

Alder Coppice Primary School

Northway, Sedgley, Dudley, DY3 3PS

Inspection dates 3–4 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 are above the national average and improving year-on-year.
- The vast majority of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium, achieve well. This is as a result of teachers' high expectations of their work and behaviour.
- Teaching is typically good, fostering good attitudes to learning and an enthusiastic curiosity. There is an increasing proportion of outstanding aspects of teaching.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides stimulating and exciting learning experiences for children, ensuring that they make good progress.
- Leaders and managers have secured improvements in the quality of teaching through close checks on pupils' progress and training for teachers that meets their individual needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils understand the link between good behaviour and achievement and they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is good.
- Pupils feel very safe in this friendly school. They learn about and are respectful of different cultures and beliefs.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the work that teachers ask children to do in subjects other than English and mathematics is not challenging enough.
- Teachers do not always give pupils feedback that is precise enough to help them to improve their work and they do not always check that their advice is followed.
- Leaders and managers do not record all incidents of poor behaviour in a central record.
- Leaders do not evaluate the impact of the support they give to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs well enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons and to learning areas in the course of their observations of pupils' behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the 116 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, governors, senior and subject leaders, and teaching staff.
- The information from 21 staff questionnaires was taken into consideration.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, and looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data, self-evaluation and monitoring of how well pupils are doing. They also checked planning documents, records of checks on the quality of teaching, and records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding to support pupils eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or with a parent in the armed services) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 6 by ensuring that all teachers consistently:
 - provide the same high level of challenge in the topic work that they ask children to do as they do in mathematics and English
 - give pupils feedback on the work they do that tells them precisely how to improve it and then check that their advice is followed.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - all incidents of poor behaviour are systematically recorded in a central log so that patterns can be analysed
 - the impact of planned interventions for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is thoroughly assessed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children achieve well throughout the school. This is as a result of good teaching, and teachers' high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.
- In 2013, the standards reached by pupils leaving Year 6 were above the national average in all subjects showing a trend of improvement over a three-year period. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 was well above the national average in all subjects.
- Children enter Reception with the expected skills and knowledge for their age. They make good progress as a result of high-quality provision in their indoor and outdoor learning and high levels of challenge for all children, including the most able. Their learning is enriched by opportunities for cultural and scientific visits and, by memorable activities, such as counting live chicks.
- Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1 and develop their skills in reading and writing rapidly through brisk teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and plenty of opportunities to practise their writing in other subjects.
- Pupils who read to inspectors were able to break down and read unfamiliar words as well as describe different styles of writing and name different authors. In the national check on pupils' phonics skills in 2013 a higher proportion than do so nationally reached the expected standard.
- The proportions of pupils making expected progress in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 improved to be above average in 2013. The proportion making expected progress in reading fell in 2013 but remained above average. The proportions of pupils making more than the expected progress was below average in reading and writing but current progress tracking information and the work in pupils' books confirms that Year 6 pupils are on track to make better progress this year.
- In 2013, pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium made good progress in all subjects and there was no difference in their attainment and that of their classmates. Across the school, this is also the general picture although their progress is less rapid than other pupils in reading in Year 3.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers in most year groups but some slower progress is evident where the support for pupils is not thoroughly assessed. This means some pupils are not given exactly the support they need or challenged as much as they could be.
- The most able pupils also make good progress in all year groups. This is due to the high expectations of the Key Stage 2 teachers and the competitive atmosphere of achievement which all pupils are encouraged to embrace.

The quality of teaching is good

- The combination of high expectations and strong relationships are at the heart of teaching at Alder Coppice. Pupils respond very well to teachers' instructions and work hard on all the tasks they are given. Pupils are left in no doubt about the quality of work that is expected and excellent questioning means that teachers know what pupils understand and that they push

them to extend their thinking.

