

Athelstan Primary School

Richmond Park Way, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S13 8HH

Inspection dates 2-3 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires Improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress has not been consistently good, especially in reading.
- Pupils' achievement is too varied. Pupils do not always make good progress, particularly during Key Stage 2. Too few pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Year 6.
- The teaching of reading is too variable and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Some pupils do not have the opportunity to read to an adult often enough.
- The quality of teaching is not consistent. Teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes too low and work does not challenge pupils sufficiently.
- Teachers generally use questions to check basic understanding rather than to help pupils to build deeper understanding and learn more quickly.
- Marking does not regularly tell pupils what they have done well or how to improve their work. They are not always expected to respond to the advice given and some teachers do not check that pupils have responded to their guidance.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is moving in the right direction under the leadership of the headteacher. Governors contribute fully to ensuring that the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is improving.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils work hard in lessons and mix well with each other.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school very much and their attendance is good.
- Provision in the early years is effective. As a result, children make good progress and most achieve a good level of development.
- The work of leaders to keep pupils safe is outstanding. As a result, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, for example, when using the internet.
- All staff have a very high commitment to the school and they work well together as a team, determined to ensure the school improves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 21 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteachers. They observed the teaching of reading skills and listened to pupils reading. Teaching in small groups was also observed.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone to a school improvement consultant who works closely with the school.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked to them about their work.
- A variety of documents were scrutinised including the school's improvement plan and self evaluation, information on pupils' progress, teachers planning and minutes of the governing body. Inspectors also reviewed how well the school makes use of additional funding.
- Records relating to behaviour and attendance, as well as documents relating to safeguarding were taken into consideration.
- Inspectors took account of 67 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of parents from the school's own questionnaire from 2014. Inspectors also met with parents who were arriving at school to bring their children.
- Responses to the inspection questionnaire were received from 40 staff and their views were taken into account.

Inspection team

Michael Wintle Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Johnson

Additional Inspector

Keith Bardon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Athelstan Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils receiving support through the pupil premium funding is much higher than average. The pupil premium is extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for school meals, and those looked after by the local authority.
- Almost 40% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is much higher than average.
- Over one in five pupils' first language is not English.
- The turnover of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times is higher than at the time of the last inspection.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the last inspection there have been considerable staff changes. The two deputy headteachers have been in post since September 2013.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better and raise pupils' attainment by making sure teachers:
 - have high expectations of all pupils and provide more difficult work and opportunities to learn more quickly for pupils who are capable of this, particularly the most able
 - use questioning in lessons to help deepen and accelerate learning, as well as to check pupils' understanding
 - ensure actions already taken to improve pupils' skills in reading are sustained so that gaps in pupils' reading skills across the school are effectively addressed
 - ensure marking helps pupils to improve their work or move on in their learning
 - ensure that pupils take account of feedback and always check that they have done so
 - encourage pupils to read regularly and often, including at home, so that they have more opportunities to practise and develop their skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides strong and focused leadership. She has created a highly-skilled leadership team who collectively work to support their colleagues and improve the quality of teaching and achievement. Together leaders have created a culture of good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning.
- Although pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not securely good, they are rapidly improving. Training and initiatives introduced are having a positive impact on standards and the progress made by current pupils is accelerating. The introduction of the school's new reading and writing materials has helped current pupils from early years through to Year 6 to make accelerated progress.
- The appointments of two deputy headteachers have greatly strengthened the leadership team. Leaders and middle leaders are now more effective. They understand their roles and responsibilities and hold teachers to account for pupils' progress. Their actions are beginning to lead to better progress compared to last year.
- The school's systems for assessing, recording and analysing pupils' attainment and progress are detailed and accurate. Together with rigorous checking of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress, they identify where further support is needed, including for any pupil who may have difficulty living up to the school's expectations for good behaviour.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils. The school's own data shows that gaps in their attainment, compared to others are closing rapidly. Leaders and teachers now keep a sharp eye on the impact of funding and this has ensured that those pupils who are in danger of falling behind are given the help they need.
- The curriculum provides for learning in a full range of subjects and, in the best lessons, encourages enthusiasm for learning. In a Year 6 literacy lesson on writing dialogue, pupils were using mature subject vocabulary such as 'shell shock' and 'flashbacks' to explain their writing on the First World War. Often skills are firmly established and a thirst for knowledge is generated, promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, from work in a range of subjects, pupils know that it is important to look after the environment for others to enjoy.
- Leaders at all levels have made sure that pupils have high quality opportunities to learn how their community works and are able to communicate this positively. For example, during the inspection, displays of pupils' work celebrated how they felt their school was democratic. Leaders enable pupils to have a sophisticated understanding of the democratic principles on which their school council is based. This is preparing them well for their future lives in modern Britain.
- The local authority has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has provided valuable training and effective support in evaluating the school's performance and identifying areas of development.
- The school is always striving for equality of opportunity for all. Leaders ensure that behaviour is good and that discrimination is not tolerated.
- The school has good links with parents. They are warmly welcomed into the school for a range of activities, including coffee mornings and meetings with staff. The 'stop and drop' system at the start of the day is highly effective as this allows parents to drop children off at the gate knowing they will be escorted safely into school by a member of staff.
- Leaders, including governors, have ensured that rigorous systems are in place to meet all statutory safeguarding requirements. All adults are thoroughly checked before working in the school. The school is outstanding in monitoring the safety and well-being of children in most need and taking effective action when required. The pupils are aware of how to keep themselves very safe in school, and in the local community.
- The school has good arrangements for spending the primary school physical education and sport funding to improve and widen pupils' opportunities to take part in sports activities. Several clubs have been established which pupils attend regularly. The funding is also used to improve teachers' skills to enable pupils to improve their sporting skills. The school got through to the local Sheffield Schools Athletics finals on the first day of inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Good governance is now contributing significantly to the school's improvement. Governors have become closely involved in school improvement and monitor progress closely. Retraining and a review have enabled them to become more effective and to hold school leaders to account.
 - Governors receive comprehensive and regular reports from senior staff on how well the school is performing compared to other schools. They are familiar with published data and school information

