

Airedale Junior School

Fryston Road, Airedale, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 3EP

Inspection dates

6–7 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders have introduced a range of measures to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching. These are now having a positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Teachers are held well to account for the progress of their pupils. Moreover, leaders are mindful to ensure that teachers' workload is as manageable as possible. Morale among staff is high.
- The governing body provides high quality support and challenge to school leaders.
- Achievement information is sometimes presented inconsistently. This causes some ambiguity in target setting, performance management and school development plans.
- The quality of teaching has been transformed. Consequently pupils' skills in mathematics, reading and writing are improving at a fast pace.
- Mathematics is particularly well taught across the school. As a result, pupils can solve problems, calculate and explain their answers well.
- Progress is not so strong when pupils do not have sufficient time to practise and master a skill before moving on to the next topic.
- Teaching assistants offer high-quality support not only to pupils who need to catch up but also to the most able. This has contributed to rapidly rising rates of progress for pupils currently in the school.
- Every child really does matter in this school. Meticulous record keeping of pastoral aspects goes hand in hand with teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils. This has led to high-quality personal development and welfare of pupils.
- Pupils behave well, both in lessons and in the playground. They apply themselves well to work and are polite to each other and to adults.
- Outcomes for pupils currently in the school are improving rapidly, particularly in reading and mathematics. The rate of progress is accelerating from year to year as a result of improvements made by leaders.
- Outcomes for pupils in science and humanities are weaker compared to reading, writing and mathematics for the most able pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching still further so that:
 - pupils fully practise and master a skill before they move on to the next topic.
- Improve outcomes for the most able pupils in science and humanities subjects by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders give clear feedback and advice to teachers so that they can improve their teaching of these subjects
 - teaching in these subjects challenges the most able pupils.
- Sharpen how achievement information is used in target setting, school development plans and performance management so that it is consistent and clear for governors, the trust and school leaders.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Inspirational, straight-talking, no-nonsense leadership from the acting headteacher has created a strong ethos based on excellence for all pupils within a caring, supportive environment. The many changes she has introduced with her senior team have been transformational in driving up outcomes for pupils. Staff who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire are 100% in support of the changes made, and morale is high.
- Training for teachers has helped them improve their subject knowledge and ensure that their assessments are accurate. Persistently weak teaching has been tackled decisively by school leaders.
- The curriculum is rich, relevant and exciting. Art and music feature highly. Trips and visits bring learning alive for pupils. Extra-curricular activities are plentiful and well attended. As a result, pupils say 'I love school and everything we do here.' This undoubtedly contributes to their high attendance rates.
- The curriculum in reading has improved significantly through physical improvements to the school following a fire in July 2016. A new library was built which is now used extensively throughout the school day. Reading and encouraging a love of reading is treated as a priority. As a result, pupils frequently read for pleasure. The mathematics curriculum has been exceptionally well developed by the headteacher who has particular expertise. This has led to the highest rates of progress compared with other subjects.
- A weaker aspect of the curriculum is humanities and science, where the work does not fully challenge the most able pupils. Middle leaders with responsibility for these subjects are now ensuring that the subjects are taught regularly but middle leaders have yet to give clear messages to staff on how to improve their teaching in these subjects.
- Sport and physical activity are promoted well and funded by the sports premium for primary schools. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in five-a-side football coached by expert coaches or take part in more unusual sports such as squash. Staff use the funding to observe professional coaches at work, teach alongside them and so improve their own sports teaching skills.
- Development plans, self evaluation and performance management are strong. School leaders are far from complacent and constantly strive for excellence. The bar is set high for teachers who, in turn, rise to the challenge. Accountability, through pupil progress meetings, is sharp. It identifies which pupils are at risk of falling through the net and the responsibility is firmly on the teacher to address these concerns. This has been instrumental in improving teaching.
- Achievement information is used well by leaders. However, there is inconsistency in how targets are set, which results in some ambiguity for leaders, the trust and governors. For example, some targets are based on value-added progress, some on attainment measures and some use 'steps' relating to a commercial product used by the school.

