

Almondbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School

Longcroft, Almondbury, West Yorkshire, HD5 8XW

Inspection dates

31 March – 1 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- This is a happy, highly nurturing and improving school.
- The headteacher's determination and vision for improvement is shared by staff and governors.
- Leaders, managers and governors' dedication and decisive actions have successfully improved the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils.
- Staff morale is high because staff are united in working as a team. They feel valued, supported and appreciated.
- Pupils have many exciting and stimulating learning experiences. These promote well British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Strong and positive relationships exist with parents.
- Partnerships with the local community and other schools are strong.
- Governors have greatly improved their effectiveness since the last inspection. They are well led and provide rigorous challenge and support to ensure the school continues to improve.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and proud of their school. Behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe because staff look after them well and help them avoid dangers. Pupils are eager to learn. Their punctuality and attendance is improving.
- Pupils have highly positive and trusting relationships with staff. This boosts pupils' self esteem and willingness to try their best.
- The quality of teaching is never less than good.
- Standards are rising. All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Early years provision is good. Children thrive in the early years. Their achievement is good and sometimes outstanding from their different starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress is not always as rapid as it should be, particularly in writing.
- Some teachers do not always provide work that is demanding enough, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teachers' marking is not always effective in helping pupils improve their work.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects and when working in outdoor areas.
- It is not always clear how the effectiveness of actions planned by middle leaders will be measured.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed the learning of pupils in all classes across school and listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector made close checks on pupils' work in lessons, in a wide range of books and on display around school. The inspector also spoke to a wide range of pupils during the inspection to discuss their views of school.
- The inspector looked closely at records of the progress of pupils, their behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle leaders. Governors, including the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body, met with the inspector. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school's own view of its performance, plans for improvement and policies and procedures.
- There were careful checks by the inspector on the work of governors and a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through checking the 28 responses to the online Parent View survey and the 38 responses to the school's own recent survey of parental opinion. A wide range of parents spoke with the inspector.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff expressed in the 13 responses to the voluntary inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller when compared to the average-sized primary school.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and governance since the last inspection, including a change in the Chair and vice chair of the Governing Body.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. An above average proportion of pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium funding is above average. The pupil premium is government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The Nursery operates for mornings only. There are two Reception classes. All Reception Year children attend full time.
- Pupils attend a breakfast and after-school club in a separate building on the school site. This is privately operated and subject to separate inspection. Reports for this setting may be viewed at www.gov.uk/ofsted
- The school has been receiving close support from a National Leader in Education, who is the headteacher of Shelley First School in Huddersfield.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and so raise the achievement of pupils, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently provide tasks that challenge the abilities of all pupils, particularly the most able
 - ensuring comments made by teachers in marking, consistently help pupils know how to improve their work
 - providing more encouragement for pupils to extend their writing and mathematical skills when working across subjects and when learning in outdoor areas.