- The meetings held between school leaders, teachers and teaching assistants to review pupils' progress mean that teachers have a very clear view of what each of their pupils needs to do to reach their targets. As a result, teachers plan effective lessons that make sure pupils nearly always make good or better progress over time.
- In a Year 1 English lesson, pupils made very rapid progress in developing complex vocabulary in their writing because the teacher's expectations were so high. The teacher had given them the information they needed to include all the required features in their writing and given more extensive and complex features to the more able. Pupils are trained to give constructive and helpful feedback to one another in Year 1 classes and they then use these skills to help one another succeed.
- The high levels of challenge and brisk pace of lessons are appreciated by pupils who really enjoy their learning. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils told the inspector that they loved mathematics and that it was the best subject. The work they were doing on choosing the right technique for different division tasks was very demanding and well matched to the different abilities in the group and allowed them to apply their skills with enthusiasm and fun.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and sometimes outstanding. Clear themes give children direction and ensure that they play with purpose and are keen to take part in all the activities that are available, both inside and outside.
- The teaching of writing is good across the school. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their writing skills in different subjects. This is particularly successful in Year 2 where topic work shows clear progress in writing skills. However, sometimes the level of challenge in topic work is not as high as it is in English or mathematics and pupils spend too much time colouring or undertaking tasks that do not stretch them.
- The support provided by teaching assistants is generally of a high quality. They know the pupils very well and ask questions that challenge pupils rather than giving too much help. This is the case with the most able pupils as well as those requiring additional help.
- The quality of teachers' marking is usually good. They use a school-wide system of 'green for growth' and 'tickled pink' where teachers write about how pupils can improve their work in green pen and what they have done well in pink pen. In many cases, this is very effective in helping pupils to understand the specific steps to take to improve their work but it is not done consistently in all classes.
- Pupils appreciate the comments made about their work and try to follow the advice they are given but not all teachers follow-up their comments to make sure that their good advice is taken on board.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View and all the parents who wrote to or spoke to inspectors were highly positive about the behaviour of pupils at the school. Pupils have excellent manners and are extremely warm and welcoming. In lessons, pupils show very good attitudes to learning; they are attentive and work well with each other.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are excited and curious about their learning and enjoy working and playing with their friends. Pupils' attendance is above average and they are punctual to lessons and change sets quickly and quietly for different subjects.
- Pupils are calm and orderly as they move around the school. Their behaviour in assemblies is impeccable and they listen respectfully and all take part in the activities with enthusiasm. Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They look very smart, and made a fantastic sight in their very orderly procession to the church for the Easter service. They make every effort to ensure the work in their books is neat and tidy and always have everything they need for lessons. Their work forms vibrant displays around the school.
- Pupils are keen to have a say in what happens at school and get involved in the school council and the 'Learning Forum'. This group meets regularly to discuss all aspects of learning such as the new marking policy.
- Pupils, teachers, parents and senior staff are all confident that incidents of poor behaviour are rare and that the 'Respect and Responsibilities' ethos has a positive impact on the behaviour in the school. Some low-level disruption was seen in a very small number of lessons where the teaching did not fully engage and motivate all pupils. The school does not keep a central record of behaviour incidents.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Consequently, pupils' knowledge about how to keep themselves and others safe is excellent. All pupils say that bullying rarely, if ever, happens. Older pupils have an exceptionally well-developed understanding of the different forms of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying.
- Pupils feel very safe in the school not only because of the very good physical security but also because of the ready availability of the headteacher and other senior staff and the good relationships with staff which ensure they always have someone they can talk to if they have a problem.
- The curriculum makes a very strong contribution to pupils' safety. Pupils can recall lessons on road safety, 'stranger danger' and fire safety. They have an extremely well developed understanding of the dangers of cyber bullying and can outline what to do if they feel uncomfortable while online.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear vision for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. This is built upon an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses which is derived from effective checking of its work and wide consultations with the community, pupils, staff and parents.
- The senior leadership of the school is continually evolving to meet the challenges of improvement. Leaders have developed expertise in using data and checks on the quality of teaching and learning that enable them to hold other leaders and teachers to account for the performance of pupils.
- The senior team, together with governors, are successfully promoting a culture of learning in the school that sees all staff talking about how learning can be accelerated and the techniques and practices that best make this happen. Pupils benefit from the fact that their teachers reflect on,

and discuss, what works best in the classroom.

- The formal appraisal process sets challenging annual targets for teachers which closely link the progress of pupils to teachers' pay. Targets are rigorous and a range of approaches are used to check progress and to support teachers in reaching them.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Assessment information is highly detailed and carefully analysed, transition arrangements are well organised and parents are well informed about their children's progress.
- The leadership of the provision for disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is currently under review. Support staff are generally well deployed but the effectiveness of the interventions they lead are not assessed well enough.
- The pupil premium is spent prudently, including through paying for additional teaching groups in Years 5 and 6 and a senior teaching assistant to fill any gaps in learning. This helps eligible pupils apply their skills in different subjects.
- Primary sports funding is being used to buy in specialist teaching and to bring in associate teachers with expertise in physical education. These additional staff work with teachers, subject and phase leaders to develop their coaching skills and provide additional extra-curricular sports which are increasing participation rates and improving pupils' health and well-being.
- The school's curriculum includes an increasing amount of pupil choice in the topics they study and the questions they want answered in their learning. Senior leaders ensure that the range of activities provide good opportunities to develop the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics in other subjects while also promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Topics like 'World of Difference' in Year 4 explore other communities and give pupils the chance to find out about people from very different backgrounds. These topics also help to tackle discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.
- The school receives good support from the local authority in the form of a commissioned local headteacher who helps the school to evaluate its own performance and challenges leaders on performance and improvement planning. This has also led to productive partnerships with other schools. The school also uses the services of an external school improvement partner who knows the school well and provides objective challenge.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school has been the subject of a number of changes of leadership in recent years but the core of governors currently in post provide good levels of challenge and bring a range of skills to their roles for the benefit of the pupils. They have a detailed understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupil performance, including those eligible for the pupil premium. They know that teachers' salary and targets are linked to pupils' progress.
 - The governing body understands its role and is well informed about the school's progress towards its priorities through visits to school and by some members helping in the classroom on a day-to-day basis.
 - Governors are well placed to challenge leaders to accelerate pupils' progress because they closely analyse data and understand how well different groups of pupils are doing. They understand the impact that primary sports funding is having on staff expertise and pupils' health and well-being. Governors ensure that current safeguarding requirements are 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	103869
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	444073

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair (Acting)	Nigel Ford
Headteacher	Peter Mandelstam
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2010
Telephone number	01384 816610
Fax number	01384 816611
Email address	smillward@alder.dudley.sch.uk

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 2014

