

Altrincham C of E (Aided) Primary School

Townfield Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 4DS

Inspection dates

26 to 27 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders and governors have overseen a significant decline in standards at key stage 2.
- A lack of challenge from governors has contributed to this decline. Recent training means that governors now have a realistic view of the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders and teachers have not adapted quickly enough to curriculum changes, and this has contributed to falling pupils' progress in key stage 2.
- Governors, leaders and staff are working with local and diocesan schools to bring about the necessary changes. As a result, early improvements to all areas of school life are evident.
- The impact of the pupil premium spending is unclear. Disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as their peers.
- Over time, pupils do not make strong enough progress in reading and writing during key stage 2.
- The progress of pupils across subjects and year groups is not tracked well enough. As a result, leaders are not clear about the progress being made by current pupils.
- The role of senior and middle leaders is developing. Some middle leaders are not involved sufficiently in developing their subject or improving teaching. The curriculum in some subject areas is weak and does not sequence learning well.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. At times, the needs of pupils are not met well as work is either too easy or too difficult. Assessment is not used well to identify gaps in learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is effectively led by the new headteacher. She has a strong and clear vision of what needs to improve so that pupils can make the progress of which they are capable.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and well-mannered.
- The early years provision is good. Children behave well, enjoy their learning and achieve well.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils are kind, caring, respectful and welcoming to others.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - implementing effective systems to assess the progress of pupils and the standards they are reaching across subjects and key stages
 - developing the roles of middle and senior leaders to monitor and improve standards in their areas of responsibility
 - developing the expertise of teachers and middle leaders so that they extend their subject knowledge and ask meaningful questions
 - reviewing and revising the curriculum in the foundation subjects to ensure that all pupils develop the subject knowledge, skills and understanding they need for success.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by:
 - ensuring that governors challenge leaders more rigorously, particularly in relation to the achievement and progress of pupils
 - making sure that governors have an accurate overview of the impact of the pupil premium funding on the progress and attendance of disadvantaged pupils
 - improving governors' awareness of the quality of teaching and learning so that they can hold leaders more stringently to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to plan learning which meets the needs of pupils across all key stages
 - providing stretch and challenge for all so that work is pitched appropriately
 - using assessment to identify any gaps in learning so that the progress of pupils in key stage 2 improves rapidly.
- Increase the progress of key stage 2 pupils in reading and writing.

External reviews of the school's use of pupil premium funding and of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- In recent years the quality of education at the school has declined. Senior leaders, middle leaders and teaching staff have not kept up to date with changes to the national curriculum and teaching has not remained at a high standard. As a result, the progress of pupils in key stage 2 has deteriorated.
- Prior to the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2019, governors have not challenged leaders stringently enough about the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. Since the start of this academic year, governors have begun to take part in training so that they better fulfil their duties and have a clearer understanding of the school's overall effectiveness.
- Governors, senior leaders and staff are beginning to work more closely with the local authority and diocese. Teachers are enthusiastic about their professional development and the positive impact this is having on pupils' learning. As a result, morale is improving. Staff are proud to work at the school and want the best for pupils.
- The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, particularly in assessment and the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders have prioritised key areas such as safeguarding and progress in reading and writing. The headteacher has made key improvements in these areas in the short time she has been in post and there is ample evidence of leaders' capacity to improve the school.
- The headteacher has the full confidence of staff, pupils and parents. The local authority, Diocese of Chester and governors all express their confidence in her and can give examples of the improvements she has already brought about. Pupils and parents speak positively about how approachable leaders are and appreciate the improvements seen in site security and communication.
- Assessment of pupils' progress and achievements does not enable leaders to know how well pupils are progressing across the school and in a wide range of subjects. There is little strategic information available to enable staff to intervene quickly when pupils fall behind. The impact of any subsequent interventions is unclear. As a result, although the work in pupils' books shows that they are making progress over time, improvements in the progress of pupils are not carefully planned or evaluated.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. As a result, pupils receive good support from teaching assistants. Funding is used to provide support academically, socially and emotionally. However, the evaluation of the impact of this funding on academic outcomes is unclear. The SENCo does not routinely ensure that teaching meets these pupils' needs or what impact the additional funding is having on their outcomes across the school.
- Middle leaders feel well supported by the new headteacher and welcome the recent training they have attended, both in school and in conjunction with local schools. Middle leaders are developing networks with other schools to moderate the assessment of pupils' work accurately and to share good practice. As a result, they know where

improvements need to be made to the wider curriculum so that pupils' learning is sequenced carefully to build the necessary knowledge and skills for future success. For example, leaders identify that the teaching of mathematics does not prepare pupils sufficiently well to solve problems and reason at a high level.

- Leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a notable strength of the school. Pupils are tolerant of others, regardless of differences, and they know about other faiths and cultures.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport funding effectively to improve the range of sporting activities and clubs on offer to pupils. Teachers also benefit from working alongside specialist coaches to develop their teaching of sporting activities.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and built on mutual respect and care. Staff provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities for pupils so that pupils can try new experiences or develop their talents in areas such as singing, archery and making robots.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not received sufficient information from leaders regarding pupils' progress, attainment or attendance. As a result, governors have not held leaders to account for the declining progress at key stage 2. Governors have not asked sufficiently probing questions to get to the root causes of the fall in standards at key stage 2.
- Governors have not held senior leaders to account for the impact of the pupil premium funding on disadvantaged pupils' achievement and attendance. Similarly, although governors are aware that attendance is generally above the national average, they do not know about the underlying trends for different groups of pupils.
- With the support of the local authority and the diocese, governors are undertaking relevant training and now know how to fulfil their statutory duties effectively. Governors now have a realistic view of the school's effectiveness and are clear about the current strengths and weaknesses in the school's work.
- Governors willingly give of their time and are committed to ensuring that leaders' plans for improvement are effective. They are now better informed about school issues and are able to more effectively support and challenge the headteacher on the school's improvement journey.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures for recruiting and appointing staff are appropriate and all required checks are carried out and documented. Safeguarding training is provided for all staff, including those new to the school and supply staff. All staff are confident in what to do if they have concerns about a pupil.
- Leaders responsible for safeguarding work closely with a range of external agencies to ensure that any vulnerable pupils are supported in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Parents are appreciative of the improvements made to site security to ensure that

pupils are safe on school grounds. All parents who responded to Parent View stated that their children feel safe at school.

- Pupils spoken with during the inspection said that they are taught to keep themselves safe online and in the community. They trust staff and feel confident to talk to someone if they are worried or in need of support.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning across the school is inconsistent, both between subjects and within key stages. The work in pupils' books shows that pupils are making variable progress and that some pupils' progress falters when work is not well-matched to their needs. On occasion, pupils find the work too easy and move on to their reading books instead of attempting more complex and demanding tasks. At other times, planning is overambitious and the activities for pupils are too difficult as they have not yet mastered the basic knowledge and skills needed to progress.
- The lack of a consistent approach to assessment means that teachers do not effectively use pupils' prior knowledge to plan learning that leads to good progress. This has contributed to underachievement, particularly for middle-attaining pupils in reading and higher-attaining pupils in writing.
- Teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum is variable. When teachers' subject knowledge is strong, effective questioning and appropriately-pitched activities mean that misconceptions are quickly addressed, and pupils learn effectively. Sometimes, however, when subject knowledge is weaker, pupils make less progress because their interest wanes and they disengage from their learning.
- Ongoing dialogue and assessment by teachers are not used well enough to encourage pupils to reflect on their work and think more deeply about their learning. Pupils' writing is limited at times because teachers do not have a consistent approach to spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- In some subjects, such as history and geography, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils do not experience the range and depth of curriculum to enable them to develop knowledge and skills to the highest standards.
- In mathematics, pupils' fluency and confidence in their arithmetic skills are strong. However, there are weaknesses in pupils' ability to reason and problem-solve. In some classes, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to study algebra, shape and space, or to handle data.
- When teaching effectively meets the needs of pupils, pupils are interested and enjoy their learning immensely. Pupils' learning is enriched through educational visits and talks from external speakers. Pupils make good use of the knowledge they gain during such activities to improve their understanding of their topic work.
- A clear focus on pupils' reading and writing since the beginning of the spring term of 2019 is leading to improved outcomes for pupils, and this is evident in books and in lessons over time. Pupils are using a wide range of sophisticated vocabulary and increasingly complex punctuation to improve their writing. The teaching of phonics and early reading is strong and is having a positive impact on pupils' confidence in their

reading.

- There are pockets of strong practice in all key stages across the school. Where the curriculum is well thought-out and sequenced appropriately, teachers plan activities which engage and motivate pupils. The vast majority of pupils enjoy their learning and conscientiously complete the work set. However, where teaching is weaker, pupils are uncertain at times and wait for clearer direction from teachers. Where teaching is stronger, pupils show initiative, demonstrate curiosity and a thirst for learning and make sound progress as a result.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and say that they are happy and enjoy coming to school. Parents share their children's views and are mostly supportive of the school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils trust and respect their teachers and know that they can go to them for support.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop leadership skills. There are many opportunities to take on positions of responsibility, such as being playtime leaders, helping infant classes, running clubs or being members of the school council. As a result, pupils are confident and show high levels of maturity.
- Pupils respect others from a range of backgrounds and cultures. Pupils learn about a range of faiths in religious education and this prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils enjoy physical exercise, playing together and playing sport for fun as well as competitively.
- Staff, parents and pupils all agree that pupils feel safe in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe through the curriculum, assemblies and a range of additional activities and visits. Pupils feel safe from bullying and told inspectors that it is extremely rare in school and is dealt with effectively by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is a welcoming and friendly environment. Pupils speak confidently to adults and visitors and are proud of their achievements. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and during social times. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are sociable, and pupils play well with each other. Pupils respond well to clear routines and the very high expectations of staff.
- The attendance of pupils is good overall, compared to national averages. Leaders now challenge families who take pupils on holiday in term times and, as a result, less learning time is now lost. The proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is low. However, the small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language do not attend as regularly as others.
- Pupils are friendly and polite. They are respectful to others. They listen carefully to teachers and behave well. When teaching is not well matched to their needs, some

pupils disengage from their learning and become demotivated. On rare occasions, they can start to exhibit low level disruption, but this is dealt with effectively by staff.

- Pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour are extremely well-supported. The number of pupils excluded by the school for a fixed period of time is very low.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- For the past few years, although attainment in key stage 2 has been high, the progress of pupils in reading and writing has declined. In 2017 and 2018, the progress of middle-attaining pupils in reading and all pupils in writing was considerably lower than that achieved by other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- In mathematics for the past two years, the progress made by pupils by the end of key stage 2 was average.
- In 2017 and 2018, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was below that of other pupils nationally. These pupils consistently underperformed and did not make the progress of which they were capable.
- Over time, pupils' progress is below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. The progress of pupils across a wide range of subjects is weak. As a result, over the past few years, pupils have not been prepared well for life at secondary school.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been high for a number of years. The vast majority of pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. A high proportion of pupils achieve the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been above the national average for several years. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for reading and are able to access the wider curriculum.
- Currently, pupils are making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics across key stage 2. This includes pupils with SEND. However, outcomes in foundation subjects are inconsistent. Work in pupils' books shows that outcomes in different year groups and across different subjects are varied. Curriculum planning does not sequence learning well in some subject areas. As a result, pupils do not have the basic knowledge and skills they need in order to move on to more complex concepts. In religious education, however, pupils make good progress and can talk knowledgeably about their learning and what they have studied.
- Pupils read widely, often and with fluency, confidence and understanding. Younger pupils use their phonics skills well to decode unfamiliar words. Older pupils read with expression and can interpret their reading and suggest possible endings. All pupils recognise the importance of reading and the new books provided by leaders ensure that pupils have a good selection of high-quality texts to read.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a strong start in early years. A high proportion of children enter

Nursery with skills, knowledge and abilities at least in line with, or above, those typical for their age. They are ready to learn and settle well when starting at the Nursery.

- Leaders and staff have high expectations of children. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is consistently above the national figures. Throughout the early years, children make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have a clear view of the positive impact of teaching on children. They track the children's good progress over time, using learning journals and technology. Areas for improvement, such as boys' reading and writing, are identified and clear plans are in place to address these. However, the outdoor space is not used well enough to support children in their early reading and writing.
- Teachers plan activities which capture the interests and imagination of children. For example, in Nursery children were seen enthusiastically digging for dinosaur eggs. Children are eager to learn and their learning over time helps them to develop the knowledge and skills to equip them well for key stage 1.
- Good teaching in Nursery and Reception classes is underpinned by positive, caring relationships. Children's learning is supported well by teaching assistants.
- High-quality phonics teaching promotes enthusiasm and meets the individual needs of children. Disadvantaged children and children with SEND make good progress as a result of careful planning and well-targeted support. Leaders are aware of those disadvantaged children who cannot read as well as others. They make sure that a focus on language development prioritises reading to help them catch up with their peers.
- Children behave well. They cooperate well with each other and enjoy playing and learning together. Children respond clearly in sentences and are happy to talk in front of others. They are keen to share their successes with adults.
- Leaders and staff develop good relationships with parents. Staff work effectively, prior to the children starting at the school, to provide a smooth transition from home or other providers. Parents have opportunities to contribute to and support their child's learning.
- Leaders ensure that the statutory welfare requirements are met. Children are safe, well cared for and learn well.

School details

Unique reference number	106341
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10086862

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoff Reyner
Headteacher	Mrs Kirsty Chrysler
Telephone number	0161 928 7288
Website	www.altrinchamceprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	altrinchamce.admin@trafford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 July 2008

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It has a nursery class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The governors arranged a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools in January 2018. At that time, the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school were judged to be outstanding.

- The new headteacher took up post in January 2019.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects in the early years and key stages 1 and 2. During visits to lessons, inspectors spoke with pupils and scrutinised their written work. Most observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of the leadership team and representatives from the governing body. The lead inspector also met with the director of education for Trafford and the director of education for the Diocese of Chester.
- Inspectors met with pupils, both formally and informally, to discuss their experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for future improvement. Inspectors reviewed behaviour and attendance information relating to current pupils, minutes of governing body meetings and documentation relating to safeguarding.
- School policies relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium and the sport premium, were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before school, in lessons, and around the school at lunchtimes and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground to seek their views about the school and considered the 100 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Two emails sent to the lead inspector were also considered. The lead inspector also spoke to a parent by telephone.

Inspection team

Helen O'Neill, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Sandie La Porta	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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