

Alderman Payne Primary School

9 Main Road, Parson Drove, Wisbech, PE13 4JA

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Almost all pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups, and standards have risen over the last two years in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Teaching is good. Teachers ask searching questions to check pupils' understanding, maintain their interest and deepen their thinking.
- Other adults in the classroom support pupils sensitively and effectively. This helps pupils with additional learning needs to do well.
- Pupils behave well and have a good understanding about how they can keep themselves safe in different situations.
- Changes made to the way subjects are taught have improved achievement and made learning more enjoyable for pupils.
- Good links with parents and the local community make sure they are fully involved in school life.
- The governors hold the headteacher accountable for improving the school by asking challenging questions and visiting regularly to check how well it is performing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The guidance given to pupils on how they can improve their work is not consistently good across all classes and all subjects.
- Occasionally, the work set for pupils is too hard or too easy and the teacher does not adjust the lesson activities quickly enough.
- Too much responsibility for leadership and management falls to the headteacher in this small school.
- Some practical activities in lessons fire pupils' enthusiasm, but they are not yet planned carefully or happen often enough to help pupils develop their basic skills in different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, three governors, school staff including senior and subject leaders, and a representative of the local authority. Informal discussions were held with parents.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), four staff questionnaires, and recent questionnaires carried out by the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at information from the school's checks on its performance, school improvement plans, analysis and tracking of pupils' progress, the headteacher's records of classroom observations, safeguarding arrangements and minutes of governing body meetings. She also sampled pupils' work, listened to pupils read and checked information on pupils' attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Hughes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to help particular pupils who need it) is above average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those who speak English as an additional language are both lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action is above average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A larger-than-average proportion of pupils join the school partway through the year, or in different year groups.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2010. Three out of the four class teachers started at the school in the last two years, and the current senior leadership team was formed this term.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school changed its name in September 2012 from 'Payne' to 'Alderman Payne' Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
 - teachers' marking gives all pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work in all subjects, and teachers routinely give them the opportunity to respond
 - as a result of accurate checking of understanding during lessons, all teachers act promptly to refocus pupils' learning so that they make as much progress as they can.
- Strengthen leadership and management through:
 - developing the skills of senior leaders in analysing progress data and making accurate judgements about the quality of teaching
 - ensuring that the practical activities planned for pupils not only excite them, but also give them a deeper understanding of the skills they are learning and how they can use them in different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. While some children start school with skills expected for their age, others have less well-developed skills, especially in reading and writing. Whatever their starting point, all pupils make good progress.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 are now above average. The results of the national screening check on phonics (the sounds letters make) for Year 1 pupils reflect this.
- Standards in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 have risen over the last two years. Overall, pupils left Year 6 last year with broadly average standards, though the proportion who reached the higher National Curriculum levels was above average.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in all classes. Occasionally pupils with very specific needs do not make as much progress as others. However, most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of well-planned support and regular checks on how well they are doing.
- Pupils who are supported by additional funding such as the pupil premium make good progress. This is because the money has been spent on learning programmes that are tailored to their specific needs and extra adults to provide individual teaching for these pupils. Their progress is checked every few weeks to make sure that the help and guidance are working well.
- Pupils who join late make good progress from their various starting points. The school quickly assesses their levels of attainment when they first arrive, and provides any extra help they may need to catch up with their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan lessons that engage pupils and work is usually matched closely to their ability levels. Mathematics and literacy classes include different year groups so that pupils are working with others of similar ability levels. Occasionally, however, a teacher may not identify quickly enough that some pupils in the group are finding the work too easy or too hard.
- Teachers fire pupils' love for learning. They ask stimulating questions and plan exciting activities. They check for understanding but also help pupils to develop their thinking further. For example, Year 6 pupils were challenged to 'convince' their teacher that their theory about a mathematical sequence was correct by describing their strategy and mathematical thinking. Pupils say that lessons are now much more exciting and value the opportunity for practical experiences, such as a visit to a local castle and the opportunity to make home-made sherbet.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are at risk of not making enough progress are well supported. Well-briefed additional adults in the classroom work with pupils in a sensitive and unobtrusive way. They are careful not to talk over teachers' instructions, and encourage independence so that pupils do not rely too much on their help.
- Marking in some books is good. It directs pupils to what they need to do to improve and the teacher gives them time to respond. However, this is not consistent across all classes and is

stronger in literacy than in mathematics, science and topic books.

