

# Athersley South Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131160
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	381311
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Christine Millett

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	316
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kath Bostwick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Iredale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Wakefield Road Smithies Barnsley S71 3TP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01226 284223
<b>Fax number</b>	01226 733039
<b>Email address</b>	j.whiteley@barnsley.org

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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Christine Millett  
Freda Jackson  
Janet Keefe

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 26 lessons or parts of lessons given by 13 members of staff. They also listened to pupils read. They held meetings with groups of pupils, a member of the governing body and members of staff. They also observed the school's work, and looked at work in pupils' books, school policies and plans, data tracking of pupils' progress and records on safeguarding, health and safety and attendance. The inspectors considered 112 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

Athersley South is larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are from minority ethnic groups. English is the first language of the very large majority of pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Some pupils are taught in single-age classes and some in mixed-age classes. Currently, there is an Early Years Foundation Stage Unit, mixed Year 1/2 and Year 3/4 classes. The school meets the government's current floor standards which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A significant number of pupils start school at different times throughout the school year.

The school has received the Study Support Award and Activemark. The governing body manages a breakfast and after-school club. A flexible arrangement between the school and the local authority is in place which allows the substantive headteacher time to pursue work with a professional body. An acting headteacher has been in role since May 2012.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- Athersley South is an outstanding school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have discovered the joy of learning. The school's thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that they mature into responsible, caring members of the school and the wider community. The overwhelming majority of parents, carers and pupils who gave their views were extremely positive about the school.
- Achievement is outstanding. Children are provided with a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is built on effectively throughout the rest of the school. The school has focused on raising attainment. This has been particularly successful as a result of the now well-established whole-school approaches to improvement.
- Pupils' exemplary behaviour in and out of lessons, their very positive attitudes to learning and consideration for each other contribute to their outstanding achievement. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure; parents and carers agree and inspectors endorse these views. Attendance is average but is improving strongly year-on-year.
- Much outstanding teaching throughout the school demonstrates well-judged approaches that match pupils' needs effectively, based on rigorous and accurate whole-school assessment systems. Pupils are keen to be actively involved in responding to teachers' marking and feedback. Pupils learn exceptionally well across the imaginative and stimulating curriculum and consequently achieve outstandingly well, including in reading.
- The drive, example and commitment of leaders and managers have ensured that high levels of achievement for all pupils have been sustained over time. Their relentless focus on the leadership of teaching and the management of performance has ensured that all staff, including teachers new to the school, are committed to the pursuit of excellence. They demonstrate determination to provide opportunities for pupils to experience a rich and meaningful

curriculum. Parents and carers recognise the opportunities the school provides for them to support their children's learning.

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

- Further improve pupils' attendance by capitalising on the good relationships with parents and carers.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve particularly well. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are very low when compared to those expected for their age.

As a result of teaching that is predominantly outstanding, pupils make progress that is consistently good and often outstanding as they move through the school. This begins in the Nursery class. From very low starting points, children achieve well. Assessment shows year-on-year improvements in all areas of learning, particularly communication, language and literacy. Pupils continue to do well in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, in 2011, attainment in writing was broadly average and that in reading and mathematics, while below average, was higher than in previous years. At Key Stage 2, in the same year, data show attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average.

The school's rigorous tracking system and inspection evidence show that pupils' progress is accelerating rapidly across the school. Pupils in Year 2 are on target to improve upon 2011 results with reading and writing now in line with national averages. Data for the current Year 6 show a much greater proportion of pupils attaining broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics than in previous years, with more pupils reaching the higher levels. School data, inspection evidence and the work seen in pupils' books confirm that these trends are set to continue.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and the small number of minority ethnic pupils are making similar rates of progress to their peers. They are supported extremely well by teaching assistants and the class teacher during lessons and benefit greatly from small group activities. Pupils in the mixed-age classes are also achieving exceedingly well.

In lessons, pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and have good levels of concentration. All pupils work well together and are clearly engaged and involved in their learning. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, pupils collaborated extremely well in groups to write descriptive paragraphs. Good discussions, peer evaluation and application of learning skills such as making use of their 'Magpie Books' (notebooks where pupils jot down words and phrases from their reading books or other sources, which they use later to enhance their own writing) enabled pupils to work well

together to produce work of a very high standard. Pupils were proud to share their work and spoke confidently to inspectors about their achievements. Parents and carers expressed very positive, and accurate, views on the levels of progress their children were making.

### **Quality of teaching**

As a result of teaching that is outstanding overall but with a small proportion that is good, pupils throughout the school make rapid and sustained progress. All staff, including teachers and teaching assistants, have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Time is rarely wasted. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and they have designed a stimulating, cohesive curriculum that engages and motivates pupils. They plan lessons to ensure they meet the needs and interests of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special needs.

