

Atherton St George's Church of England Primary School

Derby Street, Atherton, Manchester, Lancashire, M46 0HJ

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| 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.

- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is constantly driving forward new initiatives to impact on pupils' progress. She is supported by a very able deputy headteacher, senior and middle leaders.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding.
- Governors challenge senior leaders well to achieve the very best for pupils.
- The pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are proud of their unique school's Christian values of respect, faith, integrity, humour and shine. They are taught to respect other cultures and faiths and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The pupils feel very safe in this nurturing environment. All aspects of safety are a high priority.
- The nurture provision is used to great effect to support pupils and families.
- The quality of teaching overtime across the school is good. Lessons are often well planned and build on pupils' prior learning. Systems to assess pupils' progress are developing well. Pupils believe the lessons, trips and visitors to the school provide exciting learning opportunities.
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress as they move up the school. In 2014, many pupils made more than the progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in Year 6.
- Children get off to a very good start in the Reception class. The provision is well organised and children thrive in a calm and orderly learning environment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is not as fast in Key Stage 1 as it is in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing.
- Sometimes teachers' marking does not always give pupils a clear idea about how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are not always effective in moving pupils' learning on.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in many lessons. Two observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and listened to groups of pupils read in Years 1 and 2. Inspectors observed support for pupils who have special educational needs. Inspectors looked very carefully at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teachers and support staff, two groups of pupils, including the school council. Inspectors interviewed members of the governing body and spoke to a representative from the local authority. Documentation about the school's use of alternative provision was also considered.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation summary and development plan; policies and procedures for safeguarding; information about attendance and behaviour; records of monitoring teaching and learning; information about pupils' achievement and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at recent summaries of school questionnaires sent out to parents and pupils. They took into account 10 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Jean Tarry, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Adrian Martin | Additional Inspector |
| Alan Parkinson | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Atherton St George's Church of England School is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and therefore supported through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is higher than average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus is higher than the national average.
- The on-site nursery and pre-school had a separate no notice inspection at the same time as this school inspection.
- The school uses specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs and behavioural difficulties. The alternative provision is at The Phoenix Centre in Wigan.
- The headteacher is a local leader in education and she currently provides support for a local primary school. She also works very closely with the local authority to help and support other schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast club each day.
- The school's Reception class provides full time early years provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1, particularly in writing by:
 - ensuring that the tasks given to the pupils is always pitched at the correct level of difficulty to suit the varying needs of pupils
 - raising expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving.
- Raise the quality of teaching across the school so that is it consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that all the marking of pupils' work gives them a very clear idea about how to improve their work
 - ensuring that teaching assistants have the necessary skills and information to fully support pupils in their learning and are totally clear about what pupils have to learn next.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership. Her drive and ambition to constantly provide a high quality of education for all pupils are outstanding. She is ably supported by a very able deputy headteacher. The senior leadership team continually share ideas and look for ways to improve the school's work. The school is very well placed to maintain and improve on the higher standards reached at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2014. Leaders know that pupils' progress is still not as fast in Key Stage 1 as it is in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, and are addressing this effectively.
- The checks made on what works well and what requires some attention are thorough and timely. Plans to make improvements are discussed regularly at senior leadership meetings. The checks made on pupils' progress are exemplary and effective. These have helped to raise attainment, particularly at Key Stage 2 and ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.
- The quality of teaching is checked rigorously and, as a result, has improved throughout the school. Senior leaders look carefully at the plans for lessons, the lessons taught and the pupils' progress in their work. Any weaker aspects are tackled with mainly in-house training and support, which is mostly effective. As a result, teaching is now improving quickly in Key Stage 1. The management of teachers' performance through setting targets linked to pupils' performance is excellent and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management at all levels are effective. There is much that enriches the curriculum and senior leaders strive to ensure it is as exciting and interesting as possible. Pupils experience trips to rugby finals in Wigan, war graves in Belgium, and aspirational trips to Cambridge University. There are a whole host of activities in which pupils can be involved, such as residential trips, music tuition, foreign languages, different sports taught by qualified coaches and themed weeks, such as anti-bullying week. There are also good systems in place for leaders and managers to monitor the progress, behaviour and attendance of pupils who attend the alternative provision.
- How the school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a huge strength of the school. Pupils are taught to be reflective in assemblies, to use resilience with their reading tasks and reasoning in their mathematical development. The pupils are taught to read, reflect and respond to their work to address any mistakes.
- The primary physical education and sports funding is being used effectively and has made a significant impact with staff working alongside highly qualified sports coaches to improve their own skills, extra sports clubs being provided and more involvement in competitions and sports festivals.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted exceptionally well and leaders and managers are committed to tackling discrimination of any kind. Leaders ensure that very positive relationships are established, particularly with hard to reach parents. The headteacher insists that all parents attend parents' evening and they do.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding are fully in place and there is no cause for concern.
- The local authority holds the school in very high regard and has used this school as an example of exemplary practice in some aspects of the school's work. The school is involved in supporting other schools. The headteacher at present works closely with a local primary school supporting leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school very well and uses information about pupils' progress astutely to compare the school's effectiveness with that of other schools locally and nationally. Governors provide excellent support and challenge in a relentless quest for further improvement. They know how good the quality of teaching is and what needs to be done to improve it even further. Governors know the importance of performance management and its link to pay progression. Governors ensure that the pupil premium is used appropriately. The governing body checks on the impact that funding has on pupils' progress in all subjects and has made a significant impact on the improvements made in many areas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' attitudes to their work are exemplary and this makes a positive contribution to their excellent progress higher up the school. They have a very good sense of what is acceptable behaviour and pride themselves on knowing what is not.
- In classrooms and on the playground, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils in Year 6 develop a sense of responsibility as they organise games for the younger pupils at lunchtime. Play leaders and buddies act as very good role models for the younger pupils. The adults are excellent role models for the pupils to follow, particularly with their own good manners and attitudes.
- The schools' values are very dear to pupils' hearts and the song connected with this will stay with them forever. When asked what was special about the school, a typical comment was 'Every child shines throughout our school'.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The safeguarding requirements are met.
- Pupils recognise the difference between bullying and falling out. They report that instances of bullying are rare and when they do happen they are confident the adults will help and any issues will be resolved.
- Pupils know how to ask for help and some work closely with the learning mentors and pastoral support staff. This work is extremely effective because pupils know what they have to do to succeed.
- Any attendance issues are addressed very quickly. Attendance is average and is rising. The school has impressed effectively upon parents the importance of their children attending school regularly.
- The breakfast club is very well attended and ensures pupils get off to a really good start at the beginning of the day.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of the quality of the teaching overtime is good. Some teaching is outstanding because the activities given to pupils very clearly builds on what they already know and can do and meets pupils' varying needs exceptionally well.
- Teaching is improving strongly in Key Stage 1 but occasionally, work is not always pitched at the correct level of difficulty to suit the varying needs of pupils. Work is too sometimes easy or too hard as a result, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers check on pupils' learning well during lessons and use questions effectively and expectations are high in Key Stage 2. For example, pupils in Year 6 were working on converting fractions to decimals. The teacher expertly moved pupils on when they needed to be challenged further ensuring their rapid progress. Expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving however are still not always consistently high in Key Stage 1.
- In literacy lessons, well thought-out tasks are usually provided for pupils to complete and this ensures their rapid progress. Marking is often exemplary and pupils know exactly what to do to improve their work next time. However, this is not always the case across the school. Sometimes pupils are not sure how to improve their writing, particularly lower down the school.
- The rigorous teaching of the linking of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) has had a positive impact on reading across the school. School data and inspection evidence confirms this. Parents appreciate the workshops provided to help them support their children with their reading at home.
- Not all teaching assistants have been sufficiently well trained to have the necessary skills to fully support pupils in English and mathematics. They are also not always kept sufficiently informed of what pupils are expected to learn and so pupils' progress falters at times. This is especially so in Key Stage 1.
- Classrooms are bright and very well organised. The displays in the classrooms provide very useful prompts to help pupils remember key information and celebrate examples of pupils' good work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils now make good progress from starting points when they join in the early years that are mostly below those typical and often significantly so, to reach average standards at the end of Key Stage 2.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, in the past, pupils have reached an overall standard that is below average but

