

Asterdale Primary School

Borrowash Road, Spondon, Derby, DE21 7PH

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 acting senior leadership team has maintained and built on the previous strengths in leadership and management.
- Leaders and staff have created a very positive and supportive culture in which pupils talk about how much they enjoy school and learning.
- The school pays good attention to pupils' safety and achieves pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.
- From their different starting points, pupils make good progress. Attainment varies but in reading and mathematics it is often above average. Pupils who left Year 6 last year achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents are very supportive and praise their children's progress. All those who completed the online questionnaire would recommend the school to others. The school has maintained its important place at the heart of the local community.
- The governing body has effective and knowledgeable members and rigorously holds the school to account. Governors have worked closely with staff, pupils and the local authority during the appointment of the new headteacher.
- Although there have been changes in leadership recently, interim leaders have maintained and improved the quality of teaching through the robust use of appraisal systems and training.
- Teaching is good. Teachers develop good learning relationships with pupils and provide enjoyable, engaging work. Teachers' marking is especially effective in helping pupils' make good progress.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide children with a good start to their school lives. The focus on their social and emotional development, and basic reading, writing and number skills, prepares children well for their future schooling.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not good enough to consistently promote high quality writing.
- At times teachers' introductions to tasks are too hard to understand for many yet too simple for some.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, a representative from the local authority, members of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined, some with the headteacher present, and pupils read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors took into account the 19 responses to the parental survey, Parent View. The inspectors took account of the 26 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents produced by the school, including data on pupils' progress and attainment, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and minutes of their meetings, and the action plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patrick Walsh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Asterdale Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is average and around nine per cent of the pupils. The proportion supported by school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is slightly below average and around six per cent.
- A well-above average proportion of pupils, around a third of the school, are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The previous headteacher retired last term. A new substantive headteacher has been appointed for the start of next term. During the inspection, the school had an acting senior leadership team.
- Most children in the Nursery class attend on a part-time basis.
- A children's centre shares the school site. There is a privately-run breakfast club in school each day. These were not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help more pupils reach the higher levels in writing by improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills.
- Ensure that teachers' explanations to the whole class are clearly understood by pupils of all abilities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher and leaders at all levels have continued to improve the quality of teaching to raise attainment. They have built on previous strengths in leadership while maintain a strong emphasis on the successful nurture aspect of their work. This has had a positive impact on improving pupils' achievement.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies what remains to be done to improve the school further. Development planning has been effective in helping the school through a time of significant change. The staff know how well individual pupils are making progress, and the resulting data are analysed well by senior leaders. A newly introduced computerised system simplifies the collection and use of data.
- Data on pupils' progress and attainment are regularly checked, internally among staff and externally by the local authority and with other schools. These confirm the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work. The school is preparing well for the full implementation of its approach to assessment following the change to remove National Curriculum levels.
- The local authority has had a positive impact by supporting the interim leadership and providing advice on evaluating the quality of teaching and learning through a range of activities. The leader of the provision for children in the early years works across the local authority to check other school's assessments and to train other early years teachers. Training to extend teachers' professional skills is effective. For example, training has improved the teaching of phonics (the sounds letter make) and reading. Visits to observe high quality practice in other schools has helped improve the teaching of writing.
- The leadership of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special education needs is effective and has a positive impact on their good progress. Leaders also ensure that the most able pupils are well provided for through a range of extension activities and links with a local secondary school. There is no discrimination. Staff promote equality of opportunity and there are good relationships in school and throughout the local community. Statutory safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- Funding available through the pupil premium is used to help disadvantaged pupils take a full part in school life, and benefit from additional help from adults. The impact of this is evident in the narrowing of the gaps in achievement over time between these pupils and others and the higher standards now achieved by disadvantaged pupils.
