

# Athelstan Primary School

Richmond Park Way, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S13 8HH

## Inspection dates

15–16 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The passionate and effective leadership of senior leaders and the commitment of the staff have improved the school. Standards have risen and pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and maths. Sometimes, the actions that leaders and governors take are not linked closely enough to the school's priorities.
- Improvements in the teaching of reading have had a significant impact on raising pupils' progress and improving pupils' understanding of texts. A range of measures have been taken to promote the enjoyment of reading.
- Pupils behave well and are well mannered, polite and courteous. The school is a calm, orderly and purposeful place where pupils can learn.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and make effective progress from their different starting points.
- Rigorous safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils are safe. All staff have a clear understanding of how to keep pupils safe. Training and records are up to date and carefully managed.
- Leaders support disadvantaged pupils well and they make good progress across the school. Some disadvantaged pupils' attainment remains below that reached by others, but these pupils are catching up quickly.
- Effective staff training, including support for teachers who are at an early stage in their career, have resulted in improvements in teaching. However, in some classes teachers do not use assessment well enough to provide pupils with further challenge or support.
- Pupils show a good understanding of British values and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, has improved this year and is closer to the national average.
- Pupils are very well cared for. The school identifies pupils' individual needs and ensures that actions are in place to help them from the moment they enter the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Governors are ambitious and challenge and support leaders effectively. They have a good understanding of the school.
- The curriculum is broad and pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences. Leaders' assessment of pupils' achievement in subjects outside of English and mathematics is not thorough enough. Similarly, in these subjects, pupils' learning is not deep enough.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that leaders, managers and governors maintain a focus on the areas identified as a priority by:
  - aligning a greater proportion of staff training and support to the school's priorities
  - aligning internal systems of monitoring and evaluation more tightly to the school's priorities
  - ensuring that governors focus monitoring and challenge on the school's priorities.
- Ensure that standards continue to improve, particularly in writing in the early years and in key stage 1, by:
  - using ongoing assessment in lessons to ensure that pupils are challenged or supported more quickly
  - raising expectations of the basic skills required for writing such as handwriting and spelling
  - encouraging pupils to show higher levels of independence in the classroom and around the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in foundation subjects by:
  - developing systems for tracking and recording progress and attainment in subjects other than English and mathematics across the school
  - ensuring that pupils are given time to deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of subjects
  - ensuring that all areas of the national curriculum are delivered to a high standard.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are ambitious. The headteacher, who is supported well by senior leaders and governors, has a clear vision of how the school should support pupils. She has developed a culture where the needs of the pupils come first within an environment that is warm, welcoming and caring. The information that leaders gather about the performance of adults in English and mathematics is used precisely to plan steps for improvement. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and standards have risen.
- The enthusiasm of senior leaders and the high-quality support they provide means that staff are highly motivated to do well. Staff welcome the professional development they receive and say that this makes a real difference to the quality of their teaching. Staff are committed to ensuring that every pupil has equal opportunity to succeed. They are highly supportive of one another and work effectively as a team. Staff appreciate senior leaders' relentless focus on improvement.
- Senior leaders have established strong procedures so that they and class teachers know how well pupils are learning in English and mathematics. Pupils' attainment and progress are carefully tracked. Fortnightly 'laser meetings' examine progress for different groups of pupils and individuals, including the many pupils that enter the school within the school year. Support is adapted to meet pupils' changing needs. Regular moderation activity within the school and with other schools ensures that assessment information is accurate. As a result, pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics from their different starting points.
- Leaders' and governors' evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. They know the school well and understand what it needs to do to improve. There are clear systems in place to check on the quality of teaching, learning and the progress that pupils make in English and mathematics. In their drive to improve all aspects of the school, leaders do not always use time well enough to focus upon those areas of the school that they have identified as priorities.
- Performance management procedures link closely to the school's priorities. Leaders are stringent in their approach to performance management and provide bespoke support for the individual needs of staff.
- Leaders evaluate the quality of teaching and learning accurately. Leaders respond quickly to what they find out and provide a wide range of opportunities for staff to improve their practice. These include coaching and one-to-one support from colleagues in school. The support for teachers early in their career is effective and greatly appreciated. One teacher said, 'I couldn't have wished for a more positive and supportive staff network.'
- The curriculum is broad and the pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences that enrich their learning. Pupils do not always get the opportunity to learn about the different curriculum areas in sufficient depth and the coverage of the curriculum is not monitored closely enough. 'Theme teams' have been introduced to carry out this monitoring but they do not yet track standards well enough. Sometimes work is not planned well enough to challenge the most able pupils in subjects such as history,

geography or religious education.

- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Leaders are well trained and use their extensive knowledge of special educational needs to identify specific needs at an early stage and provide timely support. Funding for special educational needs is used well to provide the right help for individuals and, as a result, these pupils make good progress.
- Middle leaders have a strong understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics. They carry out observations and examine assessment information to ensure that all groups of pupils are well supported. Leaders of these subjects constantly evaluate the impact of the learning resources and the strategies they provide and are quick to stop them or adapt them if they do not have a positive impact upon outcomes.
- Leaders successfully use pupil premium funding to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils in classes lower down the school are now making better progress. Leaders are aware that although disadvantaged pupils make strong progress across key stage 2, progress across early years and key stage 1 is not fast enough to ensure that their attainment meets that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. A programme of assemblies is planned to support the promotion of these important principles. The school responds to ongoing current issues in the news as they arise, ensuring that pupils maintain tolerance and respect for others.
- The physical education and sport premium is used well. The profile of sport has been raised and more pupils now compete in sporting activities. The school reached the regional finals in an orienteering competition and talented pupils have access to local clubs.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are ambitious and highly knowledgeable about the quality of provision that the school provides. They have a detailed understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to be improved.
- Governors are well organised and they bring expertise in a range of relevant aspects that help them to provide effective challenge and support. They have received appropriate training and link with other governors in their trust to share expertise.
- Governors are provided with detailed information about the standards of different groups of pupils. They are tenacious in the challenge they offer, even when these standards have improved. The minutes of meetings show that where actions need to be taken, there are clear plans and these are followed through.
- Governors visit the school regularly and expect to see positive changes when actions have been agreed. They are able to identify the impact of their support and challenge around the school and are proud of the inclusive ethos that the school promotes. Governors do not always focus closely enough on the school's priorities.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors take pride in the steps they take to ensure that pupils are safe. Comprehensive systems that are supported by well-trained staff sustain a high level of vigilance and high-quality support for vulnerable pupils.
- All necessary checks are undertaken in the recruitment of staff and induction processes provide relevant information and training. Staff receive regular updates throughout the year and all staff have read the most recent guidance on 'Keeping children safe in education'. The culture of safeguarding in school is strong.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- The teaching at Athelstan Primary is underpinned by warm and caring relationships between staff and pupils. As a result, most pupils are keen to learn and focus well on their activities. Staff have high aspirations and ensure that all pupils are valued and included in learning. Adults give pupils opportunities to share ideas and challenge their own thinking and this helps their confidence when answering questions. Adults' questioning prompts pupils to think for themselves and extend their responses so that they continually improve their answers.
- The quality of teaching has improved as a result of a relentless focus from senior leaders. Approaches that senior leaders have introduced can be seen improving learning in classrooms. The support that senior leaders offer and the support that staff provide for one another means that pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are improving and pupils are well prepared for entry into the next key stage.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is effective and the attainment of Year 1 pupils in the phonics screening check is above that seen nationally. The school has been recognised for their expertise in this aspect and is visited by other professionals so that their practice can be shared.
- The improvement of reading has been a priority and leaders have implemented a new approach to teaching reading. This has begun to develop pupils' vocabulary and they are now more confident when answering questions about texts, referring to evidence from what they have read. For example, pupils in a Year 4 class used their inference skills to suggest that a dragon was 'gargantuan'. Pupils now read more often. The introduction of high-quality texts and strategies, such as a weekly opportunity for families to visit school to read with their children, mean that this enthusiasm is sustained.
- Pupils are given opportunities to apply their writing skills in a range of subjects. They write for a range of purposes and teachers provide good examples of writing that pupils can use to help them. Pupils use 'success criteria' that enable them to know what to include in their writing. These are not always used effectively enough and sometimes pupils are not focused on the criteria that are most appropriate for their ability. This means that pupils are sometimes not sufficiently challenged or that further challenge is not provided quickly enough.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to reason in mathematics and teachers allow pupils time to discuss how they can tackle problems and which strategies they could use. A range of resources are available for pupils to use. Teachers and other adults work

closely with groups of pupils and individuals but do not always identify which other pupils need further support or challenge. Children wait for adult support for too long. This means that sometimes precious time is lost because work is not matched closely enough to the needs of the pupils.