due to strong improvements in teaching this picture is now improving quickly. Even so, expectations of what pupils in this key stage are capable of achieving are still not always high enough. Sometimes pupils are given tasks that are either too hard or too easy for them.

- Standards reached in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 have improved rapidly. This improvement has been especially rapid since September 2013. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that this improving trend is continuing in the current years groups in Key Stage 2.
- A high proportion of pupils reached the expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014. A growing proportion also made more progress than expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils are now reaching the higher Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2, showing that their needs are being well met. Teachers plan work that provides opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or to work at tasks that challenge them to the full. However, too few reach the higher levels in Key Stage 1; this is because there are lower expectations of what pupils can achieve at this key stage.
- In Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in spelling, grammar and punctuation was about one term behind non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and two terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. In Reading there was no gap in attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged in the school but pupils were about two terms behind pupils nationally. In writing, disadvantaged pupils were about one term behind in non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and also nationally and in mathematics were two terms behind those in school and three terms behind those nationally. School data and inspection evidence shows that in 2014 all the previous gaps have now closed as a result of rigorous tracking and good or better teaching.
- The pupils who have a special educational need make good progress and achieve well because of the highly effective support that they receive from some teaching assistants and specialist support teachers.

The early years provision

is good

- The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Leadership and management are good because there is a strong emphasis placed on developing children's social skills and their readiness for learning before they enter Year 1. Relationships are conducive to good progress for all the children.
- Children enter the Reception Year with skills that are mostly below those typically seen in children of this age. For some children, their skills in reading, writing and mathematics are significantly below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the early years because they are well supported, especially in acquiring the basic skills of reading and number. When they leave the Reception Year, a small minority reach a good level of development and are well prepared for their next stage of learning, but most are still behind what is typical in reading, writing and number.
- The teaching in the Reception class is well organised and provides a calm, nurturing atmosphere, so children feel safe and secure. Safety is given a high priority and is effective. The parents agree that the early years provision is good and they appreciate the strong links with the pre-school on site.
- The behaviour of the children is exemplary as they follow instructions very carefully and access tasks independently. They are capable of clearing up after themselves very well and to make their own decisions about what they what to play with next.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 130300 |
| Local authority | Wigan |
| Inspection number | 448856 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 268 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andrea Atherton |
| Headteacher | Rachael Coulthard |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 October 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01942 883971 |
| Fax number | 01942 893907 |
| Email address | enquiries@admin.saintgeorges.wigan.sch.uk |

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