

# Alvanley Primary School

Manley Road, Alvanley, Cheshire, WA6 9DD

**Inspection dates** 16–17 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders and governing body has secured good achievement for all pupils over several years.
- The subjects taught and the numerous opportunities for visits give pupils a window on the world and broaden their horizons so that they are extremely well prepared for the future and for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are curious, interested, self-motivated and enthusiastic about school and learning.
- Parents are unanimous that their children are happy and safe.
- Teaching is consistently good, with some that is outstanding. Pupils enjoy their learning because teachers plan interesting activities for them.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years class.
- Pupils learn to read successfully and make excellent progress.
- All pupils achieve well regardless of their abilities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are exceptionally well cared for and make excellent progress.
- The federation of two village schools benefits both communities.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Progress in mathematics is good, but it is not yet as strong as it is in reading and writing.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the rules of punctuation but their spelling is weaker.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited nine lessons taught by four teachers. She observed sessions where pupils were practising letters and sounds led by both teachers and teaching assistants. The inspector listened to pupils from Years 2 and 6 reading.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, members of staff, pupils and members of the governing body. She had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress, arrangements for safeguarding, the work in pupils' books and arrangements relating to pay and performance.
- The inspector gained the views of parents from the 22 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, from letters sent to the inspection team and from talking to parents at the start and end of the school day.
- The views of staff were gained from meetings and from a scrutiny of the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Since 2006, Alvanley has been federated with Manley Village School, a similar-sized school about a mile away. The schools have the same headteacher and the same governing body.
- Pupils from Reception to Year 6 are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are from White British heritage, with only a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Currently no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs (previously supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs) is high, at twice the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- In 2013 the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
  - pupils have more chance to practise problem-solving skills in mathematics and improve their confidence in mathematics
  - pupils' standards in spelling are raised.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The success of the school stems from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. She realises her aim of ensuring that every child makes good or better progress, is known and supported individually and is happy and fulfilled at school.
- In this small school, all staff take on leadership roles. Together they make an impressive team. Collectively they have provided a rich curriculum so that exciting learning pervades all classes. Middle leaders across the federated schools have been empowered to innovate, lead change and ensure the curriculum constantly evolves. No opportunity is lost to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are residential trips for every year group so that pupils become experts in finding out about their own culture and that of others. Recent visits have included York Minster, Roman Chester, the World Museum in Liverpool, Chatsworth and Quarry Bank Mill.
- The school sets a high priority in making sure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education and for life in modern Britain. Pupils feel relaxed and confident about moving to much bigger high schools when the time comes. They take a keen interest in local and national events; for example, in 'Thought for the week', they were discussing the voting taking place in Scotland, the value of democracy and what it means to have a voice in society.
- Rigorous checking of learning and pupils' progress ensures that all pupils make at least good progress and for some, progress is outstanding.
- The special needs coordinator ensures that the high proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are enabled to make the best possible progress. She maintains an ongoing dialogue with teachers, teaching assistants and parents as well as the children themselves. Some of these pupils make exceptional progress because of the encouragement, quality teaching and care that they receive.
- Self-evaluation is excellent. The headteacher, staff and governors know their strengths and areas where there can be improvement.
- The school has invested the sports grant in creative ways so that pupils have had the opportunity to try out sports new to them such as judo, fencing, badminton and visits to forest schools for younger pupils. As a result, some pupils have joined local sports clubs and encouraged their families to join with them. There are now many tournaments and competitions with other local schools, because together they have appointed a sports coordinator.
- Parents who wrote to the inspection team were generous in their praise of the commitment of the staff and the ways in which their children have been helped to succeed. Those who spoke to the inspector at the school gates were equally positive. One comment was that the school is 'exceptional' in the care it takes of every pupil.
- Disadvantaged pupils make as good progress as others because they have a 'pupil premium champion' and each child has a specific plan to ensure they are successful.
- School leaders have the full confidence of the local authority because of their proven track record of strength over several years.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well aware of their responsibilities and discharge them well. They share the vision for the two schools; they give unstintingly of their time to see for themselves what is happening and how it is improving the education of the pupils in their care. They know about the quality of teaching and the new curriculum and how well pupils are doing in all classes. They recognise that in very small schools, data comparing this school with others is less valuable than checking on the progress of every individual child. Governors ensure that salary progression is closely linked to proved good performance in the classroom and across the federated schools. They check on the progress of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They are rightly proud of the ethos of the school, which is such that good teaching and achievement can flourish and behaviour is excellent. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Governors comment that although theirs is the statutory responsibility, everyone in school is responsible for making sure children are safe and well looked after. Governors ensure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to be successful.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils work in a very calm but exciting environment where they