- Ensure actions planned by middle leaders are always crystal clear with measurable targets linked to how they will improve the achievement of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and governors firmly believe that the judgements of the last inspection provided a much needed catalyst to shake the school out of a period of complacency. The response of the headteacher in particular, has been decisive. Her steely determination and passionate drive for improvement has galvanised a shared vision to succeed. As a result, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils are improving strongly.
- The headteacher receives good quality support from the deputy headteacher. This strong team working has enabled the headteacher to successfully manage the significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. There is a very positive culture in school. Staff morale is high because staff feel valued and supported. A typical staff comment was, 'Staff work as a team supporting one another. It is a happy school where the children are always put at the heart of everything we do.'
- Teachers strengthen their skills through specific guidance from senior leaders. They also benefit from opportunities to observe and share their practice in their own school and in other schools. Staff enthusiastically access training opportunities both locally and nationally.
- Senior leaders know the school well. Increasingly rigorous and regular checks are made on teaching and the progress of all groups of pupils. No stone is left unturned in the drive for continuous improvement. They know exactly where teaching and learning are strong and where teaching needs to improve further. The information senior leaders gather is used very effectively to plan detailed actions for further improvement.
- Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers. Close checks are made on the progress of every pupil in class to ensure they are making at least good progress from their different starting points. Staff take swift action to support any pupil in danger of underachieving. Good use is made of additional pupil premium funding to provide skilled additional adults to help support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, these pupils are progressing as well as, and sometimes better than, other pupils in school.
- The school uses the primary sport funding very effectively to provide specialist teaching and skilled sports coaching. This is improving staff confidence and the abilities and skills of pupils. Pupils particularly enjoy the training some of them have received as play leaders. The funding also provides additional resources and competitive sports activities through membership of the local sports partnership. There is clear evidence that pupils' attitudes to sport, healthy eating and exercise are improving. Pupils particularly enjoy clubs such as mini-soccer and dance and cross-country running events.
- Middle leaders are highly enthusiastic and share the passion and drive for improvement. They produce plans to improve teaching and achievement. However, it is not always obvious how the impact of their actions will be assessed because plans do not always include measurable targets.
- Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural education promotes positive relationships well. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to celebrate cultural differences and traditions. They also learn a lot about respect, awe and wonder from assemblies, class work and visiting such places as Cathedral House and a mosque. Staff promote British values such as tolerance and the rule of law well. Pupils learn about democracy and have regular opportunities to take part in voting on school council ideas. This prepares pupils effectively for life in modern Britain.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Pupils receive good support to enable them to have equal access to the curriculum on offer.
- School leaders ensure the curriculum is well planned. Subjects often link together in highly stimulating topics. When learning about explorers, pupils were excited by the story *Around the world in 80 Days*. They made hot air balloon models to help them on their travels as they learned about faraway places such as Egypt and China. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers always encourage pupils well enough to develop and extend their writing and mathematical skills across subjects.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of visitors such as puppet theatre groups and exciting events like World Book Day. They also benefit greatly from visiting stimulating places of interest to support their learning.
- Although there were a few negative responses on Parent View, discussions with many parents during the inspection and the school's own surveys found no evidence to explain these. The inspector found strong evidence that relationships with parents are highly positive. A typical parental view was, 'Really happy. I think the headteacher is great, very approachable and helpful with any issues.'
- The school has benefited greatly from its strong links with a National Leader in Education. As a result, leadership has strengthened and judgements moderated. In addition, staff have a wealth of opportunities to share and observe practice.

