

Athersley North Primary School

Lindhurst Road, Athersley North, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S71 3NB

Inspection dates 13–14 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The school pays extremely close attention to the needs of all its pupils and provides them with a high quality education. As a result, pupils of all ages and abilities make outstanding progress in their learning and achieve extremely well.
- A major success of the school is the confidence it gives pupils that, with regular attendance and hard work, they can and will succeed. This, along with the many skills pupils acquire during their time at the school, prepares them extremely well for the next stage in their education.
- Creative and high quality teaching makes learning fun and inspires pupils to do their absolute best. However, while pupils' work is marked regularly, teachers do not always make sufficiently clear what pupils have done well and how they can make it even better.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic learners with an extremely positive attitude to school. They welcome visitors with smiles and friendly greetings and take great pride in what they are able to achieve.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptionally well planned and provides children with an excellent start to school.
- Leaders and managers have an extremely clear vision of what the school is capable of and how to get it there. The drive for further improvement is relentless and generates a very rapid pace of development.
- Systems for checking and promoting the quality of teaching are extensive and highly effective. Rigorous evaluations of performance coupled with regular opportunities for staff training ensure the quality of teaching goes from strength to strength.
- Highly skilled senior staff regularly share their expertise with other schools, helping to raise standards and improve the quality of education for pupils in different parts of the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons of which two were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons and listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with pupils from Years 2 to 6, the vice chair of governors, a representative from the local authority and school staff with management responsibilities.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the 28 staff questionnaires and the views of parents they met informally, in planning the inspection.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records in relation to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Keith Bardon, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mark Randall	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Athersley North is a little larger than the average sized primary school.
- A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also well above average. These pupils experience a range of difficulties including learning, behaviour, emotional and social, and speech, language and communication.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A children's centre is based on the school site and is managed by the local authority. This will be inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers' marking by:
 - ensuring pupils receive the right amount of praise for what they have done well and clear guidance on how to make the work even better
 - encouraging pupils to check for themselves that they have made full use of the advice and guidance they have been given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children start school with skills and abilities that are typically well below those expected for their age. Many are not yet speaking clearly, have difficulty using simple equipment and lack experience of playing together. Lively and colourful activities, led skilfully by experienced and well trained staff generate high levels of interest and enthusiasm so that children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- This rapid rate of progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment matches national averages. The substantial gains pupils of all ages make in their knowledge, understanding and skills represent outstanding achievement.
- Although a minority of pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not yet read fluently, most pupils of this age read story books with confidence and understanding. All pupils, irrespective of their ability, use letters and sounds very well to help them identify unfamiliar words. For example, after correctly reading the word 'dough', one Year 2 pupil explained she was able to work it out because she knew the 'ou' letters made an 'o' sound.
- Older pupils build well on this secure start. Year 6 pupils recognise and know a wide range of words and apply effective methods to identify those that are new. Although lower-ability pupils do not always make full use of punctuation as they read, they are given very clear advice on how to improve and make quick progress.
- The content of pupils' written work improves at a fast pace and by Year 6 they are writing stories, factual accounts and persuasive argument of the quality expected for their age. The solid foundation for this achievement can be seen in the younger-age classes. For example, Year 2 pupils label a fire-fighter's uniform with flair, adding 'to keep your head safe' to the helmet and 'warm black' to the gloves, to provide detail for the reader.
- Year 6 pupils use well chosen strategies when working in mathematics. While calculating the difference a percentage reduction makes to an amount of money, pupils combined division and subtraction competently to arrive at accurate answers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught and supported extremely well. Very detailed planning to meet their individual needs coupled with rigorous and continuous monitoring of the outcomes ensures this group of pupils maintain an excellent rate of progress and achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make excellent progress in line with that of all pupils and their attainment is often above that of similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The highly effective teaching stimulates a very strong desire to learn by providing pupils with motivating lessons which engage and enthuse. In a lesson for Years 3 and 4, pupils were rehearsing a shadow-puppet play they, with help from the teacher, had written and produced themselves. English, science, music and design and technology combined cohesively to provide a highly enjoyable lesson from which pupils gained much.
- Using their detailed knowledge of each pupil's abilities, teachers plan tasks that enable each individual to get the most from the lesson. Work for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very closely matched to their targets.
- New work is introduced very thoroughly, often through lively discussion combined with carefully structured questions. As a result, pupils start tasks with a very clear understanding of what they have to do and what they are expected to achieve. This makes for highly productive lessons which move along at a good pace.