- The teaching of phonics is good. The school's well-planned approach is followed consistently by all staff, and pupils say they enjoy these sessions. Those observed had a good pace so that all pupils were fully involved all the time and made rapid progress. Pupils of all ages show an enjoyment for reading that is evident in the way they talk about their books.
- Homework is set regularly and pupils are very enthusiastic about it. They say the homework is always linked to their work in the classroom, and they particularly enjoy the practical tasks they are given, such as building a model castle.
- In all lessons, teachers set pupils a good example of how to behave as mature and responsible people. They encourage pupils to be equally responsible, and to develop good social and moral skills and understanding. Pupils respond well and show consideration and respect for each other.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around school. Older pupils play with and look after younger ones on the playground, and they say they enjoy playing together. Pupils refer to the 'tough consequences' of any bad behaviour, and feel that these are fair and help everyone to behave well.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying means, and the different forms it can take. The school council has written a guide for pupils, and this is updated annually by each new council. They say that bullying has happened in the school in the past, but are adamant that this is now very rare and is always dealt with well by the staff.
- The 'Worry Box' is held in high regard by pupils of all ages. They say that they can put any concerns in there and they know that the headteacher will take them seriously and do what she can to sort them out. This helps them feel safe and valued in school.
- 'Play buddies' are very evident at lunch-time. They are pupils from various year groups who applied and were interviewed for their role. They currently support lunchtime supervision, but the school plans to train them to lead games on the playground.
- Pupils talk about how they are taught to keep themselves safe. Visits to the local fire station, road safety talks and lessons about how to stay safe when using the internet were spoken about enthusiastically during the inspection. Pupils recalled how a school disco effect set off a fire alarm and proudly explained how well they evacuated the school.
- Although the school is small, its pupils have a wide range of backgrounds and needs. The way all pupils are accepted and included in lessons and other activities is a credit to the school and its pupils. Pupils show a mature sensitivity and patience so that everyone feels they belong and are valued.
- The school's leaders and managers have worked closely with parents to improve attendance. Although below average for a number of years, it has improved and is currently above average. The school no longer authorises holidays in term time, which caused a large proportion of absences.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's drive and ambition for the school are evident in the impact her changes have had over the past two years. A whole-school approach to teaching literacy and mathematics with interesting projects and good teaching has resulted in rising standards and good progress for pupils.
- The headteacher regularly and thoroughly checks data on pupils' performance and observes lessons to see how well they are taught. The other senior staff have not yet had enough opportunity to fully develop their skills in analysing performance data or using observations of lessons to make precise judgements about the quality of teaching.
- Teachers' performance is checked against how much progress their pupils make and how well they fulfil their different roles in the school. Targets for teachers are used to measure whether promotion up the pay scale is justified by the results achieved.
- The way subjects are taught has become much more exciting and practical over recent years. For example, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage were excited about 'fishing' for numbers and where they could be hung on the number line, while pupils in Years 1 and 2 were fully engrossed in challenging their teacher's ideas of a fair test when investigating the effectiveness of soap. However, the school's leaders see that it could do more to regularly help pupils develop skills they can use in a range of different subjects and situations.
- The school is developing strong links with parents and the local community. For example, parents and the local 'Street Pride' group are building an outdoor willow classroom. Last year's Jubilee celebrations involved the oldest resident of the village opening the 'Jubilee Garden', which then won a regional garden competition.
- Good partnerships with other local schools mean that staff have the opportunity to share good practice and bring new ideas back to the school. Close working with the local pre-school means that starting school is not stressful for the children. These links are strengthened by sharing resources such as the Traveller van, which was booked during 'Traveller Week'.
- The local authority has supported the school well. It has provided guidance on the teaching of English and mathematics, checked how well the school understands its strengths and weaknesses, and supported working with other schools.
- The spiritual development of pupils is achieved through strong links with the local church and opportunities for pupils to take part in such celebrations as Remembrance Day at the local cenotaph and in school. Older pupils are given the chance to think deeply about such events as the holocaust and what impact this has had on our lives today.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and teachers plan opportunities for them to discuss moral issues and dilemmas. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used the dramatic representation of a 'conscience alley' to investigate the dilemma faced by a character in a story – whether to give up a magic cushion or a pet cat.
- Music is an enjoyable part of school life. During the inspection, pupils sang well and with enthusiasm. The school has rightly identified a need to give pupils plenty of opportunities to learn about and appreciate other cultures. This is achieved through singing and listening to music from other countries, participation in such activities as an annual area multicultural day and the celebration of 'Fenland Week', which looks at other cultures in the Fens.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors have a very clear understanding of the school’s strengths and where it needs to improve. They have good systems for checking how well the school is doing. They understand what progress data show about pupils’ performance, and how it compares to other similar schools nationally. Governors visit regularly to see for themselves, and their findings are then reported to the rest of the governing body. Minutes of meetings show that the governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher and are keen to ensure that her checking of the quality of teaching is accurate and linked to pay rises that reflect good performance. Governors manage the budget well and have a good understanding of how the pupil premium is spent and what difference this makes to pupils’ achievement. As there are a number of new governors on the governing body, arrangements have been made to ensure that they are quickly given the skills they need and are paired with more experienced governors when checking on school performance. All governors have recently been retrained on safeguarding and the governing body fulfils its statutory duties in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet the nationally required standard.

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	110644
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	401139

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Wahlandt
Headteacher	Sue Blyth
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2009
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