

Atkinson Road Primary Academy

Atkinson Road, Newcastle, NE4 8XT

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- Atkinson Road Primary Academy is at the heart of the community. Parents and pupils are proud of their school. Parents say it is improving theirs and their children's lives.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and ensure that all pupils are inspired to learn through exciting lessons.
- From their very low starting points on entry to the school all groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those who have speech, language and communication difficulties achieve well.
- The school provides well for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. Where appropriate they are fully included in mainstream classes.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of exciting experiences, including after school clubs. It makes a positive contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school and their enjoyment of lessons. They behave well and treat adults and each other with courtesy and respect. They rightly believe that the school is a safe and secure environment.
- The headteacher and her leadership team have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further. Monitoring the quality of teaching and tracking pupils' progress are their top priorities. Staff and governors share their vision and ambition.
- Governors make sure that they are well informed and are prepared to challenge as well as support school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough teaching which is outstanding.
- Work planned for pupils is not always hard enough.
- Teachers do not always insist that the quality of pupils' work seen in their English books is reflected in pupils' writing in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons of which one was a joint observation carried out with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils from Year 1 to Year 6, two governors, including the Chair of Laidlaw Schools Trust, the academy sponsor, and a member of the Local Advisory Governors, and senior and middle leaders. Short discussions were held with pupils at break times and lunchtime.
- Discussions were also held with parents who brought their children to school to ascertain their views because the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were too few to be meaningful. Inspectors also analysed 42 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and took into account the work in pupils' books, the school's own data on pupils' current progress, the school's improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding were also considered.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Geoffrey Seagrove

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Alan Sergison

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Atkinson Road Primary Academy is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Atkinson Road Primary Academy converted to become an academy on 1 June 2012 as part of the Laidlaw Schools Trust. When its predecessor school, Atkinson Road Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The school has three resource centres. Two are funded by the local authority and offer provision for 16 pupils with speech and language difficulties and eight pupils with communication difficulties. The third centre offers provision for 10 pupils with moderate learning difficulties and is funded by the school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of families in the armed forces, is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that there is always sufficient challenge in the work provided in lessons so that more pupils make better than expected progress
 - ensuring teachers expect and encourage pupils to raise their standards in writing across all subjects to the level seen in their English books.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The overwhelming majority of children start school with skills that are very much lower than those typically expected for their age. They make good progress throughout the Reception classes because of good teaching and the exciting range of well-planned activities which take account of their individual needs. By the time they enter Year 1, their attainment has risen to below average.
- Attainment at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been consistently low for a number of years. This is largely due to the high number of pupils who join the school at other than the usual time, the majority of whom are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. However, recent changes to the way classes are organised and improvements in teaching have resulted in rapid and sustained improvements in pupils' progress and attainment at both key stages.
- Despite attainment remaining low by the end of Key Stage 1 in 2012 the gap between the school and the national average was dramatically reduced.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment was broadly average in English and mathematics. The rapid gains in pupils' learning resulted in levels of progress which were in the top 12% of schools nationally. Inspection evidence shows that progress is continuing to accelerate at a faster rate than that nationally and attainment is continuing to improve rapidly.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. The systematic teaching of linking letters and sounds is enabling younger pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with greater confidence. As pupils move through the school, they develop a love of reading.
- The provision, especially in speech and language in each of the resource centres, is well structured. The way adults use spoken language is good and, as a result, pupils make the same progress and reach levels of attainment similar to that of their classmates.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make progress similar to that of their classmates. Their progress is checked carefully, programmes of work are planned to help them improve and teachers and teaching assistants provide good support.
- The group of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make progress and attain standards similar to that of their classmates in English and mathematics. This is because they benefit from the careful and considered allocation of this funding to ensure their needs are met.

