

# The Avenue Primary School

The Avenue, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough, TS7 0AG

**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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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.

- Pupils make good progress. Their attainment is above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is consistently good. It helps pupils enjoy learning and make rapid progress in reading. Outstanding teaching in Year 6 encourages pupils to become confident learners who take responsibility for their own work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good; they say they feel very safe. They play a large part in helping all pupils to play and behave well together. Attendance is above average.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is a strength.
- The headteacher has a clear view of what is good about the school and what needs to be improved further. He is well-supported by other school leaders and the governing body who make sure that everyone knows that high standards are expected.
- Procedures to check the quality of teaching are rigorous and accurate. As a result, teaching has improved and pupils make consistently good progress across school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school does not make enough use of information about progress to set work that is hard enough for all pupils and to form a full view of progress.
- Despite some exciting learning activities the curriculum does not give pupils enough chances to be creative and follow their interests. They do not have enough opportunities to use their writing and mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Marking and target-setting do not tell pupils clearly how to take the next steps in their learning. Pupils are not given time to act upon any advice that is given by their teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors had meetings with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books; and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in ten lessons taught by ten teachers and listened to a group of pupils read. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher conducted four joint observations of lessons with the inspectors. The inspectors also observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on their findings regarding the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in lessons.
- The inspectors took into account the 23 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Thirteen staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

## Inspection team

Gordon Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deborah Bailey

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well-below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well-below average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- There are many after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body.
- A Parent and Toddler group rents accommodation from the school. This is currently undergoing a change of management. It is subject to a separate inspection.
- The schools meet the current government floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2012.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding, thereby further raising attainment and the rates at which pupils make progress, by:
  - offering pupils more opportunities to develop their creativity, make decisions about their own learning and follow their own interests in activities that help them to see how learning in different subjects links together
  - offering more opportunities for pupils to improve their writing and mathematics skills by practising them in different subjects and in real-life problem-solving activities that have more than one solution
  - improving marking and target-setting so that pupils know clearly how to take the next steps in their learning and have time to act upon advice
  - using the school's information about how well pupils are working to set tasks which are hard enough for all pupils especially in writing
  - making better use of the school's information about how well pupils are working so that leaders can accurately measure pupils' progress in different classes and set targets for teachers and pupils to ensure even faster progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Most children start school with skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age. Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage so they start Year 1 with above average skills for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is typically above average, although too few pupils achieve the highest levels in writing.
- Leaders have acted decisively to remove weak teaching. Improvements in teaching across the school ensure that progress is good. Outstanding teaching in Year 6 makes sure that the minority make up learning in areas where they may have fallen behind.
- In 2012 pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were broadly average. This was as a result of a much larger proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. However, these pupils attained higher standards than similar pupils across the country and pupils with a statement of special educational needs made outstanding progress in mathematics. All pupils made good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium attain standards at the end of Year 2 that are in line with similar pupils across the country but below the attainment of all pupils. At the end of Year 6, they attain standards which are well above similar pupils across the country and in line with all pupils.
- Inspection evidence shows that progress in reading is good. This is a result of good teaching of how to link sounds and letters to help pupils read words they are not used to and a drive to help pupils enjoy books and read more in school and at home.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and, on occasion, outstanding. Teachers make lessons interesting and pupils learn quickly. Teachers ask questions which encourage pupils to explain their ideas and use their answers to reshape work during lessons.
- Outstanding teaching in Year 6 allowed pupils to use their own understanding of their homework to decide what they needed to do to improve their writing. They quickly became enthusiastic experts and made outstanding progress in writing about other people's lives.
- Teachers use exciting topics, allow pupils the chance to talk together to plan their ideas and give them the time to concentrate on developing their skills. Pupils in Year 5 were excited by the work they were doing on scaling and the way their teacher had linked this to their reading of Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, making scaled plans of Hagrid's house.
- Another clear strategy which has improved reading and is beginning to improve writing is to use stories to give pupils ideas for writing. For example, the reading of folk stories about trees in Year 3 was used to encourage pupils to write stories, leaflets and brochures using information technology. This also developed their skills in science and geography and their understanding of life in other countries.
- However, excellent approaches of this nature are not consistently used across the school and pupils do not do enough writing across a range of subjects. The curriculum also does not give enough opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematics skills in real-life, problem-solving activities that have more than one solution.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked and this marking helpfully tells pupils how successful they have been in their work. It is used less well to tell pupils how to improve their work and teachers give pupils too little time to act upon any advice they give. While pupils in Years 5 and 6 know the level of their work, in all classes pupils do not have clear targets which will help them take the next steps in their learning and reach the next level.
- While there are good examples of teachers making sure that work set is at the right level, they do not all use information about pupils' skills and abilities to plan work well enough to get the best out of all pupils, especially in writing.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are happy in school and enjoy their lessons because they are excited by their learning. As a result attendance is above average. They respect one another, work and play well together and are very polite to adults. They are very keen to talk about their school, show their work and their excellent dancing and singing. They are particularly proud of their school pond and wildlife area.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good in their lessons and any minor misbehaviour is quickly dealt with by their teachers. Indeed, much excellent behaviour was evident in lessons observed during the inspection as well as around the school.
- Inspectors analysed the school's records of behaviour which showed that behaviour is consistently good. This is as a result of the successful use of clear expectations. As a result, there have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils feel very safe and they are aware of different forms of bullying. They say that any form of bullying, including cyber-bullying, is rare and when it does happen they are confident that it will be quickly dealt with. They know that older pupils, as well as the teachers and other adults in school, will help with any problems.
- Playground buddies and the dance team help pupils play safely and enjoyably together and they develop social skills in the after-school clubs. Pupils say that the school council listens to their concerns and ideas. It was involved in the appointment of the new headteacher. It has agreed school rules with teachers and members talk to school leaders on safety issues that worry pupils.

