

Ashfield Junior School

High Street, Workington, Cumbria CA14 4ES

Inspection dates

2–3 May 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's unwavering drive for improvement since the last inspection has led to improving outcomes for pupils currently in the school.
- The school motto, 'Together we achieve', embodies the high expectations shared by staff and governors.
- Although published outcomes for pupils have not been good enough in the past, the majority of current pupils are on track to have the skills and knowledge that are typical for their age by the end of the academic year.
- Leaders have ensured that actions to bring about improvements have been implemented effectively. As a result, a higher proportion of pupils are now reaching the expected standards at the end of key stage 2, particularly in writing.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that learning opportunities meet the pupils' needs and excite their interests.
- Sometimes, teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills, such as reasoning and problem solving. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. As a result, they are able to hold leaders stringently to account.
- Pupils who attend the resource base and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well by skilled staff. As a result, they are making strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils are fostered well. Consequently, pupils feel safe and valued in a calm and focused learning environment.
- Leaders have developed a curriculum that prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- Parents and carers appreciate the care and guidance that their children receive. They praise the broad range of extra-curricular opportunities available which have the well-being of their children as a priority.
- Teachers do not routinely correct pupils' spelling. This hinders pupils' ability to reach higher standards in their writing.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on improvements to the way that mathematics is taught, to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills, so that a greater proportion of pupils are working at the expected standard by the end of key stage 2, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the accuracy of pupils' spelling, so that a greater proportion are working at a higher standard in their writing by the end of key stage 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's commitment to the pupils of Ashfield Junior School and the local community is unwavering. Staff and governors share her vision and have worked diligently to bring about the improvements that were identified during the previous inspection. Leaders actively promote high levels of respect and cooperation. Positive relationships and pupils' strong attitudes to learning contribute effectively to the good progress that they make. Pupils thrive socially and personally. They enjoy coming to school.
- Published data in 2017 indicated that pupils' progress was weak. However, this masks the reality of the school's context. Pupils join the school in Year 3 from a number of different infant schools in the local area. This includes a higher than average proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan, and a small number of pupils who attend the resource-base provision for pupils who have physical disabilities. The complexity of these cohorts has a negative influence on published progress data. From 2016 to 2017, attainment improved. The proportion of current pupils on track to reach the national standard by the end of key stage 2 shows that this improvement has been sustained.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. Middle leaders analyse information about the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make from a range of assessment activities. They accurately identify key priorities for further improvement. Leaders' actions have brought about the necessary changes to the quality of teaching very effectively. Leaders have ensured that teachers have the skills and knowledge that they need to support pupils' learning and progress. As a result, outcomes for current pupils are good and improving.
- Leaders provide staff with the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise with other colleagues. They work closely with colleagues in other local schools and with colleagues from the local infant school, in particular. Consequently, they are able to work together to ensure that judgements about pupils' achievement are accurate and that the next steps in pupils' learning are identified as they join the school in Year 3.
- Leaders have improved the way that reading is taught across the school. Through good-quality professional development, leaders have ensured that staff have the skills and knowledge to teach reading well. As a result, pupils' achievement in reading is improving.
- Leaders' work to improve the teaching of mathematics has been positive in many respects, and as a result, teachers are far more competent in teaching number. However, the opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics are not as well developed.
- Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum that provides pupils with the skills, knowledge and resilience that they need to be successful in the future. Leaders provide a wide range of experiences to enhance the curriculum. These include welcoming visitors from other cultures and beliefs, and residential visits to cities and rural destinations. Pupils find out about British society beyond their own area. Leaders

ensure that pupils understand and respect those from different backgrounds, cultures and faiths.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. For example, pupils take part in a range of activities linked to the United Nations' Global Goals. They work with pupils from other schools to promote recycling in the local community. They do this with the local member of parliament and they also help to keep the coastline in the area free from litter.
- Leaders in the resource base have the skills and knowledge to meet pupils' needs effectively. They ensure that pupils who attend the resource base and other pupils in school who have SEN and/or disabilities as well as an EHC plan, are supported effectively by skilled staff. Leaders work closely with professionals from the local authority and other agencies to meet the complex needs of the high proportion of pupils who have an EHC plan. As a result, this group of pupils, including those in the resource provision, are making good rates of progress from their individual starting points. Pupils make good progress academically as well as in their personal, social and emotional development.
- The pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Leaders work closely with parents to ensure that pupils receive the appropriate help that they need, both in school and at home. As a result, outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are beginning to improve, particularly in reading and writing.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport premium funding effectively. Pupils participate in a range of different sports both in school and in the wider community, including tennis and gymnastics. Sports teams are becoming increasingly successful in competitions. For example, the bowling team was the winner of the local league.