- The pupil premium is having a strong impact on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Support from outside agencies is bought in to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are promptly met. Highly trained teaching assistants give valuable support to pupils resulting in them now making faster progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. Most impact has been made through working with the parents of disadvantaged pupils, for example so that parents understand the importance of listening to their children reading at home.
- Additional funding to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is having a positive impact on the achievement of these pupils. This is particularly evident in Years 3 and 4 where pupils have been supported well since they arrived at the school.
- The trust has, over the past year, stepped up its support for the school by offering specific primary assistance for leadership and school improvement partner support. This has sharpened the focus leaders have on the curriculum and on teaching quality.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development.
- Governors have supported the headteacher well through the various necessary changes to raise achievement and tackle ineffective teaching.
- Governors are provided with a comprehensive package of support to help them understand achievement information. The information provided by the headteacher is of high quality and enables governors to both challenge and support school leaders.
- Governors are sometimes unclear of the progress of different groups of pupils. This is because of some ambiguity of how achievement information is presented by school leaders.
- Governors have not ensured that the school fully meets DfE requirements on what academies should publish.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding in the school is strong. All staff see it as their responsibility to be watchful for any safeguarding issues.
- Training that is provided to staff, including for lunchtime supervisors, is regular and thorough. Record keeping is thorough.
- Appropriate checks are made on staff upon their appointment to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.
- Policies are particularly clear. They provide staff with detailed guidance of what to do should they need to address any safeguarding concerns.
- The site is well maintained and is safe and secure. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Reading is taught well. Teachers use their assessment information to ensure that all pupils are challenged well. The most able pupils are challenged to justify their answers fully so that their comprehension skills improve. The least able are helped with their fluency and stamina to read long passages of text.
- Teachers make sure pupils grasp the basics in mathematics. Recent collaboration with feeder infant schools has ensured a smoother transition in how pupils improve their skills in adding and subtracting in Year 3. Teachers give plentiful opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematics skills to solve problems. This prepares them well for the tests in Year 6 and the next stage in their education.
- In writing, pupils are taught how to use an increasing range of punctuation and how to spell more complex words, as they get older. However, teachers sometimes move on too quickly before pupils have had a chance to practise and master a skill properly.
- Teaching assistants add much value to the quality of teaching and learning. In various lessons seen by inspectors, teaching assistants gave high-quality support not only to the lowest-ability pupils but also to the most able.
- Teachers question pupils well so that they give full answers. This enables pupils to deepen their understanding. For example, in a reading lesson, teachers asked pupils to justify their answers with quotations from the text. In turn this enabled them to write a well-considered answer.
- Teachers support pupils to become confident, independent learners, which prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Pupils decide for themselves what equipment they will use to do the work and solve problems. Displays in classrooms promote pupils' independence so they find out answers themselves rather than asking the teacher unnecessarily.
- In subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics there are significant strengths in teaching. It is exceptionally strong in art where, for example, pupils are able to talk informatively how the work of Henry Moore has influenced their own sculptures. Similarly, in music, pupils develop their composing skills well alongside performing. However, it is not so strong in science and humanities where the work is too easy for the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children are happy at the school. Parents who inspectors spoke to said the same.
- Pupils take responsibility willingly, for example by being members of the active school council or playground helpers. Pupils are polite to each other and to adults.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. While they say bullying does go on at times, there is always a caring adult to turn to should the need arise.
- Visits to different places of worship, membership of various clubs, the 'Wednesday reflection' and a link with a school in Ghana help pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet or their mobile phones.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Attendance overall and for different groups including disadvantaged pupils has risen and is now above average. Few pupils are persistently absent. This has been the result of high-quality work with parents to improve attendance and an engaging curriculum, which pupils do not want to miss.
- In class, pupils apply themselves well to their work. Only when the work does not challenge them do they become passive in their learning. Pupils say that there are occasional times in lessons where misbehaviour disrupts their learning.
- In the playground, there are plenty of activities to do. Pupils chat sensibly in small groups or take part in team games helped by play leaders and learning mentors.
- Pupils wear their uniform proudly. The site is neat, tidy and litter free.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Outcomes in the 2017 national tests showed that over time, pupils had made weak progress in reading, which was in the lowest 10% nationally. Progress in mathematics, particularly for disadvantaged pupils was also weak.
- Inspectors found that improvements made to the curriculum and teaching have had a profoundly positive effect on the outcomes of pupils currently in the school. Pupils in all years are now making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Tracking shows that pupils who are currently in Years 3 and Year 4 are making most gains in their learning. This is because they have benefited from high-quality teaching since they joined the school. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are now making fast progress but had not developed strong mathematical and linguistic skills when they were younger.
- Most-able pupils are challenged well. Achievement information shows that these pupils are making good headway in reading, writing and mathematics. This includes the most able disadvantaged pupils. In lessons, teachers challenge pupils well in these subjects but not so well in humanities subjects and science.
- Disadvantaged pupils benefit from good support in class and from mentor support outside the class. Their regular attendance and the high-quality support they receive means that their progress is accelerating quickly. School tracking shows that disadvantaged pupils are making progress which is close to that of others in the school and nationally.

- Outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities were weak in 2017. This is because setting by ability that was in place 18 months ago did not benefit these pupils. The work was too simple and pupils fell more and more behind as time went on.
- There is now a 'no excuse' culture where pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported to achieve their very best alongside their peers. Inspection evidence and the school's own tracking shows that pupils are now making rapid and sustained progress.
- Pupils who need to catch up are now making better progress than before. This is because the basic skills of reading and writing are now addressed as soon as pupils arrive in the school and their progress tracked meticulously.

School details

Unique reference number	141409
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10036385

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	406
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Stephen Groves
Headteacher	Katie Robinson (acting)
Telephone number	01977 556 946
Website	www.airedalejuniorschool.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@airedale-jun.wakefield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- At the time of the inspection, three members of the senior leadership team were in temporary roles. This includes the headteacher, who was previously the deputy headteacher.
- The school was damaged by a fire in July 2016.
- The school became an academy sponsored by the Northern Ambition Academies Trust in January 2015.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, accessibility for disabled pupils and how the school promotes equality.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, accessibility for disabled pupils and how the school promotes equality.

- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and so the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic groups is below 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.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons, listened to some pupils reading and looked at the work in pupils' books to evaluate their progress over time. Inspectors spoke to pupils, staff, parents, governors, the school improvement partner and the chief executive of the Northern Ambition Academies Trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised various documents including the summary of self-evaluation, governance documents, safeguarding information and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- The 63 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered by inspectors. Questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Robert Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Hussey	Ofsted Inspector
Larissa Thorpe	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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