

Alkrington Primary School

Manor Road, Alkrington, Middleton, Manchester, M24 1JZ

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

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.

- Pupils' achievement is good. From their varying starting points they make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics, during their time in school.
- Effective help and guidance mean that all groups of pupils achieve well including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who are supported by pupil premium funding.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment and are keen to take part in all activities. Relationships in lessons are good.
- Staff, including non-teaching staff, work well together.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will react quickly to any problems they may have.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- The headteacher leads the school extremely effectively. Standards are rising and there is consistent improvement in the progress being made by pupils. Leadership has had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching.
- The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support for the school. Governors are fully involved in the continuous drive for improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good, not enough is outstanding as teachers do not have adequate opportunities to observe outstanding teaching and share best practice.
- Not enough pupils reach the highest levels because tasks are not always hard enough, particularly for the more-able pupils.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as in other subjects. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write in other subjects and, when they do, work is not marked well enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 lessons or parts of lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work and heard a number of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher and senior leaders, staff, groups of pupils, four members of the governing body and the school improvement officer.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress, and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors took into account 31 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and met informally with a number of parents. Inspectors also took into account responses to the school's own survey of parents' views. The views of staff and pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Christine Millett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Blackburne

Additional Inspector

Baljinder Khela

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alkrington is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is in line with the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been changes to the senior leadership team and governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - sharing the outstanding practice that already exists in the school
 - ensuring there is always an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects
 - improving the quality of marking in subjects other than mathematics and English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their individual starting points, pupils make progress that is at least in line with that expected for their age. An increasing number are now exceeding these levels and progress is accelerating. The school's own data show that levels of attainment across the school are also improving.
- Children start Nursery with skills and knowledge that are typical of those expected for their age, except in communication, language and literacy. However, they make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes so that by the time they start Year 1 they have started to catch up.
- School data show that pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. The results of the 2013 Year 1 national reading check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) are well above the national average. The improvements seen in the results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2012 have been maintained in 2013, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Reading is well taught and pupils develop an enjoyment of reading and love of books. By Year 6 pupils read fluently and with expression. They are able to work out unfamiliar words using a range of skills they have been taught lower down the school.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils make expected levels of progress in reading, writing and mathematics with some making better progress than is expected, particularly in mathematics. The results of the most recent national tests for Year 6 pupils show, not only a considerable improvement on recent years, but also that standards overall are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, too few pupils are reaching the highest standards.
- School data show that pupils in other year groups are achieving well. Work in pupils' books supports this. However, progress in writing tends to be slower than that in reading and mathematics and too few pupils are reaching the higher standards in this area. This is because opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects are limited.
- All groups of pupils do well whatever their ability because teachers plan learning activities carefully. Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium funding make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Teaching assistants are used successfully to provide support in small groups or for individual pupils. This makes certain that specific learning needs are met and equality of opportunity for all pupils is ensured. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is the same as that of other pupils in the school.
- Year 6 pupils say that they feel well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The quality of teaching is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good with some examples of outstanding teaching seen during the inspection. The impact of this is evident in the improving levels of achievement.
- Relationships in lessons are good and pupils show a willingness to learn.
- In the best lessons, teachers expect the most from pupils and ask them searching questions to test their understanding and get them thinking. This skilful questioning ensures pupils remain involved in lessons. The friendly atmosphere in classrooms means pupils feel confident to answer questions.
- Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' levels of ability because they make effective use of information about how well pupils have learned to help them plan lessons. However, the work set for higher-attaining pupils does not always include activities which fully challenge their thinking.
- Teachers know their subjects well. They plan activities that engage and motivate pupils. A good

example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils worked together in small groups to retell the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, in French.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes benefit from good teaching. Their classrooms and outdoor areas are well organised and include a stimulating range of activities.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. In mathematics and English they identify where mistakes have been made and give pupils the opportunity to respond to marking. However, the same good quality marking is not seen in other subjects. For example, opportunities to develop writing skills in subjects other than English are not being taken because pupils are given too few chances to write in other subjects and, when they do, work is not marked effectively and so pupils' learning does not benefit fully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in and around school is typically good. This view is supported by parents and staff.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They quickly follow advice given by staff.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are respectful of each other's views and, as a result, cooperate well with each other in group work and listen carefully to what each has to say. They are confident to share what they know and are keen to answer questions. They move from one activity to another quickly and without fuss.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take. They have confidence in staff to help them sort out any problems they may have quickly and fairly.
- Pupils say that behaviour in and around school, is good. They can explain in detail the systems that are in place to reward and reinforce good behaviour.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and look after themselves and others. They are aware of the potential dangers of the internet. They say that they learn about being safe in lessons, in assemblies and from visits from the emergency services. The school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an important influence upon their good behaviour.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take part in school life through, for example, being a member of the school council, a reading buddy or member of the eco-group. During Enterprise Week all classes take part in their own fundraising event for their chosen charity.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage begin to take on responsibilities by joining in with tidying up and giving out snacks.
- The importance of good attendance is emphasised strongly. As a result of constant checking, attendance has improved and is currently above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership for the school. He is extremely well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Together they lead an effective team of teachers, teaching assistants and support staff with the aim of providing the best education possible for all pupils.
- The local authority provides effective support and has helped the school improve the quality of teaching.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning in lessons are checked regularly by senior leaders, and teachers are held responsible for the improvement and success of their pupils. Staff are helped by the linking of their performance management targets to opportunities for further training to help them continue to develop their skills.
- The rigorous checking of the quality of teaching has led to improvements. However, not all teachers have had the opportunity to share or observe lessons where teaching could be outstanding.
- The school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of how well it is doing are effective and

feed into the school development plan. The school's leadership has shown that it is extremely capable of continuing to make improvements.

- The school provides an interesting and varied range of subjects which meets the needs of all pupils. 'Themed weeks' are very popular with pupils. Pupils benefit from many first-hand experiences provided by visitors to school or visits to local museums. This extensive range of experiences and subjects taught, alongside a wide variety of after-school clubs and links with a school in Africa, makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' work, reflecting the class topics, is attractively and prominently displayed throughout the school and in classrooms.
- The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Detailed systems for checking pupils' progress mean that any potential underachievement is quickly recognised and acted upon. For example, good use has been made of the pupil premium funding to support small group work and one-to-one work as well as additional equipment. This has ensured that eligible pupils make good progress during their time in school.
- The school enjoys good relationships with parents. They have many opportunities to be involved in school life at assemblies, concerts or meetings to discuss their children's progress. Newsletters and the school website keep them up to date with events.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is extremely well informed and members play an important part in school development. They have been effective in supporting the school and asking important questions about future developments. They are willing to take part in any additional training that will help them carry out their duties. Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement compared with pupils nationally. They use this knowledge to make decisions about staffing and to make sure that any underperformance is tackled. Governors make sure that finances are used in a way that supports pupils' learning effectively. For example, they know how the pupil premium funding is spent and how well the eligible pupils are doing as a result. They ensure that statutory duties are met and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements.

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	105786
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	400052

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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Chadwick
Headteacher	Tim Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2011
Telephone number	0161 6436357
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Email address	office@alkrington.rochdale.sch.uk

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