- Good use is made of the extra funding available to promote physical education and sporting opportunities. There is increased participation in a wide range of sports clubs, such as golf and boccia. Staff training, from specialist coaches, is promoting improvements in teaching.
- The curriculum maintains a strong focus on provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and good preparation for life in modern Britain by, for example, a good range of visits to places of worship and the taking part in Diwali celebrations. The school provides a popular range of clubs and extra-curricular activities which enhance pupils' learning.
- Leadership of the early years has improved further since the previous inspection. Children make at least good progress. Effective use is made of resources. The small outdoor area is used well to promote all areas of learning to the full.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning, and taking action where necessary, are good. Current leaders have developed a new system for checking teachers' performance although this process has only had time to be partly introduced. Consequently, weaknesses in teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling, and in crafting teachers' explanations so that they are fully understood, have not yet been dealt with. Other leaders, such as in literacy or mathematics, check the success of the teaching in the areas for which they are responsible. Leaders' skills have improved through appropriate training.
- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body carries out its statutory duties well. The governors manage their work efficiently through a strong committee structure. They provide the school with a good level of support and challenge. Governors carried out an assessment of their skills and this has led to recruitment of members with specific skills that can be used for the benefit of the school.
- Governors check the school's work through visits, such as to observe and monitor the work with pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs. They have a good understanding of performance data. Some governors give time to work in school providing the benefit of their skills in, for example, computer coding.
- Members of the governing body understand the system used to determine teachers' effectiveness in enabling pupils to make progress. They check how well school leaders improve the quality of teaching and have been appropriately involved in decisions about teaching competency. Decisions about teachers' pay are well linked to their performance and responsibilities.
- Governors track finances well and lead the school in deciding how to spend additional money, such as that to support disadvantaged pupils or to extend sports and physical education opportunities. They ensure that all the requirements for safeguarding pupils are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In almost all lessons observed, and in the 'pumpkin' assembly, the dining room and at playtimes, pupils were well behaved. School records confirm that this is the norm.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. Most are fully engaged in lessons and activities and they work hard to make their work neat and tidy. Talking to them shows they have pride in their efforts. This was supported by what pupils told inspectors about how much they enjoyed school, and it has a positive impact on their progress.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about lessons and other aspects of school life. Pupils told inspectors that the teachers 'help make sure we get the best education we can'. Pupils show respect for the learning environment and do not drop litter. They talk enthusiastically about the different educational visits they have been on and the friendly atmosphere around the school.
- Pupils respond well to the school's expectations of their behaviour and social development. They have a number of opportunities to take responsibility. The school council were keen to explain to the inspector how much they have enjoyed helping to organise events such as a disco. Older pupils often read with younger ones.
- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes towards others. They are polite and interested in other people. They do talk about incidents of misbehaviour in lessons but they are confident teachers deal with this if it happens. There have been a small number of recent exclusions of pupils. These were carried out appropriately and correctly, and proved of benefit for those involved.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school, and all of the parents who responded to the questionnaire confirm this view. The school provides a good range of activities to help pupils learn to stay safe and they are taught how to use computers and the internet safely.
- The pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and say that, although there is none currently, if it occurs it would be effectively dealt with. They are confident there are adults in school they can talk to if worried or concerned about something.
- Attendance is slowly improving and is currently broadly in line with the national average. The school has a strong focus on encouraging better attendance, and monitoring and addressing persistent absenteeism. Most parents appreciate the importance of their children's full attendance. Pupils are punctual.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' work the school's assessment data of their achievement and evaluations of teaching, together with inspectors' direct observations of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress, all provide evidence that teaching is consistently good. The good teaching has resulted in pupils' current good progress and rising standards, especially in literacy, reading and mathematics.
- The school is kept tidy, with most materials and resources easily accessible. Displays of pupils' work create good opportunities for teachers to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects and to celebrate their work. Currently, for example, high quality work in mathematics is celebrated with large displays in the school hall.
- The marking of pupils' work provides pupils with clear and constructive information on how well they have done and provides suggestions for improvement. This has a positive impact on their progress. Pupils understand what their targets are and what they need to do to achieve even better.
