

# Ash Croft Primary School

Deep Dale Lane, Sinfin, Derby, Derbyshire DE24 3HF

## Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good throughout the school.
- Until recently, leaders have not ensured that the additional funding the school receives for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively.
- Teachers do not use assessment to match the work consistently well to pupils' abilities. In particular, the most able pupils are not consistently given work that is challenging for them.
- Some teachers do not apply their questioning skills effectively in order to consolidate and deepen pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Teachers' expectations for the presentation of pupils' written work are not consistently high.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was well below the national average in 2017.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 1 has declined over time and is typically below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has been above the national average for the last three years.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years is not consistently good.
- The early years outdoor area does not effectively promote children's learning and development.

### The school has the following strengths

- Safeguarding is effective. Parents and carers, staff and pupils said that the school is safe.
- The school's current assessment information shows that pupils' rates of progress are improving.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. As a result, the majority of pupils typically reach the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1.
- The executive headteacher has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has recently established an effective senior leadership team. As a result, there is strong capacity for leaders to drive improvement.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of leadership and management in order to secure sustained improvement by:
  - ensuring that leaders and those responsible for governance take urgent action to address and resolve issues of staff underperformance, especially in key stage 1
  - developing the roles of middle and subject leaders so that they become more skilled in supporting colleagues and monitoring the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility
  - ensuring that that the additional pupil premium funding provided for the school is used effectively to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils attain more highly and make faster progress, by making sure that:
  - teachers use assessment accurately to set work that is consistently well matched to pupils' abilities, especially for the most able
  - teachers use questioning skills effectively to challenge pupils and move them on in their learning
  - teachers have consistently high expectations of the quality of pupils' written work and insist on high standards of presentation.
- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce rates of persistent absence by ensuring that secure systems are in place to promote sustained improvement.
- Improve provision in the early years by:
  - making sure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good
  - urgently improving the quality of the environment and resources in the outdoor spaces so that the area may be used effectively to support pupils' learning and development.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not been effective in halting the decline in pupils' attainment and rates of progress over time, in key stages 1 and 2. As a result, in 2017, pupils' standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 declined to well below the national average. Standards at the end of key stage 1 have also been typically below the national average since 2014.
- Until recently, leaders did not make sure that the additional funding made available by the government to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils was used effectively. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics were well below those of other pupils nationally in 2017.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good across the school, including in the early years. They have not addressed issues of teachers' underperformance urgently enough.
- Middle leaders have only recently begun to take responsibility for the oversight and analysis of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They are in the early stages of developing the skills required to fulfil their roles. As a result, their effectiveness as leaders is limited.
- At the time of the inspection, the coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities was temporarily absent from the school. However, the head of school is providing effective interim leadership of this aspect of the school's work. Consequently, support is precisely targeted to pupils' needs, and there is evidence that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- The experienced executive headteacher is ambitious for the school and she has an accurate overview of its strengths and weaknesses. She has recently strengthened the senior leadership team by appointing an effective interim deputy headteacher to support the head of school in implementing the actions in the school's improvement plan. As a result, there is an increased capacity for leaders to drive improvement.
- The vast majority of staff said that they feel proud to work at the school. A range of staff said that they value the opportunities they receive for professional development.
- Leaders and staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, inspectors looked at a range of evidence which clearly shows how the school celebrates the diverse heritage of its pupils. There is an obvious culture of respect and tolerance in the school. Pupils spoke thoughtfully about their understanding of equality; they value and enjoy one another's differences. Pupils are taught to understand and appreciate the fundamental British values; their understanding is celebrated in assemblies through a weekly British values award scheme.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have rich opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects and activities. Pupils who spoke with inspectors recalled with enthusiasm the topics which had inspired them to produce their best work, including learning about the industrial revolution and life in

ancient Greece.

- Leaders have made sure that they use the additional sports funding effectively to promote pupils' physical fitness, health and well-being. The member of staff responsible for leading this aspect of the school's work has an effective plan in place to make sure that the benefits to pupils are sustainable.