- The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils meet statutory requirements. They are effective in keeping pupils safe and secure.
- The school receives highly effective support from the local authority. This has aided staff and governor training and improved the accuracy of school judgements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors have responded well to the external review of their effectiveness. They have successfully reviewed the skills they need and the type of rigorous questions they should be asking. The Chair of the Governing Body ensures that governors hold the school effectively to account. They now have an accurate view and understanding of the school's performance. They visit regularly and ensure they have the information they need to check on the progress of all groups of pupils. This helps them to support and challenge school leaders and to keep focused on continuous improvement. As a result, they have successfully supported improvements in leadership and management, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils since the last inspection.
 - Governors check the use of all finances carefully. They know how pupil premium and sports funding are used and its impact on outcomes for pupils. Governors ensure teachers' pay progression is rigorously linked to the quality of teaching and pupils making at least good progress. They understand how leaders tackle any underperformance among staff. Governors make very close checks to ensure safeguarding procedures are robust.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils respond well to the very nurturing environment, enjoy learning and demonstrate a pride in their school. Pupils typically say that, 'I love coming to this school. It's great and the teachers are really kind and help us.' Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute well to their improving progress. Their eagerness to learn is reflected in their good punctuality and in their broadly average and improving attendance.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. They get on well together and play safely, especially when using equipment such as the climbing wall or balance equipment at break times.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They listen attentively to teachers and try hard. Pupils are excited by learning that captures their interests and makes them think hard. When this happens, their behaviour and attitudes are sometimes outstanding. However, when tasks are too easy or too hard, a few pupils sometimes drift off task, fidget and chat.
- Pupils generally produce neat work. The school's handwriting scheme is helping pupils to present work with increasing pride.
- Pupils are helpful to each other and show considerable respect for staff and visitors. Their highly positive and trusting relationships with staff help boost their confidence and self esteem well. They enjoy the responsibilities they are given and speak with pride about being a school councillor or play leader. They enjoy clubs such as cooking, dance and football.
- Staff ensure pupils enjoy lots of opportunities to celebrate differences and respect for the rights of people to hold different beliefs. Pupils typically say, 'It's ok for people to have different ideas and beliefs. We are all different and unique.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous. Staff are well trained and have a good understanding of how to keep pupils safe. Pupils say that they feel safe and have a good understanding about how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils have a good awareness of the dangers that can be posed by strangers. They are taught how to avoid dangers, such as on the roads.
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take because of the school's work on anti-bullying and e-safety. They say that, on the few occasions bullying happens, staff deal with it fairly.
- Parents are confident that their children feel safe and are kept safe in school. This is reflected in their response to the online Parent View survey, comments to the inspector and in their response to the school's own surveys.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils extremely well as individuals. Their caring and reassuring approach helps build very positive and trusting relationships. Pupils respond by trying their best and wanting to please. This contributes well to pupils' good and improving achievement.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. They ensure that pupils understand what is expected of them. Staff encourage and reward pupils well and this motivates them to be eager learners. This reflects the good understanding staff have of the school's revised behaviour policy.
- Staff use their good subject knowledge well. This helps them to check on pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. They encourage pupils to assess their own and their partners' work.
- Teachers make regular checks on how well pupils are learning. They use the information they gather on what pupils know, understand and can do to provide greater challenge and plan future learning. However, a few teachers occasionally plan work that is not pitched at the right level. As a result, tasks are not always demanding enough for some pupils, particularly the most able. This hinders their progress.
- The marking of pupils' work reflects the improvements made by senior leaders to the school's marking policy. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly. Teachers often provide pupils with helpful feedback on how to improve their work and pupils have time to respond. However, not all marking consistently reflects the school's marking policy. This also hinders the progress made by some pupils.
- Reading is taught effectively. Any pupils in danger of falling behind receive highly skilled additional support to help them catch up quickly. The daily and systematic teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) helps pupils to build the skills they need to be confident readers. Teachers ensure pupils develop a love of reading. This is done through lots of exciting class stories, World Book Day events and encouragement to read widely.
- Teachers ensure pupils have interesting and exciting reasons to write. Pupils have many opportunities to talk about their writing and ways it can be improved. These include re-drafting work to reflect better use of punctuation or more interesting vocabulary. As a result, the quality of their writing is improving.
- Mathematics is taught effectively. Pupils have regular opportunities to tackle interesting calculations and solve practical problems. This reflects the success of the school's revised approach to building pupils' basic skills and their mastery of mathematical concepts.
- Teachers create a very positive environment for learning. This helps to motivate pupils' eagerness to learn. When learning tasks capture pupils' interests and imagination and stretch their abilities, they make at least good progress. This was clear in a Year 1/2 English lesson. Pupils were inspired to write diary entries to help reflect part of the Easter story. Most able Year 2 pupils produced good quality writing such as, 'They were feeling shocked and confused.'