Teachers use effective strategies to challenge pupils of all abilities to improve. For example, teachers have been successful in encouraging pupils to write through the innovative use of information and communication technology to produce blogs using touch-pads. The best teaching reflects the school's very strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and its highly effective approach to the teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Inspectors noted the enthusiasm and resilience of pupils towards their learning, and their cooperation with their peers. This is evident throughout the school. In observation of the youngest children in the Nursery class, children are supported and encouraged to make use of the outdoor area to stimulate imagination and investigation. The oldest pupils demonstrated great empathy and sensitivity when discussing racism in Circle Time. Educational visits and homework are often linked to pupils' curriculum work and this makes it more meaningful.

Teachers and teaching assistants in all classes regularly check pupils' understanding through effective use of questioning. As the relationships between adults and children are excellent, pupils are willing and able to seek guidance. All parents and carers think that their children are taught well. Inspectors endorse parents and carers positive comments regarding teaching. Teaching assistants' effective deployment and professionalism contribute significantly to pupils' learning. All teachers mark pupils' work carefully and provide constructive feedback. Pupils have the opportunity to correct, improve and comment on their work.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration for others that make this school a highly cohesive, calm and orderly learning community. They are thoughtful and extremely polite and courteous to adults. Their behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of safety are very good. This is recognised and commented on by parents and carers. Pupils make a meaningful contribution to their school community and their views are sought and listened to by staff. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and they can identify many of the actions that the school takes to ensure their safety. Pupils have well developed awareness of e-safety and how they should use the internet. They say that there is little, if any, bullying of any kind and that they know the actions to take if they have

concerns. They are very aware of the need to respect others and understand the different forms of bullying that may take place. Pupils are given many opportunities to help the school community through, for example, the buddy scheme and the school council. Older pupils act as extremely positive role models. The school's particularly supportive learning environment reinforces the value of good behaviour and all pupils happily conform to this expectation in lessons, around the school and over time. Attendance is average and punctuality is good.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher leads by example and has developed a highly effective team of senior leaders who share his vision. Their well-communicated vision and ambition for the school and their persistent drive for improvement ensure that staff are extremely well motivated, highly committed and feel part of a strong team. Middle managers are equally enthusiastic, thoughtful and well informed. They form part of a very strong leadership group that has excellent capacity to sustain improvements. The high expectations and aspirations of senior leaders and the governing body have been instrumental in ensuring the consistently outstanding teaching provision. High-quality continuing professional development has helped to accelerate pupils' progress across the school. Rigorous tracking procedures have enabled staff to keep a close check on the progress of all pupils and to implement interventions for those pupils at risk of underachieving. It has been very effective in improving pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills.

The governing body makes a strong and influential contribution to school improvement. Members of the governing body have a high profile in and around school. They are active, knowledgeable and hardworking. They support and hold school leaders to account for the quality of provision. The governing body is rigorous in ensuring that site safety and risk assessments for all activities are in place. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. The school ensures that discrimination in any form is not tolerated and promotes equality in pupils' opportunities for success very well. There are strong partnerships with neighbouring schools to drive improvement further. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. Good relationships with parents and carers are promoted through the regular newsletters and meetings.

The curriculum is excellent. It is well organised on a rolling programme, meeting the needs of all classes well. Themed events, such as the Arts Week, add interest, variety and purpose to the curriculum. Excellent displays throughout the school, in corridors as well as classrooms, reflect the diversity of the topics being studied. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich pupils' learning, and participation by many pupils in sporting activities supports their healthy lifestyles. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced by events such as the exchange visit to a school in London. Pupils are reflective and demonstrate a very strong social and moral awareness, supporting charities and showing a strong empathy for those less fortunate than themselves.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Athersley South Primary School, Barnsley S71 3TP**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you and particularly liked having the opportunity to talk to you and to see you in lessons and at play. We also enjoyed listening to some of you read. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Athersley South is an outstanding school.
- You get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are achieving very well during your time in school.
- Teaching is outstanding. You attain average standards in mathematics and English by the time you leave school. However, learning is improving all the time.
- You told us that you really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- You think that behaviour is very good, and we agree. We found that you behave extremely well in and around the school and know how to stay safe.
- Your attendance is average but improving all the time.
- You have excellent relationships with your teachers and you get on well with each other.
- The headteacher, other adults and the governing body are working very hard to make the school as good as possible for you.

In order to help you do even better in your learning we have asked the headteacher and your teachers to do the following.

- Work with your parents and carers to make sure that attendance continues to improve.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your very best in lessons, coming to school regularly and always behaving well. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Millett  
Lead inspector

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