

# West Ashtead Primary School

Taleworth Road, Ashtead, Surrey, KT21 2PX

**Inspection dates** 19–20 November 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- School leaders have driven improvements in all areas of the school since the previous inspection.
- The new headteacher has gained the trust of parents, staff and pupils very quickly and has clear, well-thought-out plans to make further improvements to all aspects of the school.
- Pupils now make better progress in English and mathematics, leading to above-average attainment at the end of each Key Stage.
- Pupils in all year groups are making good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils do as well as other pupils nationally. Previous gaps in achievement for these pupils have narrowed.
- Teaching has improved and is now good overall.
- Provision in the early years is effective so that children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Governance has improved. Governors now hold leaders to account for standards and the quality of teaching.
- Above-average rates of attendance show that pupils enjoy attending school.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They know how to stay safe in a range of situations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always move pupils, including the most able, on to more challenging work quickly enough. As a result, they do not deepen their knowledge and skills well enough in different subject areas.
- Not all teaching assistants are skilled at supporting pupils' learning in lessons.
- Pupils do not always act upon the clear feedback they receive to help them improve their work.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share best practice within the school to improve teaching so that it is typically outstanding by ensuring that:
  - all adults, including teaching assistants, have the skills and knowledge to support and extend pupils' learning well
  - all pupils, including the most able, have timely opportunities to deepen and broaden their understanding in a wide range of subjects
  - the school's systems of marking and feedback are refined so that pupils are more involved in improving their work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- School leaders were determined to make improvements following the outcome of the previous inspection. They have been successful in their work to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school and to raise the achievement of nearly all groups of pupils.
- The new headteacher has already gained a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has an ambitious plan for further improvement that will build on the outcomes of this inspection. His ambition to achieve excellence is shared by the vast majority of school staff and parents.
- Subject leaders for English and mathematics have benefited from working with consultants from the local authority to improve their leadership. As a result, they now have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in these key areas of the school and have helped to lead improvements in teaching, so that it is now good.
- The relatively new leader for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs has got to know the pupils in her care quickly. She has correctly identified the priorities for improvement in the provision for these pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils learn about different world religions and have opportunities to complete voluntary work in the school and community and to take on positions of responsibility in the school such as being a house captain. They have recently learnt about democracy when electing school councillors. All of this prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The pupil premium funding has been used effectively to close gaps in achievement for the school's small number of disadvantaged pupils. Strategies such as one-to-one tuition and providing additional groups in mathematics in Key Stage 2 have been beneficial.
- Parents are generally very positive about the school. They think it is led and managed well and the vast majority would be happy to recommend it to others.
- The school uses the primary sports grant effectively to improve the quality of sports provision and to enhance opportunities for pupils to partake in sport both in school time and during a few extra-curricular clubs. However, leaders and governors have not analysed the impact of the improvements closely enough.
- Although the majority of pupils enjoy their learning, the curriculum is not as broad and balanced as it could be. The new headteacher has rightly identified that subjects such as music, computing and the teaching of foreign languages could be enhanced. He has plans to do this in the year ahead, which will enable pupils to deepen their skills and knowledge in these subject areas.
- Parents and pupils would like to see a wider range of extra-curricular activities and competitive sports available.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance has transformed since the previous inspection. The dedicated chair, ably supported by an advanced skills governor, leads the governing body exceptionally well. The governing body now have a resolute determination to make further improvements to the school and see the outcome of this inspection as the first stepping stone to achieving their ambitious plans.
  - Governors hold school leaders to account for improvements and have an astute understanding of how well pupils in the school are doing and the quality of teaching they receive.
  - Governors are aware of their duties to ensure that the curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. However, they agree with the new headteacher that there is scope to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subject areas.
  - Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively to narrow gaps in achievement. They carefully manage the school's financial resources to ensure the best outcomes for pupils.
  - Governors carefully scrutinised the recommendations made by the previous headteacher on pay progression for teachers and ensured there was a clear link between pay and performance in the classroom.
  - Governors fulfil their statutory duties with regard to safeguarding pupils in the school.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on staff and volunteers who work at the school are robust and all staff receive relevant and detailed training. There are good links with other agencies to protect the well-being of the most vulnerable pupils. The school site is safe and secure. Parents and staff universally agree that pupils are safe at West Ashtead.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good overall.
- Lessons are planned effectively and the objectives are generally shared with pupils so that they know what they are expected to achieve.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they share with their pupils. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson the teacher gave a clear explanation of how sophisticated punctuation could be used to enhance pupils' writing. And in a Year 3 science lesson about vertebrates and invertebrates, a teacher confidently described different types of skeleton so that pupils were then able to distinguish between endoskeletons, exoskeletons and hydrostatic skeletons.
- Teachers' questioning is effective at making pupils think for themselves. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, the teacher asked targeted questions that required pupils to problem solve and give clear reasons for their answers.
- Pupils almost always have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy opportunities for paired work and discussion. In a Year 2 guided reading lesson, pupils were able to confidently work together to answer comprehension questions about a non-fiction text by using the index to find the correct page and then discussed the possible answer by scanning the text.
- There are now more opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subject areas. This included writing that required older pupils to combine what had been learnt about Victorian Britain in history lessons with their response to the class novel about a Victorian street child. Older pupils effectively use a school-wide system with different coloured pens to help them to structure their writing.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is accurate and effective in Key Stage 1. Those pupils who are falling behind in this area are provided with targeted teaching to help them improve quickly.
- Homework is used particularly well to support learning, especially in the upper juniors. The vast majority of parents are happy with the school's requirements in this area.
- Some teaching assistants are particularly effective especially when leading interventions with pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. However, a number of teaching assistants, although dedicated and hardworking, currently lack the knowledge and skills to successfully help pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- The most skilled teachers adapt activities within lessons when they are too easy or too hard for the pupils. This is not consistent, and inspectors observed evidence to support the view of a number of parents who felt that the most-able pupils were not always moved on to more challenging work quickly enough in different subject areas.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has developed consistent systems of marking and feedback so that pupils know how to improve. This includes opportunities for pupils to assess the work of their peers. However, the pupils do not always understand how this marking helps them to improve and they do not regularly act upon or respond to the helpful advice being given. The new headteacher is aware of this and has plans to refine and streamline the system so it has a more measurable impact on progress.
- The school has recently developed a new system to assess without levels. This is currently being implemented with staff and will be shared with parents in the near future. This should address the view of some parents that they do not currently receive enough information about how well their children are doing.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's procedures to work with other agencies and care for the most vulnerable pupils are effective.
- Pupils take pride in their school and their appearance. They are living up to the high expectations of the new headteacher.
- Bullying of any kind is rare. Pupils are confident that it would be dealt with effectively by adults. They are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and know how to stay safe online.
- The curriculum promotes healthy lifestyles. Opportunities for older pupils to take part in opportunities such as first aid training contribute well to their personal development.
- Parents are overwhelmingly confident that their children are well looked after at West Ashtead.
- The modelling by teachers of excellent presentation in work books is not consistent, so not all pupils always take pride in the presentation of their written work.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour at playtime and lunchtime on the playground and in the dining hall was positive. Pupils play and chat together sensibly.
- Parents and pupils are generally positive about behaviour in the school and how it is managed by teachers and leaders.
- There have been no exclusions or instances of racist behaviour in recent years.
- Pupils are generally well behaved in lessons and are focused on their learning. They work well together with partners and in small groups.
- Attendance has improved and is above the national average, showing that pupils enjoy coming to school on a regular basis.
- Where teaching is not as strong, there are some low-level behaviour incidents. The new headteacher recognises that the school needs to develop more consistent systems to record and analyse these.