The quality of teaching is good

- A well thought-out programme of training and the addition of recently appointed teachers have brought new strengths that have improved the overall quality of teaching. As a result teaching is consistently good and an increasing proportion is now outstanding.
- Teachers use assessment information well in planning lessons and generally plan suitable activities that are at the right level of difficulty for all abilities. However, in some classes, pupils are not always offered hard enough work to further increase the rate at which they make progress. For example, there is too much focus by teachers on pupils completing tasks rather than concentrating on what is being learned.
- Teaching in the resourced centres is good because spoken language is modelled effectively and activities are appropriately matched to the needs of the pupils so that they achieve well.
- Rightly, the school places emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics. Pupils are given interesting opportunities to apply and develop their mathematical skills to imaginative real-life problem-solving activities and to engage in a range of purposeful writing activities across other subjects. However, teachers do not always insist that the quality of pupils' work seen in their English books is reflected in their writing in other subjects.

- Marking and feedback across the school are good. Pupils are informed of what they have done well, are clear about what they have to do to improve and have opportunities to respond to teachers' comments and to correct their errors.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work in excellent partnership. Teaching assistants provide effective support to ensure the needs are met for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those who join the school partway through their education and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides an exceptionally caring and supportive environment in which all pupils and their families are valued. Pupils and adults treat each other with respect and have a high regard for others' cultures and beliefs. This was exemplified by one pupil who said, 'We have friends joining us from other countries and other schools. Everyone is different but everyone is welcome.'
- Pupils with special educational needs, especially those accessing the resource centres, and new arrivals to the school, are fully integrated into lessons. They benefit from care and support plans that enable them to settle quickly, become part of the school community and make good progress in their learning.
- In lessons pupils behave well. They soak up learning, relishing the many opportunities to become involved in group and independent learning, answering challenging questions posed by teachers and offering their own views.
- Teachers manage behaviour extremely well and resolve issues swiftly and quietly. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils are carefully nurtured as individuals and those with behavioural difficulties learn how to regulate their own behaviour. They are aware of all the different forms of bullying and reflect on the impact of their actions on others. Consequently, incidents of bullying are rare.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they are worried about anything. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.
- The work of the counsellor has been pivotal in improving communication between home and school. She has worked tirelessly to help the most vulnerable parents resolve any difficulties which could adversely affect their child's performance at school.
- Attendance is average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides determined and uncompromising leadership. She is extremely well respected by staff, parents and pupils. Staff share her high expectations and clear vision of what the school is capable of. Hence there is a strong sense of team spirit.
- School leaders constantly check how well the school is doing. As a result they have an accurate view of the areas that need to improve, identify actions to resolve them and carry out regular reviews to ensure that improvements are secured quickly.
- The management of teachers' performance is linked closely to teaching and learning. It is well-thought through and carried out, enabling leaders and governors to promote the most effective teachers into positions that are enabling them to drive up the quality of teaching across the school.
- The leadership of the specially resourced provision is strong. The leader has developed excellent partnerships within the local authority and has a thorough understanding of the pupils in order to ensure their needs are well met.
- The curriculum is imaginative. It excites and motivates pupils, rightly stressing the importance of reading, writing and mathematics. The wide range of after-school and holiday activities in which

a high proportion of pupils take part contribute extremely well to pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.

- The school promotes and checks that all pupils have equal opportunities. For example, the income received by the school to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used well to provide additional support such as one-to-one or small-group work focusing on English and mathematics.
- The school receives good support from The Laidlaw Trust to improve, for example, the quality of teaching across the school and to moderate data on pupils' progress to ensure that they are accurate.
- The school fosters excellent relations with all members of the community. Bilingual staff engage effectively with parents who have limited skills in speaking English. Parents fully support the high aspirations the school sets for their children. This was exemplified by one parent who said, 'It's a school with a big heart. It's making a difference to the lives of children, families and the whole community.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors and trustees have a good understanding of their responsibilities. Through frequent formal and informal visits, they have become increasingly aware of the quality of teaching and how it relates to pupils' progress. They attend training to ensure that they have the knowledge to understand data and the skills to hold the headteacher to account for the school's performance. Governors keep a close eye on the allocation and impact of any spending, including the pupil-premium funding. Governors ensure that reviews of teachers' work are linked closely to the progress and attainment of their pupils, to the standards expected of teachers and to the pay scales that teachers are on. They ensure that statutory requirements are met and safeguarding has a high priority.

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	138212
Local authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	404654

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Fair
Headteacher	Andrea O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0191 273 0452
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