- Relationships in classrooms are excellent. It is rare for teachers to have to issue any reminders about behaviour and any minor problems are quickly and very effectively dealt with.
- The teaching in Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Exceptionally clear routines, very warm relationships and a vibrant and well resourced classroom ensure children settle easily at the start of each day and involve themselves quickly in the many well planned activities staff have prepared for them.
- While there are times when pupils' work is marked very well, this is not always the case. On occasion teachers write too much information for pupils to absorb. At other times what pupils need to work on next in order to improve their work is not precise enough and does not encourage them to check for themselves how well they are using the advice and guidance they have been given.
- The teaching of sounds and letter (phonics) is very effective and provides pupils with a very clear understanding of how letters blend together to make words. This helps to stimulate excellent progress in both reading and writing.
- Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. They have clear roles and responsibilities which they carry out with considerable skill. They are an integral part of the teaching team, working closely with class teachers to provide pupils with high quality support and guidance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Parents, pupils, staff and governors share the same, very positive, views of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are very happy in school and readily described the fun they have while learning. Parents value the extensive help, support and guidance their children receive and would have no hesitation in recommending the school to others.
 - Behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. The school has very clear procedures for managing pupils' behaviour which teachers follow closely. Pupils know what is expected of them and play their part to the full. Consequently, the school is calm and orderly, lessons progress smoothly and everyone enjoys the benefits of the school's warm and friendly atmosphere.
 - The manner in which pupils apply themselves to their work in lessons is excellent. Older pupils in particular show a great deal of maturity, often concentrating for long periods until tasks are successfully completed.
 - Pupils of all ages give considerable thought to the questions teachers put to them and listen very carefully when others are putting forward their ideas. They work extremely well together in pairs or small groups, discussing what they have to do very sensibly and helping each other over any difficulties.
 - The contribution pupils make to school is excellent. Playtime leaders organise games for others, Year 4 pupils act as reading buddies for younger ones and the school parliament has helped to improve playground facilities.
 - Pupils join in school activities very readily and thoroughly enjoy social events. Singing in harmony with their friends gave members of the school choir immense pleasure. The quality of singing was excellent and the experience did much to boost the self-esteem of all those participating.
- Pupils express little concern about bullying and have full confidence in staff to care for them and keep them safe. They show a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the computer, with pupils from Years 2, 3 and 4 breaking into a rap song to demonstrate this to an inspector.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides the school with extremely strong, visionary and purposeful leadership. Together they instil in all those who work at or are involved with the school a determination that there is nothing that the pupils cannot achieve if they are given the right opportunities. This has been central to the school's rapid pace of development and the considerable improvement in pupils' achievements.
- Frequent checks of the school's performance and of the progress pupils are making, by a wide range of staff, provide a highly detailed and comprehensive picture of what is working well and where the school needs to focus its efforts next.
- Management procedures are extremely well organised and function very effectively. Teachers are set sharp and clear performance targets which have to be met before a rise in salary can be considered.
- Leaders and managers go to considerable lengths to ensure the school is getting the very best from its staff. Responsibilities are allocated after very careful analysis of the skills of each individual member, and additional training made available to help them use their skills to the full.
- The mentoring of new staff, particularly those who have recently joined the profession, is very well organised and highly effective. This ensures they quickly adopt the school's well established routines and become an integral part of the close-knit staff team.
- Pupils benefit considerably from the highly creative and stimulating curriculum which links subjects together in meaningful ways. The outstanding provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes excellent personal development so that pupils grow into sociable, well balanced individuals with a strong sense of self-worth.
- The school has excellent links with parents and works closely with them to ensure pupils benefit fully from their education. Specialist staff, including the parental support advisor, use well recognised and very clear procedures to make and maintain contact with parents and to give them access to help and advice should they need.
- The attention paid to each individual pupil's learning and development is exemplary. This ensures that they all have the same high quality opportunities to learn and none are discriminated against.
- The local authority has supported the school well in its development and now provides appropriate light touch support to help it maintain a high level of effectiveness. It encourages senior staff to work with other schools in the authority so that as many teachers and pupils as possible can benefit from their extensive expertise.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well organised and plays a full and active part in the management of the school. The Chair and vice chair meet frequently with school leaders to check the school's progress and to identify further areas for development. Other governors work in a similar way with the curriculum teams and, together, they ensure the school is continually improving. The school's finances are managed very efficiently with the business manager keeping a close watch over all spending decisions. Governors are fully aware and supportive of the way the school uses pupil premium funding and check very carefully the effect it is having on pupils' progress. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are securely in place and that current requirements are comprehensively met.

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	131157
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	402447

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lodge
Headteacher	Margaret Newcombe
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2009
Telephone number	01226 288674
Fax number	01226 204633
Email address	athersleynorth.primary@barnsley.org

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