## Outcomes for pupils **are good**

- The progress that pupils make through Key Stage 2 has improved so that it now matches the national average in mathematics and exceeds it in reading and writing. As a result, pupils attain standards that are above those found nationally. This demonstrates that when they leave West Ashtead at the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check is in line with the national average. Those pupils who do not meet the standard in Year 1 are given additional, good-quality support to help them to catch up with their peers quickly.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress in class and during additional group work which allows them to narrow any gaps in achievement that previously existed.
- Evidence in pupils' work books and the school's own assessment information demonstrates that pupils currently in the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2015, boys in Year 6 did significantly better than girls at mathematics. Inspectors investigated this thoroughly and found that this issue was specific to that cohort and that girls currently in the school are making similar progress to boys in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make variable progress depending on the type of need they have; however, the support in place for them is suitable and allows them to succeed.
- The majority of parents believe that their children are making good progress. However, some parents feel that their children, including some who are more able, are not making the progress they would expect.
- Inspectors found that, while the most-able pupils make the same or better progress than their peers in the school, there are occasions in lessons when this could be accelerated even further by moving on to challenging work more quickly.

## Early years provision

is good

- Children enter the setting with a wide range of skills and knowledge that are generally more advanced than those found typically.
- Children make good progress in all areas of the curriculum so that a higher proportion of children than found nationally achieve a good level of development. As a result, children are well prepared to move into Year 1 successfully.
- The early years leader has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Together with other leaders, she has made significant improvements to the setting since an unexpected dip in standards in 2014. She regularly shares her expertise with other early years settings in the local area.
- The environment is well organised both indoors and outdoors, enabling pupils to learn and explore a wealth of exciting and engaging activities planned across the various areas of learning. There are ample opportunities for both teacher-led and child-initiated activities.
- The teaching of phonics and early mathematics is accurate and interactive. For example, children were encouraged to count one more or one less than a given number of objects from a bowl. This showed that children were already confident with numbers to ten. However, some more-able children could have been challenged to try this activity with numbers to 20.
- During a child-initiated session, children had the opportunity to cut spaghetti to develop their fine motor skills or to mix potions out of coloured liquids. They worked well together, showing good social development. They also knew that it was unsafe to taste the potions because unknown liquids could be poisonous.
- Teaching assistants make a variable contribution to learning in the setting. Sometimes they lack the knowledge and skills to ask questions and support activities to enhance children's understanding.
- There are good links with parents and nursery settings. The school provides parents with information about phonics and reading and the teacher is available to speak to them informally on a daily basis.
- Safeguarding is effective in the setting. All the welfare requirements are met, enabling children to have a safe, enjoyable and well-supported start to school life.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125026
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002317

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	338
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pauline Russell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Hart
<b>Telephone number</b>	01372 272082
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk">www.west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk">info@west-ashtead.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	18–19 September 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The school currently has 12 classes and provides full-time early years provision in one Reception class. There is one class in each Key Stage 1 year group. Thirty pupils from local infant schools join the school in Year 3 each September. There are two classes in each Key Stage 2 year group; however, the current Year 3 has three classes due to a bulge in pupil numbers.
- Around 10% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is low compared to the national average. In this school this is additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is below that found in primary schools nationally.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Around 5% of pupils have a first language other than English.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2015.
- The federation arrangement with a local infant school mentioned in the previous inspection report is no longer in place.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in each class and also made shorter visits to a number of lessons and intervention groups. Several observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other school leaders, nine governors, a small group of teachers and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and on the playground, to seek their views about the school. They also met with groups of children more formally to talk about their work and heard some pupils read. They considered 82 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents including assessment information, minutes from governors' meetings, and records about the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors considered 93 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and spoke to some parents before school at the beginning of the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of 24 online questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Lee Selby, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Baxter	Ofsted Inspector
Mo Galway	Ofsted Inspector



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