

Ashby Hill Top Primary School

Beaumont Avenue, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, LE65 2NF

Inspection dates 16–17 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics, for all pupils regardless of ability or background.
- Pupils' attainment was above average for several years in the predecessor school and continues to rise.
- Excellent teaching helps pupils to make rapid progress in their learning in a range of subjects.
- Teachers are particularly skilled in giving different pupils work that is at just the right level for them. During lessons, they continually check up on progress to ensure that all are doing as well as possible.
- Pupils behave extremely well and are very keen to learn.
- Excellent relationships between pupils themselves, and with the adults, underpin the school's many strengths. Pupils feel extremely safe in school, and have great trust in the adults to look after them.
- There is outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children get an excellent start to their schooling because of the outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- A constant focus by leaders and managers on the quality of teaching and the achievement of all pupils ensures that both are excellent. Very effective procedures, to keep a detailed track of each pupil's progress, greatly enhance this.
- The marking of pupils' work is good but has some minor shortcomings.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed substantial parts of 17 lessons, three of these as joint observations with the headteacher. Shorter visits were made to other lessons to see the breadth of the curriculum, and to the Early Years Foundation Stage to see how the two classes work together.
- Inspectors heard pupils in Years 1 and 6 reading. The team also scrutinised pupils' work in their books and on display around the school.
- Formal discussions were held with pupils from Years 2, 3, 5 and 6, and inspectors also talked informally with other pupils around the school.
- Inspectors met formally with various members of staff and with representatives of the governing body. They also held discussions about their lessons with those members of staff who were observed teaching.
- The team examined a variety of documents, particularly those that related to pupils' progress, to keeping pupils safe, and to checking up on how well teachers are performing.
- The team took account of the 41 replies to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the results of 186 replies to the school's own questionnaire for parents. Inspectors also analysed replies to a questionnaire from 22 staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils at break times, around the school and in assemblies.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional Inspector
Karen Feeney	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ashby Hill Top is slightly larger than the average primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, with a few coming from a range of minority ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium, because they are known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or who have statements of special education needs, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Ashby Hill Top Primary converted to become an academy school on 1 October 2012. When its predecessor school, Ashby Hill Top Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- There were no changes to staffing, and only minor alterations to the individual membership of the governing body, because of this change of status.
- A breakfast club runs on the school site for pupils from this school and from another local school. This provision is managed privately, and is inspected and reported upon separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the quality of the marking of pupils' work by:
 - making sure that pupils' respond consistently to their teachers' comments
 - more frequently indicating, to pupils whose work is successful, how they can extend their learning by tackling more difficult questions
 - helping pupils to improve their work by telling them how to improve their literacy skills when marking writing in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Progress is strong from Reception, where children start with skills that are, overall, somewhat below those expected for their ages, and reach attainment that is above average by the time they go into Year 1.
- All pupils in the predecessor school had made excellent progress in mathematics for several years. Over the last two years, the already good progress in English has accelerated so that progress in this subject also is outstanding. Attainment is high in both subjects.
- Pupils' work shows high levels of achievement in other subjects. In science, a strong focus on practical work, as well as many opportunities to use mathematical and literacy skills, enhances learning in all three subjects. Work in history is diverse and wide-ranging, leading to a high level of attainment.
- Older pupils show exceptional skills in singing, playing musical instruments and composing, seen in an excellent lesson where pupils in Years 4 and 5 made strong progress in all these three elements of music. In physical education lessons, pupils show very good skills and join in energetically.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do exceptionally well. Their academic and personal progress is monitored tightly, and they are given support that closely meets their particular needs and tasks that are challenging but within their capabilities.
- Boys and girls, and pupils from different backgrounds make similar progress, including those who are entitled to the pupil premium. The attainment of the latter generally lags behind the very high levels of their classmates by about a year but is much better than that of such pupils nationally.
- Pupils' reading skills are developed extremely well from the start, with the strong emphasis in Reception on phonics (how letters in words are used to represent different sounds) matched by an equally strong emphasis on understanding and enjoyment. Pupils quickly develop high levels of independence in reading and writing.
- As they get older, pupils' very secure reading skills help them to learn rapidly in all subjects, whether using books or computers. By Year 6, they are fluent readers with decided personal tastes in books.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- A key strength of many lessons, particularly in English and mathematics, is the way that teachers prepare different work for pupils of different abilities. They ensure that work is challenging but within each individual's capabilities.
- Adults monitor each pupil's progress throughout the lesson, so they quickly spot if anyone is confused and intervene quickly to help them understand.
- Similarly, they continually encourage pupils who are succeeding to refine their work and challenge them to move to the next level. This was a particular feature of a lesson when pupils

in Years 5 and 6 made outstanding progress in their understanding of subordinate clauses, using them with increasing precision to enhance their writing.