about the progress made by groups of pupils. They are not complacent and are determined to raise standards even further.

- Governors are very visible in school and know the quality of teaching well. They have set challenging targets for the headteacher. They know the strengths of teaching, including how pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding are learning and how the school promotes British values of understanding and tolerance. They recently undertook a full audit on how actively leaders promote British values and how pupils are made ready for life in modern Britain.
- Governors attend regular training to keep their skills up to date. They manage the school's finances well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Inspectors agree with staff, parents and pupils that teachers show pupils how to be respectful and courteous, and that pupils reflect this in their behaviour.
- Pupils say that almost all behaviour is good. They acknowledge that a small number of pupils find it difficult to maintain the high expectations set by the school leaders. However, they say that all staff support these pupils to understand the consequences of their behaviour and this leads to them making better choices.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and approach activities with commitment.
- Pupils contribute positively to the school in a number of ways. There is an active school council, for example, through which pupils influence changes made by the school leaders. Older pupils, as playground friends, look out for younger pupils and act as role models. All of these things help with the strong sense of community at the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and as a result their attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now above the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Staff are fully trained and risks are carefully assessed. Governors fulfil their duties very well, for example, with regard to ensuring safe recruitment of staff and all aspects of safety on the site.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, but they are clear about what bullying involves, how to combat it and how to deal with it.
- Pupils feel entirely safe and are exceptionally well taught about how to avoid potential hazards outside school, such as when crossing roads and staying safe near water. They are very aware of e-safety guidelines. The school actively helps pupils protect themselves from the risks of internet abuse and cyber bullying.
- The site is secure and risk assessments are thorough. Safeguarding policies and procedures are very effective. Any accidents or behaviour incidents are carefully recorded and followed up. Staff are fully checked prior to appointment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it is not consistently good enough to ensure that all groups of pupils in all year groups make rapid progress during their time in school, especially in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers' questions are mainly used to check understanding of the ideas being taught, rather than also to help pupils think about ideas more deeply and to learn more quickly.
- Often the most able pupils, in particular, are not given work that is hard enough for them. They are also not given enough opportunity to learn more quickly. Consequently, these pupils do not reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Not all teachers use marking skilfully enough and often enough to ensure that pupils understand how well they are learning and how to improve their work. Sometimes teachers do not check that pupils have acted upon their comments and so pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- The pace of learning has improved since the last inspection. Phonics teaching in Key Stage 1 is better and leading to more rapid progress. The new reading materials are starting to provide much better support for

teaching and learning. This is enabling pupils to catch up.