- Teachers plan lessons to build upon what pupils already know. This means that the activities that pupils begin with in each lesson are usually well matched to their needs. However, sometimes teachers do not identify when pupils need further challenge as lessons progress. This means that on these occasions learning is limited and not enough challenge is provided or pupils are unable to complete the tasks they are set. Basic errors in handwriting or spelling are not always identified and corrected, which means that pupils repeat them in subsequent learning.
- Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to lessons. They have a clear understanding of the tasks they are delivering and the needs of the pupils. Their questioning is effective and they skilfully assess pupils' understanding before adapting their approaches.
- Teachers provide homework for pupils that encourages them to complete a wide variety of tasks. These tasks are not always well matched to the learning needs of the pupils and don't always consolidate or extend learning so that pupils are well prepared for the work to come.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The vast majority believe that their child is taught well and makes good progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school's welcoming and caring ethos is central to its work in raising standards for pupils. From the moment pupils enter the school each day, they are greeted with respect and a genuine sense of care from the adults in the building. Staff know the pupils well and pupils benefit from good pastoral care. The school's 'Butterfly Room', an area to support pupils' social and emotional well-being, is used well and pupils enjoy a range of support that helps them to make good progress socially and emotionally. Teachers talk to pupils in Year 6 about life in secondary school and plan activities that help them to prepare for these changes. As a result, they are well prepared for transfer to key stage 3.
- The school places a real emphasis on the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils in key stage 2 enjoy wearing devices that measure how many steps they have walked each day and love to compete with their peers. A new gym has been installed in the playground and pupils say that they enjoy keeping fit.
- Parents, pupils and staff agree that the school provides effective support for pupils; they feel safe, enjoy school and their lessons are interesting. Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to keep pupils safe and there are appropriate policies in place that are adhered to by adults and pupils. All adults, including visitors, are subject to security checks to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Case studies

demonstrate that procedures are robust and the actions taken by the school ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported.

- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that any instances of bullying are rare. On the occasions that this happens the school deals with it very well. Pupils learn about different forms of bullying and are taught to respect others and the importance of tolerance. One class wrote letters to the Prime Minister to promote different aspects of tolerance in society.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The behaviour policy is applied consistently and pupils understand what is right and what is wrong. A wide range of rewards are available for pupils including raffle tickets for asking great questions and OBEs (Outstanding Behaviour Expectations) encourage pupils to display the attitudes and behaviours expected of them.
- In all classes, around the school and outside on the playground, inspectors observed positive behaviour. Pupils are polite and courteous. For example, they frequently hold doors open for adults and for their peers, and during the inspection one polite young man was even keen to shake hands. Adults model this standard of behaviour for pupils and this contributes to a calm, orderly atmosphere. Pupils are usually attentive in lessons. However, when they are unsure of what to do, many pupils are reliant on adults for support. Pupils show low levels of independence and this means that the rate of learning slows.
- Senior leaders' actions have improved attendance so that it is now close to the national average. The attendance of some vulnerable groups has improved and is now getting closer to the attendance of other pupils. Rigorous systems are in place to follow up any absence. The rate of persistent absenteeism has halved this year and is currently below the national average.
- Rates of exclusion were high in 2015/16. This has been reduced this year and leaders have thorough systems to manage challenging behaviour. Record-keeping is detailed and demonstrates that the school follows procedures accurately.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Senior leaders and governors have focused their efforts on improving the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, pupils' achievement across the school has improved and their attainment is broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils across the school are making good progress in a range of subjects. They are building on their previous learning and developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills from their different starting points. Pupils are making good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in writing is slower across key stage 1, although pupils have made good progress in Year 2 this year.
- Children in the early years make a good start at school. A large proportion of pupils



enter the school with skills that are much lower than those typical for their age. They make good progress so that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is close to the national average. Not enough children are exceeding levels typical for their age when they leave the early years and writing remains an area of focus for the school.