feel safe and valued. Their achievements are constantly celebrated and pupils are rarely discouraged if they make a mistake. Their positive attitudes to learning are a key factor in the good and sometimes excellent progress that they make. Pupils take great pride in the presentation of their work and are always keen to improve it.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Unkind behaviour is very rare. Pupils' good manners are evident everywhere. Older pupils enjoy working as buddies with younger ones and there is a warm family atmosphere within the school. Name calling is rare. Pupils are adamant that there is no racist or homophobic name calling and that, if it occurred, adults would deal with instantly. Musicians who gave a performance of string music to the whole school during the inspection commented in the visitors' book that they were impressed by the wholehearted enthusiasm of their audience and their good manners.
- Pupils are kind, patient and considerate in working with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Everyone is able to join in every activity so that there is a great team spirit among pupils.
- Pupils' excellent attendance shows how much they enjoy and appreciate school.
- Pupils are proud of the contribution they make to the life of the school and the wider village community. They enjoy working with pupils from the federated school when they join up for residential visits or trips. They say that the only rivalry with their fellow school is on the football field. They enjoy celebrating the main Christian festival at the village church but also learn about other faiths through religious education and visits to mosques or other places of worship.
- Older pupils feel well prepared for high school because they visit the schools, already know the different headteachers and have even met the community police officers in these schools. Pupils are confident that they will thrive because past pupils come back to visit and talk about the opportunities they will enjoy at their next school.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching over the last few years has never been less than good and is sometimes outstanding. This is evident from talking to pupils and parents and from looking at the work in pupils' books.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are working at the right level for their abilities. Every pupil is challenged to do their best work. Pupils are developing good skills in using the internet as well as books for their research. This was evident in a science lesson where the class were successfully investigating night and day, time zones and the movement of the planets.
- Marking is excellent because it is detailed and comprehensive. It provides plenty of praise for what has been done well and advice on how pupils can improve or reach the next level. Basic errors are corrected and all pupils know their targets.
- Teachers follow up pupils' interests and so make work even more interesting for them. For example, the World Cup last summer led to some fascinating research into the countries of the world, the need to preserve rainforests and goal analysis graphs. Closer to home, when the gardener discovered a live mole in the school gardens, every class came out to look and learn more about our native wildlife. By common consent, they named the mole Adrian. Teachers developed this unexpected event into a 'thought for the day' – take care of the earth, it has treasures you hardly ever get to see.
- Teachers organise many special events in school that make learning lively and interesting. For example, investigations as to why it is hotter at the equator, making pumpkin soup for bonfire night, workshops on birds, insects and fossils and 'mad science' days.
- Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They work closely with class teachers and the special needs coordinator to make sure that pupils in their care make the best possible progress, even when that progress is measured in very small steps.
- A focus on writing last year resulted in faster progress across the school for most pupils. Pupils were challenged to write in different styles, from factual reports to fantasy stories and debates such as 'How wrong was Goldilocks?' and 'Has the time come to ban cars from the centre of towns and cities?' Teachers are aware that they need to put the same focus on mathematics this year where progress, although good, is not quite as strong. Although writing has improved considerably, for example in the quality of the pupils' expression and in their good use of punctuation, spelling has not.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- Pupils have achieved well over time and continue to do so. Year groups are very small in this school, often less than ten pupils, and so statistical data are less helpful in judging achievement. Standards can appear to be very high or very low but good progress is always evident.
- In the last published results in 2013, Key Stage 1 pupils achieved above-average standards in reading and average standards in writing and mathematics. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 6 made consistently good progress so that the proportions gaining the expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics and the higher Level 5 were above average. Over time, standards have risen at the end of Key Stage 2. Boys achieved especially well in 2013 but this is not always the case and does not represent a pattern.
- Pupils achieved less well in the spelling, punctuation and grammar tests. Teachers have analysed their work and recognise that it was spelling which caused the standard to be just below average.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is small. The school uses the pupil premium funding to support progress in reading, writing and mathematics very effectively so that there is no gap between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and those of others in the school or with the standards reached nationally by all pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. This is because of the exceptional care taken to make sure that every pupil has the right level of support.
- High-ability pupils are enabled to make good progress and reach above-average standards because of the focus on every individual pupil.
- Listening to pupils read, looking at the work in their books and observing their progress in lessons confirm that pupils are making good progress across the school in all classes. Currently progress is faster in reading and writing than in mathematics.

**The early years provision is good**

- Most children start school with skills a little below what is typical for their age and, for many children, the Reception class is their first experience of school. Good progress is evident and most make the progress expected of them, with some achieving a good level of development over the year. Children receive the appropriate level of support to help them make good progress in literacy and mathematics whatever their level of work. A focus on early writing in 2013/14 has enhanced the opportunities for children to practise writing on a daily basis. A good focus on counting and early problem solving is helping children to make good progress in mathematics.
- At the time of the inspection, Reception children were attending school only for the morning session. Very good induction procedures have helped them to settle quickly. The atmosphere for learning, both indoors and out, is extremely positive. Teachers and teaching assistants have already begun to assess the progress and needs of all the children in the group.
- Children enjoy working and playing together and have quickly settled into school routine. For example, a group were running a puppet theatre outdoors, with a 'showman' sitting at the till and charging an entrance fee, while others were developing a story for the puppets to act.
- The progress of children is tracked carefully from the start and the school rightly prides itself on recognising quickly any children who may need extra help and children with high ability who need extra challenge.
- Children thrive in the stimulating atmosphere both indoors and out. The school fosters spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across all sessions. Visits such as that to a forest school or to a Literacy and Dance festival based on the theme of 'Food, Glorious Food' help children to appreciate the wider world. Personal development is equally valued and, during the inspection, the children were learning about the importance of helping each other.
- The Reception children are taught with those in Year 1. Teachers plan lessons which enable both year groups to make good progress and work at the right level. The children also enjoy working with their older buddies in Year 6.

## 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>	111003
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire West and Chester
<b>Inspection number</b>	448178

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Wilde
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kate Walker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244 981211
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	admin@alvanley.cheshire.sch.uk



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