- Teachers do not always do enough to engage pupils in their reading. Pupils across the school say they read very little to adults at school and some say they do not enjoy reading. Many do not read at home. As a result, pupils do not develop their skills or their confidence. Lower-ability pupils are not listened to reading on an individual basis regularly enough and there are ineffective home-school reading records.
- Teachers have higher expectations of the quality of pupils' written work. Most pupils take pride in their written work. Effective systems are in place to check progress and provide better support where it is needed. Pupils have individual targets in writing and mathematics and work hard to achieve them. As a result, pupils know their curriculum levels and can say how well they are progressing. Consequently, rates of progress for current pupils across the school and especially in Year 6 are rising quickly.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is improving because teachers focus on making sure that pupils understand key ideas, use the correct mathematical terms and build their confidence in tackling mathematical problems.
- Classrooms are bright and well organised. Displays in classrooms provide useful prompts to help pupils remember key information and model examples of good work.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Teaching in the past adversely affected pupils' progress. Consequently, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have significant gaps in their learning. As a result, too many pupils have left Year 6 with below average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Throughout the school, pupils' progress is improving. There is clear evidence in lessons, pupils' work and in the school data that progress is no longer insufficient, as historic data may suggest. However, there has not been enough time for this to show through convincingly in school data.
- The progress of the most able pupils has been too slow in reading, writing and mathematics for the past two years. As a result, not enough pupils attain the higher levels. Inspection evidence shows that the most able currently at school are now making good gains in their learning and this is resulting in them making better progress.
- In 2014, pupils who speak English as an additional language made better progress than their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, they are making the same rate of progress as other pupils in the school.
- Staff changes in the last two years have contributed to a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching. This is now addressing the legacy of underperformance, although there is still significant 'catch up' required in Year 6.
- The number of pupils who achieved the expected level in the Year 1 2014 national screening check on phonics (letters and the sounds they make) rose from the previous year but was still below the national average. This is because too many pupils had not acquired a secure grasp of letters and the sounds they make. Leaders have taken effective action to address this by improving the teaching of phonics and introducing a new reading scheme, which inspection evidence confirms has made a positive impact on reading standards in the current year.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. They receive prompt additional support to help them keep up with their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils in previous years attained less well than their classmates and their progress was slower than other pupils nationally. In 2014, the gap between their attainment and other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics was nearly two years. In writing and mathematics, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates was four terms and in reading six terms. School data show that disadvantaged pupils are currently making similar progress to the others across the school and that gaps in attainment are narrowing. In 2015 and in the current Year 6, disadvantaged pupils are outperforming their peers in reading and are performing as well in writing and mathematics.
- Work in pupils' books demonstrates that pupils are now making better progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing. This is because of the improvements that have been made by the headteacher and the senior leadership team. The school's data demonstrate that pupils are currently working at a level that is much more in line with the national average and in some cases better.

The early years provision**is good**

- Much-improved teaching, effective experienced leadership and skilled external support have ensured that the early years outcomes have improved more rapidly than those in the rest of the school.
- Most children enter Reception with skills below those typical for their age. Good teaching ensures that children make good progress so that on leaving the Reception Year, they are well prepared for entry to Year 1. The proportion of children achieving the expected good level of development in 2014 improved to just below the national average. Currently children's good level of development is similar to the national picture.
- Children have regular access to the outdoor learning area. Many activities, such as role play, engage children because the learning environment is stimulating and exciting. Children have positive attitudes to learning.
- Staff ensure that children's behaviour is good because they are clear about what teachers expect of them. Children are well cared for and safe and teaching staff know the needs of individuals well. Teachers expect children to take some responsibility for their own learning from an early age. This helps them to acquire personal, social and emotional skills rapidly. Children wait their turn, form good relationships with each other and work and play collaboratively. For instance, children playing explorers in the 'Athelstan Explorers Camp' outside were 'cooking' their food and sorting out their supplies for an adventure together.
- The early years leader and senior leaders have used additional funding for disadvantaged children more effectively since the beginning of the current school year. As a result, the gaps between the achievement of these children and their classmates are now narrowing quickly.

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	107083
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	462201

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Horsfield
Headteacher	Deb Halliday
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2013
Telephone number	0114 269 2301
Fax number	0114 254 8710
Email address	enquires@athelstan.sheffield.sch.uk

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