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The early years provision offers 60 full-time Nursery and Reception places.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Extended school provision is run by the school and offers before- and after-school care.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further, so that more pupils make outstanding progress and achieve even higher standards, by:
 - all teachers consistently using assessment information well to reshape activities throughout lessons to better meet the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers' marking helps pupils improve their work
 - providing increased opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills across all subjects.
- Strengthen communication with parents so that they have a greater understanding of the school's approach to the new curriculum and assessment procedures.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides exceptional and energetic leadership for the school. She has initiated huge improvements in a short space of time through her relentless drive to raise the achievement of all pupils and improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Recent appointments to senior leadership positions within the school have complemented the dynamism of the headteacher. Senior leaders share her vision. They demonstrate the same determination to create an exciting place in which all children can reach their full potential and where good relationships are fostered.
- Subject leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of standards in their subjects. They know how to improve them and have systems in place to do this. For example, subject leaders in English and mathematics have improved approaches to planning, which now details a clear progression of skills. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The system used to check the work of the school is highly effective and includes all leaders. Outcomes from these checks inform priorities for improvement, are shared well with staff and have led to the improvements in teaching, which is now good.
- Leaders have taken time to consider their approach to the new curriculum, which now offers opportunities for pupils to investigate, apply their skills and follow their learning interests. This is at an embryonic stage but has already ignited pupils' curiosity. The 'High Challenge' curriculum uses a well-known story as a stimulus for all learning. For example, in Year 5 pupils learnt about the Second World War through studying *Carrie's War*. They experienced an air raid in school and looked at rationing. One pupil wrote: 'We looked at the food adults had for a week. It wasn't a lot!'
- Assessment is detailed, accurate and regularly checked and evaluated by leaders. The school is well advanced in developing its approach to assessing pupils' learning without levels; however, leaders have not shared well enough with parents the changes they have made and the raised expectations from the new national curriculum.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. It makes pupils aware of core British values and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. It also underpins the calm and purposeful atmosphere within the school. For example, pupils plan events to raise funds because they want to help children who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils also understand the importance of democracy and know that all opinions count. The good progress made by all pupils shows that discrimination is not tolerated and that there are equal opportunities for all pupils.
- The pupil premium funding is spent wisely. It has been used to fund a dedicated member of staff with responsibility for working with individual pupils.
- The school has a history of sporting success and has used the additional funding for physical education and sport to fund an additional sports teacher for Key Stage 1 and sports coaches for Key Stage 2. This has further extended opportunities for pupils to access a wide range of after-school clubs, which are very well attended.
- The good range of strategies to support pupils who have special educational needs is well organised. Detailed records of gains made by pupils in their learning are monitored and evaluated effectively. As a result, disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.
- Most parents are happy with the school and feel their children are well looked after and safe. However, a significant minority of parents felt that the school provides insufficient information about their children's learning and progress. Leaders recognise that the exciting and extensive opportunities they now offer pupils could be better shared with parents.
- Attendance is above average and punctuality excellent. This is because procedures to support individuals and families are highly effective and well established.
- The school is embarking upon an exciting partnership with five primary schools across Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire. This will support further the school improvement programme by offering increased opportunities to work and plan together, share good practice and improve teaching even further.
- The local authority has provided highly effective support to the school and brokered a lead professional to support the transition period between appointments of the headteacher. It continues to offer excellent support to the school to secure its financial position and support the further reorganisation of staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have worked tirelessly since the last inspection to improve their effectiveness. They have undertaken a review of their performance, a skills audit and reorganised their committee structure to improve the focus their work. The recently established steering group has been particularly effective in

driving through improvement priorities, challenging decisions and supporting much needed change.