- Leaders have invested time and resources to ensure that the proportion of pupils that achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check continues to increase. This has been a success and the proportion of pupils meeting this standard is now above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard was below other pupils in 2016. This is set to rise this year and diminish the difference with other pupils.
- Key stage 1 assessments in 2016 showed that attainment was below the national average. Attainment was significantly below the national average for those pupils that were at or below the expected level at the end of the early years. Leaders identified this and actions were taken to ensure that this has increased in 2017. Teacher assessment shows that pupils have made good progress across the key stage. At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, pupils' attainment in reading was below the national average. Attainment in writing, English grammar, punctuation and spelling was in line with or above the national average. Pupils made good progress from their starting points to achieve these results, particularly in writing and mathematics. Leaders' focus upon the improvement of reading has meant that attainment in reading will be much-improved this year. Similarly, attainment in writing and mathematics will be above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is also expected to increase. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that the school's expectations are realistic.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Improved attendance and the close monitoring of their progress through regular analysis of their work means that leaders are able to provide timely and effective support. Any pupils at risk of not reaching the expected standards are identified and support is put in place to help them to catch up rapidly.
- The results in 2016 showed that the attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language was below all pupils nationally despite the good progress that they had made. This year they have continued to make this good progress in each key stage and this has enabled them to catch up with other pupils.
- In some classes, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is below that of other pupils. However, the good progress that they are making shows that this difference is diminishing and they are catching up with their peers. Most disadvantaged pupils are now working at higher levels of attainment than their peers in key stage 2.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Information about the children shows that they mostly enter school with skills and development below those typical for their age. Children make good progress and by the end of the early years the proportion of children that achieve a good level of development is broadly in line with the national average. However, very few pupils exceed the early learning goals in either English or mathematics. This has been a



recent focus for improvement but has not yet had time to have an impact on the standards that children currently reach.

- Teaching in the early years is good; a wide range of carefully planned activities ensure that children have many opportunities to develop their love of learning. The children enjoy making choices about what they would like to learn and the curriculum responds to their interests. They enjoy problem-solving and were intrigued when making predictions and trying various ideas to extract frozen jelly from ice in the water tray. Adults are skilled in choosing when to intervene and move learning forwards. Occasionally, however, the activities provided for the most-able children lack challenge and are too easy to complete.
- Phonics is taught well. It is systematic and interesting and is increasingly having an impact on outcomes in reading. The children enjoyed demonstrating their knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make when jumping around a 'path' of chalked letters in the outdoor area.
- There are opportunities to write in different areas of the setting and children choose to participate in these activities. However, progress in writing, particularly for boys, is not as strong as in some other subjects. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils has improved steadily over recent years. The gap between the progress and achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their peers has diminished each year and the proportion achieving a good level of development is close to that of other pupils nationally.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are supported well. The school is well prepared to support these children in their early language development and they make good progress during their time in the early years.
- Expectations of children are high and adults model the behaviour they wish children to display. As a result, behaviour is good and children share resources and cooperate well. The positive relationships that children form with staff and their peers help them to gain confidence as they go about their choice of activities sensibly and safely. Safeguarding is a high priority and all procedures are implemented thoroughly. Children are kept safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The school has good links with its feeder nurseries; regular meetings and visits, together with home visits, ensure that children settle in quickly and confidently. The transition of children into Year 1 needs to be developed further so that progress can be accelerated as they move into key stage 1.
- The early years leader is determined to improve provision in the early years continually. She leads a committed team of staff who share the same vision for learning. She has an accurate understanding of the strengths of the early years and what still needs to be improved. A detailed early years action plan identifies these priorities and the next steps for improvement with clear reflection on those actions already taken. A programme of training linked to a robust system of performance management ensures that all members of the team continue to develop, strengthening the quality of teaching and learning.

## School details

Unique reference number	107083
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10031985

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	572
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Horsfield
Headteacher	Deb Halliday
Telephone number	01142 692301
Website	<a href="http://www.athelstanprimaryschool.co.uk">www.athelstanprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher@athelstan.sheffield.sch.uk">headteacher@athelstan.sheffield.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is just above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Large numbers of pupils enter or leave the school each year. This means that the

needs of each class can change during the year.

- The school works in partnership with the schools in the Crucible Co-operative Learning Trust.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups. A total of 27 observations were carried out. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at examples of work in a range of subjects and spoke with pupils about their work.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, the member of staff responsible for attendance, the member of staff responsible for pastoral support, the designated safeguarding leader, a representative of the local authority, a member of the trust board, staff, pupils and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents on the playground and considered the 51 parents' responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation relating to safeguarding, attendance, and pupils' behaviour and achievement. The school's improvement plan and the school's own evaluation of its performance were also considered.

## Inspection team

Jaimie Holbrook, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Mensah	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Cook	Ofsted Inspector

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