## **Governance of the school**

- Members of the governing body who spoke with inspectors acknowledge that, in the past, they did not hold leaders to account swiftly and rigorously enough. The current chair of governors has ensured that the governing body now brings a greater degree of challenge for leaders.
- The governing body has successfully addressed the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Governors have become more closely involved in monitoring the work of the school, through their programme of regular, focused visits alongside senior leaders. As a result, they have a clear picture of the priorities for improvement.
- In particular, governors are effective in fulfilling their statutory duties in regard to safeguarding. The governor with oversight of safeguarding makes regular visits to check on the school's policies and procedures. Through her professional expertise, she assists with staff training and is able to speak knowledgeably about this aspect of the school's work.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all the necessary checks are in place, in line with statutory requirements.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors stated very clearly that they feel safe in school. They emphasised that they can approach any member of staff with confidence if they have a worry. Pupils said that they value the care and kindness shown to them by the adults at the school, saying, for example 'It's great - we like them all.'
- All parents and staff who completed Ofsted's online surveys strongly agree that pupils are safe at school.
- The school's safeguarding team, effectively steered by the head of school, works in an efficient and well-coordinated manner to ensure that policies and procedures are up to date and fit for purpose. Records show that staff and governor training is thorough and up to date.
- The team's work to support vulnerable pupils and families is a strength of the school. There is a strong culture of watchful care throughout the school; staff make sure that they address any welfare or child protection concerns quickly and decisively.

**Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is not consistently good. This means that some pupils do not learn and progress as well as they should.
- On occasion, in lessons, teachers' imprecise or rushed questioning limits pupils' understanding. When this happens, teachers do not successfully address misconceptions, and opportunities are missed to move pupils on in their learning.
- Inspectors' observations of learning in lessons showed that some teachers do not set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. For example, the most able pupils do not consistently receive the degree of challenge required to enable them to deepen their knowledge and attain at the higher standards of which they are capable. This was confirmed by checking the work in pupils' books and the school's assessment information.
- Across the school, standards of presentation in pupils' books are not as high as they should be. Teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve in their handwriting and presentation are not consistently high.
- Pupils respond well to routines and, when teachers' expectations are clear, they are keen to learn and respond positively to feedback. For example, the quality of work in pupils' independent writing books is superior to that in their English and mathematics workbooks. This is because teachers give precise guidance to pupils in how to improve their writing from one piece of work to the next.
- The teaching of phonics is increasingly effective. The majority of pupils quickly acquire accurate phonic skills, and this helps them in their reading and writing. All pupils who read their books to inspectors were happy and confident to do so, displaying an obvious love of reading. They typically described the school's system for teaching reading as 'great', saying, with enthusiasm, that they appreciate being able to choose their own books at the level which is right for them. Records show that pupils read regularly and often.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. The work in pupils' books shows that teachers provide increasingly regular opportunities for pupils to practise skills of mathematical reasoning, through problem-solving activities. Where 'challenge questions' are used effectively, pupils in key stage 2 are developing the skill of writing a clear and logical explanation of their mathematics work.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently good. When teachers do not set work which is closely matched to their abilities, pupils' attention wanders and their behaviour lapses. As a result, their learning slows or they may become unsure of how to complete their work.
- The inconsistent standards of presentation in pupils' books suggest a lack of pride in their work.

- Inspectors observed many examples of positive relationships between staff and pupils, both in lessons and around school. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were positive about the care they receive from staff, saying that they feel confident in seeking help if they have a problem or a concern.
- School records show that incidents of discriminatory behaviour, including bullying, are rare. Nevertheless, when bullying occurs, records show that incidents are carefully logged and appropriate actions are taken.
- The majority of parents who spoke with inspectors and who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire said that they feel their children are happy and safe at school.
- Leaders and staff are skilled in supporting the social and emotional needs of pupils. Pupils of all ages who take part in the regular programme of activities in the nurture provision receive effective support to develop appropriate learning and social skills. Pupils relish the time they spend in this well-resourced area of the school. As a result, they are increasingly settled and ready to learn when they return to their classes.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' overall attendance is slightly below the national average. Levels of persistent absenteeism have increased over time until, by the summer of 2017, levels were well above the national average.
- Leaders understand the particular challenges faced by parents, very many of whom live outside of the school's catchment area, in bringing their children to school regularly and on time. From September 2017, the head of school has put in place a number of measures to strengthen the school's procedures for improving attendance. As a result of this new and wide-ranging approach, rates of persistent absence, although still above average, have fallen, and punctuality is improving rapidly.
- There is a small proportion of pupils who display challenging behaviours. Records show that any incidents are carefully logged and the circumstances analysed. Since September 2017, the number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced and there have been no repeat exclusions. This is because the school's work to manage pupils' behaviour more effectively, including through the nurture provision, is proving successful.
- Pupils' conduct around school is calm and orderly. They typically behave with courtesy and respect towards others. Lunchtimes and playtimes were observed to be happy social occasions.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 declined sharply in 2017, especially in writing. This applies equally to the progress of

disadvantaged pupils.