Governance of the school

- The commitment of the governing body to improve outcomes for pupils is reflected in the actions that it has taken since the last inspection. Governors have ensured that they have a range of appropriate skills and knowledge, which enables them to gain an accurate overview of the school's effectiveness. They regularly check on the information that they receive from leaders, and they work closely with other governing bodies to share their expertise. Training has ensured that governors have a good understanding of assessment information. This enables governors to challenge leaders effectively about pupils' progress and attainment.
- Governors check that staff training is closely aligned to the school's key priorities and that it is focused on improving pupils' achievement, including for those pupils who access the resource-base provision. Governors monitor the impact of staff training effectively and they check that school improvement targets are met in a timely manner.
- Governors understand their statutory duties and fulfil their responsibilities relating to safeguarding with due diligence.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils, including volunteers who help out in school regularly.
- The safety and well-being of all pupils are a priority for leaders, staff and governors. The procedures in place for the protection of pupils are effective and understood by staff; records relating to safeguarding are meticulously maintained. Staff work closely with external agencies to help families to access the help and support that they need.
- Staff and governors have completed relevant safeguarding training and receive regular updates. Appropriate risk assessments are completed, particularly for residential and outdoor learning activities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers set high expectations for pupils. The positive relationships fostered by staff enhance pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy school and take pride in their work.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to use assessment information effectively to identify the next steps in pupils' learning. Consequently, activities accurately meet the needs of the majority of pupils. However, teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills to a higher standard.
- Teachers quickly identify when pupils are struggling. They identify the precise gaps in pupils' learning, and ensure that pupils get the help that they need to catch up quickly, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Skilled support staff are deployed very effectively. They have the expertise to support pupils well. As a result, current pupils receive the care and guidance that they need to make good progress, particularly those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those pupils who access the resource-base provision.
- Staff use questions skilfully to encourage pupils to refine their ideas and explanations, particularly in reading. However, teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Teachers have changed the way that they teach reading. Pupils are beginning to improve their comprehension, inference and vocabulary skills. Pupils who find reading more difficult are given the help that they need to catch up quickly.
- Teachers ensure that pupils gain appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation skills. However, they do not always challenge pupils when they make errors in the way that words are spelled. This hinders the progress of some pupils who are capable of working at a greater depth.
- Teachers skilfully plan learning opportunities to enable pupils to gain a variety of skills and knowledge. For example, pupils had visited a local mine and found the source of a river during a residential field trip as part of their work in science and geography. They were able to use this experience on their return to school in a range of subjects effectively, for example, when doing a comprehension activity on a factual report about the trapped miners in Chile. This activity led to some high-level discussions, and demonstrated pupils' ability to explain the rationale for their answers effectively.

- Teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to practise their research skills through the homework projects set. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they enjoyed finding out information at home that they could use in their work at school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and happy and enjoy all aspects of school life.
- Through a well-thought-out curriculum, staff nurture pupils' well-being, and help pupils to feel positive about themselves. Promoting positive relationships and respect for each other is a priority across the school. As global learners, pupils learn about all aspects of British values and how these values relate to their own lives. For example, in history, work on invaders and settlers sensitively leads on to discussions about the plight of refugees from Syria today. Pupils are prepared well to become thoughtful and caring citizens in modern Britain.
- Older pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities, for example, as members of the school council, 'eco-warriors' and leaders of the Global Goals group. Pupils spoke confidently about moving on to secondary school and the new friends that they will make, because leaders ensure that they are well prepared for this transition.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying. They are confident that staff will deal effectively with any concerns that they might have.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and their attitudes to learning are good. This has a positive impact on the progress that they make.
- Attendance rates have been above the national average for the past three years. Staff work closely with the families of the most vulnerable pupils to ensure that they receive the help that they need to attend school regularly. Consequently, attendance for those pupils who are persistently absent is beginning to improve and is almost in line with the national average.
- During playtimes, pupils chat happily with their friends and play together well, including pupils who attend the resource base. There are very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. However, well-trained staff ensure that any incidents that do occur are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The published attainment data for pupils in 2017 was a considerable improvement on the previous year. The proportion of pupils who reached the national standard in writing was in line with the national average. It was above the national average for the proportion who were working at a higher standard. The proportion of pupils who

reached the expected standard for science was above the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils.

- In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the national standard in reading was broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who reached the national standard in mathematics was below the national average.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made the same rates of progress as other pupils nationally in reading and writing. Although a higher proportion were working at the national standard than in 2016, not a high enough proportion were working at a higher standard, particularly in mathematics.
- The complex learning needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities had an impact on the progress data for the school, particularly in reading and mathematics in 2017.
- Assessment information for those pupils currently at the school shows that most are making good progress from their starting points on entry to Year 3. The majority of current pupils are on track to have the skills and knowledge typical for their age by the end of the academic year.
- The detailed assessment information held by leaders, and the work in pupils' books, highlight that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make strong progress from their individual starting points. This includes pupils who attend the resource base.
- Work in pupils' books across a range of subjects is neatly presented and is of a good standard. In mathematics, pupils' work clearly shows the development of skills and knowledge, culminating in pupils beginning to solve mathematical problems accurately. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills in mathematics at a higher standard are varied.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to apply their written skills, for example in geography where they use the appropriate geographical terms to explain the journey of the river from the source to the sea. However, errors in spelling are hindering current pupils from achieving at a greater depth, including the most able pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	112147
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10046394

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	246
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Rafferty
Headteacher	Susan Frost
Telephone number	01900 604565
Website	www.ashfieldjuniorschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@ashfield-jun.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 May 2016

Information about this school

- This is a junior school. The majority of pupils join the school from the neighbouring infant school. However, pupils also join from the other local infant schools. There are two classes in each year group.
- The majority of pupils are of a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils who have an EHC plan is above average.
- The school has a resource-base provision for pupils who have physical and medical needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The governing body manages a before- and after-school club. Pupils from the neighbouring infant school also attend this provision.

- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils. They also talked with other pupils informally around the school. Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. A meeting was held with three members of the governing body. An inspector met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses, and 15 free-text responses, to Ofsted's online Parent View survey. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation and development plan, information about the school's performance, a range of assessment information and a selection of policies, including those relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector

Mavis Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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