- Governors have ensured that performance management procedures are now in place and that teachers' pay is now linked to performance and achievement of pupils.
- Governors have ensured that the school's statutory responsibilities towards safeguarding arrangements have been met.
- Governors know how the additional funds have been spent and the impact this has had on pupils' achievement, health and well-being.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They play happily together and relationships between pupils are strong.
- Pupils commented that they like the new approach to managing behaviour, 'Good to be Green', because it is fair to everyone. They also liked the rewards given for good behaviour.
- Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of bullying and the different forms it can take. They say, 'It doesn't really happen here.' School records confirm this to be the case.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is exemplary with high levels of respect evident from almost all pupils.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are exceptionally punctual, demonstrating the pupils' enjoyment in coming to school.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, but in some lessons pupils lose interest and concentration. This is often when there are not enough opportunities for pupils to engage in activities that follow their interests and allow them to apply their skills.
- Pupils are keen to do well but sometimes worry in case they get the answer wrong. This prevents them from using the most efficient method of working or taking risks with their ideas and thoughts. Changes to the curriculum already introduced by leaders are beginning to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their resilience towards learning, and apply their skills and ideas to different situations and subjects.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils overwhelmingly feel secure in school and are confident that, should an incident occur, the teacher will address their concerns. This is supported by parental responses on Parent View.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet. From Year 1, pupils have access to a very detailed teaching programme that continues throughout their time in school. This becomes increasingly more detailed as pupils' access to the internet becomes more varied.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and improving rapidly. Relationships in all classes are strong with pupils working happily together, sharing resources and taking pride in their work.
- Skilful questioning makes pupils think carefully about their answers and establishes links to learning in other lessons.
- Teachers' planning is detailed, consistent across year groups and offers an effective structure to all lessons. This enables pupils to build upon previous learning and develop their skills in a logical way. The work seen in books demonstrates the careful development of skills in lessons.
- A priority for improvement has focused upon the teaching of writing. This now covers a range of writing styles and demonstrates that pupils' writing skills are built on progressively. This has led to year-on-year improvement in standards at both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Classrooms are vibrant spaces, well-resourced and with good use made of the space provided. Displays are used well to celebrate success and provide support for learning.
- Additional adults play a highly effective role in the school. They are well deployed and offer timely support to groups and individuals in lessons. As a result, pupils working with them, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress.
- All pupils follow a detailed programme for learning the sounds that letters make (phonics) and are encouraged by all adults to apply their skills to both read and spell words.
- The teaching of mathematics is strengthening as greater focus is placed upon developing pupils' mental

arithmetic skills and relating associated facts. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply their skills more widely or solve extended problems.

- Homework is well organised and makes effective links to topics being studied. 'Brain Builders' provide pupils with opportunities to undertake extended home study. For example, 'Discovering about forests' prompted pupils to research wildlife, sketch trees and shrubs, produce poetry and writing, and make links to the local environment.
- Pupils' presentation of their work in books is of a very high standard. Teachers mark work frequently and usually provide helpful comments. However, not all teachers ensure that their marking enables pupils to have a clear idea about how to improve aspects of their work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Improvements in the quality of teaching in a short space of time mean that pupils' progress across the school is now much more even than it was previously.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Pupils are interested in books; they talk confidently about characters and authors. This has been supported by heavy investment in the quality and quantity of the reading materials available to pupils, particularly boys. It has been further supported by the 'High Challenge' curriculum which uses a well-known novel as a stimulus for learning.
- Developments in the teaching of phonics have also improved pupils' ability to read and write independently, particularly in the early years. The results in Year 2 phonics re-test increased in 2014 and results in the Year 1 phonics test were in line with the national average.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved and is now above average, with the majority of pupils making more than expected progress. Work seen in books demonstrates a high standard of writing across the school, with increasing opportunities to apply writing skills across a range of subjects.
- Achievement in mathematics is above average. Leaders have worked hard to eliminate variable progress rates across the school, and achievement is now more consistent across all year groups.
- The very small proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school means that any comparison between their achievement and other pupils nationally would be statistically unreliable. Across the school, this group achieves as well as other pupils because of effective action by leaders and other staff.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because teachers have the same high expectations of all pupils. Pupils' needs are identified early and the success of extra help is checked regularly to ensure its effectiveness. Any gaps in performance noted between pupils nationally is statistically unreliable because of the very small numbers it relates to; however, the school ensures that the progress for these pupils is monitored and tracked to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from different ethnic groups make similarly good progress as their peers.
- Overall, the most-able pupils make good progress and achieve well. Many produce work of a very high standard.

The early years provision

is good

- The quality of teaching in the early years is good overall with some outstanding practice in the Nursery.
- Children's skills and understanding when they join the Nursery are typical for their age. As a result of highly engaging activities, all children make expected progress, with a significant proportion making rapid progress. By the end of Reception, most have reached a good level of development and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Children behave very well and play safely because they are engaged and enthusiastic in their learning. Relationships within the setting are excellent, with all adults offering timely support and intervention.
- Planning is detailed and provides an excellent foundation for all aspects of teaching and learning. Staff successfully target activities to children's needs, interests and abilities.
- All areas of learning provide varied and imaginative activities with a very clear learning focus to which children respond very well, especially the most-able children.
- Children are well motivated to read and write because of the interesting contexts and fun activities on offer.
- Learning journals provide an excellent record of a child's experiences and progress, and a valuable and

precious record of development for parents.

- Links with parents are strong, particularly in Nursery, with parents' contribution to their child's learning journey fully utilised. This is less so in Reception where journals are not so accessible and are less informative.
- The early years provision is well led and managed, offering high expectations and aspirations for all children. Relationships across the unit are strong and supportive.

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

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| Unique reference number | 124028 |
| Local authority | Stoke-On-Trent |
| Inspection number | 462546 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 494 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | G Leary |
| Headteacher | Ruth Foster |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 May 2013 |
| Telephone number | 01782 658977 |
| Fax number | 01782 642316 |
| Email address | ashgreen@sgfl.org.uk |

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