- Teaching for Reception children is of high quality, with excellent use made of the outside area. Children enjoy the wide range of practical activities provided, and teachers give them many chances to challenge themselves and to be independent. Teachers intervene extremely effectively in children's play, extending their thinking through careful questioning as well as by taking a role in the activities.
- Teachers give pupils extensive opportunities to discuss ideas together, so they have excellent speaking, listening and collaborative skills. This has been a major feature in the improvements made in writing standards, helping pupils to sort out their ideas before they put pen to paper. Increasingly, there is excellent use of clear criteria for pupils to assess their own and their classmates' work. They do this extremely well, discussing their work together and improving and refining its quality.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately. They tell pupils what they have done well, and identify errors. In English, in particular, they often make clear suggestions to help pupils meet their literacy targets. However, this seldom happens in the excellent range of writing that pupils undertake in other subjects. The continual challenge seen in lessons to move to the next level, or to attempt extra, more challenging tasks, is not as frequent in the written marking of pupils' work. Too often, pupils do not respond to their teachers' suggestions or answer the searching written questions that are posed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- A strong feature of lessons is the way that teachers enthuse pupils and gain their interest through the varied and exciting activities they provide. A group of Year 6 pupils agreed that, 'Teachers make learning fun.' Combined with the great liking and respect pupils have for their teachers, and the well-established routines, this ensures excellent behaviour and extremely positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic learners, listening attentively to their teachers and each other, contributing their ideas thoughtfully, and concentrating extremely well. They are becoming adept at evaluating their own work, and identifying what they need to have more practice with. Pupils cooperate extremely effectively when working in pairs or small groups, but also show high levels of application when working independently.
- Pupils are extremely happy at school, enjoying both the social and academic aspects. They have excellent relationships with their teachers, who they trust to look after them and to help them learn. Year 6 pupils identified their teachers as the most important good thing about the school, saying that teachers 'make you feel safe' and are 'always there for you.' These positive opinions are reflected in pupils' high levels of attendance.
- Pupils themselves, staff and parents are very positive about behaviour. They agree that they are not perfect, one Year 2 pupil explaining, 'We're kids!' but they say that any major problems are extremely rare and they are confident that teachers quickly sort out any issues.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different kinds of bullying from regular discussions in class and assembly, as well as events such as the yearly anti-bullying week. They know the difference between bullying and other kinds of misbehaviour. They are confident that the adults would quickly sort out any problems, but pupils could not think of any recent instances that needed

this.

- Pupils feel very safe in school and can explain why, and have learned well how to keep themselves and others safe, in school and beyond.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and cheerful, following rules sensibly and taking care of each other. Older pupils greatly enjoy the opportunities they have to look after the youngest ones, and to help them with their reading.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have established a strong staff team with a common approach and clear priorities. This has enabled the school to build on its pre-existing strengths to achieve excellence.
- Efforts have centred on ensuring that all pupils make the progress they should, with many exceeding expectations in this regard. A strong focus on improving English has raised standards, particularly in reading. Achievement in writing has also risen and continues to do so.
- Central to the improvements has been the careful tracking of individual pupils' progress, so that any not doing as well as they should are given extra help and the more able are challenged to extend their learning further.
- The key element in all this has been a concentration on ensuring high-quality teaching. Excellent arrangements to check on teachers' performance have been successful, with targets set that focus on school priorities, the progress of pupils and the individual professional needs of teachers. Results of this monitoring have been used to ensure that relative weaknesses are addressed through high-quality training, and that teachers are properly rewarded for good performance.
- Leaders and the governing body ensure that good use has been made of pupil premium money to help eligible pupils to achieve well academically and to take part in all aspects of school life, such as learning musical instruments. This has ensured that these pupils make better progress than such pupils nationally.
- Since becoming an academy, the school has ensured that links with a variety of other schools, locally and further afield, are used to enhance provision through mutual support and a common approach to training and development which can be tailored exactly to the needs of each school.
- The curriculum is wide ranging, providing an excellent range of opportunities for pupils, not just in English and mathematics but also in other subjects. Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Provision in music is particularly diverse and makes very effective use of specialist staff expertise. The latter is true of other subjects; in French, for example. Assemblies and many lessons contribute very effectively to emphasising moral and social issues, and pupils' excellent social skills, positive relationships, secure understanding of moral issues and their care and concern for each other show the effectiveness of this. They often take the initiative, in fundraising for charities, for example. Pupils are frequently encouraged to reflect upon important issues, and do so very thoughtfully.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have excellent systems to involve themselves in all aspects of school life and to

keep very well informed. This is particularly true of procedures to keep pupils safe, which consequently meet requirements. Governors contribute strongly to the overall strategic direction of the school, making full use of the wide range of expertise in the governing body to benefit the management of the school. They have a thorough understanding of the data that shows how well the school is doing in comparison with others. This enables them to challenge and support staff very effectively. Governors have ensured that procedures to manage teaching quality are robust and are linked to rewarding good performance, and addressing any relative weaknesses decisively.

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	138804
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	411338

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Brewin
Headteacher	Diane Mullan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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