- At the end of key stage 2, standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics also dropped sharply in 2017 to well below the national average. In 2016 and 2017, no pupil attained at the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This applies equally to the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Standards of attainment at the end of key stage 1 have been declining since 2014 and are typically below the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils leave or join the school each year other than at the usual times. A significant proportion of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. This has an impact on the school's performance figures. Analysis shows that pupils who were on roll at the school throughout key stage 2 typically attain at a significantly higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 than others who are new to the school.
- The school's analysis of its current assessment information shows that pupils' rates of progress are improving. An increasing number of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are currently making more than expected progress from their starting points, in all subjects.
- As a result of a revised system of carefully targeted support provided during this academic year, analysis shows that pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are improving their assessment scores in reading, writing and mathematics. Since September 2017, the additional support has been expanded to include pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a result, those pupils are currently catching up with their peers at a faster rate than previously.
- Over the past three years, an increasing proportion of pupils have achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In 2017, the figure increased to be in line with the national average.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children enter the early years at a level which is mainly below typical for their age. In the past, children have made good progress during their Reception Year, and the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the year has been broadly typical for their age.
- However, for the first two terms of this academic year, there has been a significant turnover of staff in the early years. The early years leader is currently absent from the school. During that period, the quality of teaching has declined and has not been consistently good. As a result, current assessments show that children have not learned and developed as well as they did previously. A much-reduced proportion of children are currently on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of the year and to be well prepared for Year 1.
- From April 2018, leaders have strengthened the quality of teaching in the early years by providing an experienced and effective teacher for the Reception class. This teacher is also acting as interim early years leader.
- Senior leaders have provided additional adult support for the class during the summer

term. The quality of the additional support is, however, variable. For example, sometimes staff do not correct children's errors such as inaccurate letter formation or pencil grip. When adults' guidance or questioning are not clear enough, some children become distracted from their learning.

- The interim early years leader has carried out an up-to-date assessment of children's development. Her evidence shows that all children are now beginning to make gains in their learning. This is confirmed by the work in their books, from April onwards.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. The appropriate policies are in place and staff training records are up to date. Children are well cared for and safe.
- The indoor learning area is well equipped, and staff make sure that the space is used effectively to provide a range of inviting and stimulating activities across all areas of learning. In particular, children were fascinated by the 'dinosaur den' where they could crawl inside and explore 'creatures' in the den with magnifiers. Children, including the most able, were observed responding well to carefully targeted activities in number work. Those children who are in the earliest stages of learning to speak English were receiving appropriate support to count to five.
- Children move around the indoor areas of learning with a sense of purpose and cooperation. They follow familiar routines happily and could explain to inspectors the 'rules' for sharing equipment.
- The outdoor learning area, however, is not currently fit for purpose. The area is overgrown, unkempt and poorly equipped. It does not serve its purpose as a rich opportunity to promote children's physical, creative and sensory development.
- Leaders and staff make sure that parents are involved in their children's learning and progress. For example, parents have the opportunity to view and contribute to their children's online learning journeys. Staff also organise regular workshops for parents. As a result of these regular communications, staff have built positive relationships with parents.

## School details

Unique reference number	112771
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	10047599

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Antony Hill
Executive headteacher	Penny Brown
Head of school	Manpreet Ubhie
Telephone number	01332 764160
Website	<a href="http://www.ashcroftandcottonsfarm.co.uk">www.ashcroftandcottonsfarm.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@ashcroft.derby.sch.uk">admin@ashcroft.derby.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	7–8 May 2014

## Information about this school

- Ash Croft Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Ash Croft Primary School is part of a 'hard' federation with another local school, Cottons Farm Primary School. The governing body has responsibility for both schools. Both schools work in collaboration with Reigate Park Primary School. The executive headteacher holds her post across all three schools.
- The school has very recently appointed an interim deputy headteacher to the senior leadership team.
- Less than half of the pupils are White British. The rest come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, including a well-above-average proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times.
- A high proportion of families do not live within the school's normal catchment area.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 13 lessons or part lessons, some jointly with senior leaders, across all classes.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the senior leadership team, leaders with responsibilities for reading, writing, mathematics, early years and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Inspectors met with those responsible for attendance, behaviour, bullying and exclusions, disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium. They also met with other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also met with the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and spoke informally with pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. The lead inspector also considered the 43 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour and exclusion logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gayle Bacon

Ofsted Inspector

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