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Achievement has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are now making more consistently good progress from their different starting points and standards are rising. Standards by the end of Year 2 rose sharply in 2013 to be significantly above the national average overall. Although there was a dip in 2014, this was expected due to the particular characteristics of that cohort of pupils. However, pupils still performed on average as well as other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and slightly better in writing.
- Checks on the school's own data and inspection evidence show that, last year, the progress of pupils in most classes was good. The progress of current pupils in all classes is improving rapidly. The proportion of pupils exceeding the progress expected of them is already higher than in the previous year. Larger proportions of pupils are attaining the higher levels, particularly in reading and mathematics. School information shows that the attainment of pupils in Year 2 is currently on track to be higher than the national average in the assessments for reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- The most able pupils often undertake work that challenges their thinking and accelerates their learning. These demanding tasks keep pupils interested, motivated and working hard to succeed. However, this support and challenge for the most able is not consistent across school, especially in writing.
- Pupils achieve well in their reading and standards are rising. This is due to improvements made to the skilled systematic teaching of reading and the frequency of checks on pupils' progress. Very effective support is given to any pupils who need to catch up. As a result, pupils progressively build the skills they need to be confident readers. Staff engender a love of reading as pupils move through school.

- By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in the phonics screening check is increasing. The Year 2 checks were well above average. This reflects improvement made in the teaching of reading.
- Improvements in the teaching of writing are helping pupils make better progress and achieve well. The many exciting opportunities to write motivate pupils to try their best. Pupils receive good support in organising their writing and talk a lot about their ideas. They often re-draft their work to improve its quality.
- The whole school focus on mathematics has been successful. Pupils' achievement has improved due to the skilled teaching of basic skills and concepts, along with opportunities for pupils to explain what they are doing. These are reinforced through regular revision. Interesting and exciting challenges enable pupils to use the skills and concepts they have learned to solve problems. As a result, pupils demonstrate increasing confidence in their basic skills and mastery of mathematical concepts.
- Disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, make good and sometimes outstanding progress. This is due to early identification of their particular needs and the highly skilled additional support which meets these needs well. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their different starting points. This is due to the good quality additional support they receive.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 was nearly a term and a half ahead of other pupils in the school in reading and half a term ahead in mathematics. In writing, they were half a term behind. Compared to other pupils nationally, pupils were half a term ahead in mathematics and half a term behind in reading and writing. Inspection evidence shows that the gaps in attainment between current disadvantaged pupils and others in school are narrowing rapidly. Disadvantaged pupils in school are making good progress. They are achieving as well as their classmates and sometimes better.

The early years provision

is good

- When children start school only a minority are working at a level of development that is typical for their age. In particular, many children show weaknesses in their language, communication and personal development. All children, including the most able and those with special educational needs, make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their different starting points. In 2014, attainment by the end of the Reception Year rose sharply in all areas of learning. Children achieved particularly well in their personal development and in their reading, writing and mathematical skills. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development was above average. An even larger proportion of children currently in Reception are on track to reach a good level of development in 2015. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Strong links exist with the playgroup on the school site and other pre-school settings. Staff make good use of the information they gather from these settings to enable children to settle quickly. Positive and supportive relationships with parents ensure that they work in partnership with the staff to help their children learn. Stay-and-play activities are very popular. Parents have good opportunities to complete 'Wow' cards to help staff celebrate what children are achieving at home.
- Children achieve well because they benefit from consistently good teaching. Staff provide a good range of learning activities that children choose for themselves or which are led by adults. The indoor and outdoor areas are stimulating and attractive places to learn.
- Activities are fun and exciting. This motivates children to try hard. Staff ensure that work takes account of what children already know. This results in generally good levels of challenge for all children, including the most able. Staff and parents regularly share information on how well children are learning.
- Children behave well and are eager to learn. They listen attentively to staff and persevere well in their learning. Children get on well with each other and feel safe. They handle equipment sensibly.
- Early reading skills are taught effectively. Well-trained teaching assistants provide targeted additional support to those who need it. Children make good progress in understanding the sounds that letters make. The most able children use this knowledge confidently to read challenging sentences such as, 'Are you afraid of thunderstorms?'
- Children enjoy using the 'Finger Gym' to help them develop the dexterity they need to support their early writing skills. Children write for different purposes, such as lists or describing the daffodils growing in the grounds. Children particularly enjoyed writing about the Easter story.
- Staff develop children's mathematical skills well. Children learn to count in many different ways. Most able children knew how many centimetres make a metre when measuring the beanstalk they had made.

- Staff create many interesting and exciting opportunities for children to learn. However, children do not always develop further their writing and mathematical skills in the outdoor areas.
- The early years leader provides strong leadership and has developed a whole team approach. She has a clear vision for continuous improvement. Children are kept safe through rigorous risk assessments and the support of well-trained staff.

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	107727
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	462253

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Edwards
Headteacher	Jane Sargent
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2013
Telephone number	01484 223954
Fax number	01484 223955
Email address	office.almondburyinf@kirkleeseducation.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 and 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