**The leadership and management are good**

- In a short time, the headteacher has had a significant impact on improving the school. He has quickly gained a clear picture of its strengths and relative weaknesses, developed high expectations among all staff and strengthened staff teams.
- He has improved teaching through a rigorous approach to assessing its quality. With the deputy headteacher, he carries out regular observations of teachers, giving firm judgements and offering detailed and precise advice about how teachers can improve. This advice is clearly linked to training programmes which help teachers to become better.
- All leaders are clear about what needs to be done to make the school better and have well-developed skills in planning improvements and checking that they are successful. The school's self-evaluation is therefore accurate and offers clear and appropriate areas for development. There are clear procedures to help leaders who are new to their roles develop their skills quickly and effectively so they can be in charge of pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Funding has been used to improve the basic skills of those pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The gap between them and all pupils across the country has closed. This shows the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.
- At its best, the curriculum is inspiring. There is a growing understanding of how careful planning of interesting activities in Key Stage 1 helps pupils to make more rapid progress. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness, and to appreciate the natural world and the wonderful things, such as music, art and literature that humans have created. However, there are still too few opportunities across school which help pupils to see the links which can be made in learning in different subjects.
- Performance management is clearly focussed on raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching. Staff have only been rewarded when their pupils have done as well as they should have done. However, information about pupils' progress is not used well enough to provide leaders with a clear understanding of how much progress pupils are making in different classes. As a result, leaders do not set targets for teachers and pupils which are demanding enough to ensure pupils' progress becomes even more rapid.
- The local authority has provided successful support for the teaching of mathematics and English and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Such advice has helped to improve teaching and pupils' attainment and progress. Clear procedures to support the new headteacher have been well-

planned and highly effective.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has acted strongly to improve its skills and has introduced clear procedures to hold the school to account. Governors carry out routine assessments to check how the pupil premium funding is helping pupils to achieve better. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding. All staff have been vetted and are trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm. The governing body has rigorous procedures to plan and check the school budget and has given very clear consideration as whether or not the school should apply to become an academy. With both previous and current headteachers, they have taken decisive action to tackle weak teaching. As a result, there have been improvements in teaching, pupils' progress and leadership in recent years.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111595
<b>Local authority</b>	Middlesbrough
<b>Inspection number</b>	401191

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

<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>	194
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sylvia Pinyoun
<b>Headteacher</b>	Darren Gamble
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 318510
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 311616
<b>Email address</b>	theavenue@middlesbrough.gov.uk



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