- Throughout the school, pupils talk positively about how they enjoy lessons, especially mathematics and learning about the Anglo-Saxons and Viking poems. They describe the progress they have made and talk with pride about their work.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' attitudes to learning, and their interest and engagement in their work, are usually good. Pupils are often encouraged to learn through imaginative tasks, such as those in Year 6 using bean bags for mental mathematics warm-up activities. Other adults often provide good support for pupils, especially those disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or for those recognised as gifted and talented. This enables them to make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers have responded well to recent national changes to the curriculum. For example, in computing and in physical education, external expertise has helped to train teachers and to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered.
- The teaching of reading is good. It has improved after further training and advice for staff in teaching phonics over the last two years. Good basic skills are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, pupils, especially those who are most able or gifted and talented, use their skills in reading widely and in carrying out research for topics at home and at school.
- A check of pupils' work in books shows that teachers do not always ensure pupils' handwriting, spelling and grammar is good enough and this slows down the progress of some pupils in producing high quality writing.
- Teachers use assessment information to group pupils accurately by ability and to provide work that is usually targeted for their different capabilities. Teachers are aware of how different groups are learning, and adjust their practice to make sure that everyone does well. Sometimes, the teachers' introductions to new learning are not fully understood by pupils, slowing learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- When they start school in the Nursery class many children have levels of knowledge and understanding which are below those typical for their age, especially in communicating and personal development. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics and in reading. Following a dip in 2013 in writing, standards in 2014 have improved and were average. For all subjects, this represents good progress and achievement, from pupils' starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra help they receive. In Year 6 last year they made better progress than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' phonics skills rose sharply in 2014 after a dip in 2013, and were above average. The improvements are due to good teaching of phonics which is helping pupils to develop good reading skills and kindle an interest in a range of books.
- Good progress continues through Key Stage 1 although standards in the national teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 remain below average. Progress in Key Stage 2 is consistently good. Last year, a well above-average proportion made more than the progress expected for their age, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2013, the school closed the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 in mathematics, reading and writing with their peers and with pupils nationally. In 2014 the gap widened again, and pupils are around a term behind their peers, and about a year behind pupils nationally. However, it remains closer than it has been in the past, and the progress made by these pupils was more rapid than that of their peers or the expected progress for all pupils nationally.
- There is evidence of good achievement in other subjects, such as history, art and design and science. The effective use of the sports funding money has improved teachers' expertise and so raised standards in physical education.
- Throughout the school, the most-able pupils make good progress and an increasing proportion attain higher levels in most subjects. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, the most able pupils were able to extend their learning through a more advanced calculation method. Even so, the most able pupils' writing throughout the school is sometimes held back by their weaker skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. The performance of more able pupils in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test fell slightly in 2014 compared with 2013.

The early years provision is good

- Children make at least good progress and achieve well from their different starting points and the proportion attaining a good level of development last year was above average. This good progress helps prepare children well for the next stage in their education, including for those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. They learn to behave well, are clearly happy at school and are kept safe. There is good provision for their health, safety and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The Nursery children settle well and quickly get used to the school's routines. Talking to the children shows how much they enjoy school and the range of activities provided for them. During the inspection they showed great enjoyment using the 'medical centre'. Reception children make good progress in phonics and writing, through a range of writing activities that engages and maintains their interest, whatever their ability.
- The good leadership ensures that the available accommodation is well organised and provides a productive and imaginative learning environment. The small outdoors area is used well to extend children's learning all the children develop good skills in co-operating and sharing.
- Teaching is good. Assessment activities are detailed and adults use their assessments well to plan the children's next steps and activities. The regular information parents receive about their child's progress and the contributions they make themselves ensure that a full picture of each child's experiences and progress is always available to staff and home.

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	112761
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	448663

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Evonne Williams
Headteacher	David Evans
Date of previous school inspection	25-26 February 2010
Telephone number	01332 662323
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Email address	admin@asterdale.derby.sch.uk;

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