

Inspection of Athersley North Primary School

Lindhurst Road, Athersley North, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S71 3NB

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive school at the heart of the local community. Staff and pupils live by the school's '5 R' values: risk-taking, responsibility, relationships, reasoning and resilience. These values shape the curriculum and pupil rewards. Pupils work hard and are keen to earn value badges.

Pupils are happy and they feel safe. They say that when bullying happens, adults deal with it straightaway.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils behave well. Staff teach breathing and relaxation techniques. Pupils use 'classroom calm corners' and 'purple chairs' if they need some extra time. They say that these strategies help them to refocus on their learning. Specialist staff come into school to give extra help to some pupils so that they can talk about their feelings and emotions.

Pupils enjoy the different roles and responsibilities that they have in school. Some pupils have been elected to the school's pupil parliament. Year 5 pupils love being 'mini-police'. Local officers provide training on how they deal with speeding and parking issues.

Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, such as science club and choir. They know about different faiths and beliefs. Staff teach pupils life skills such as cooking. All pupils get the chance to make bread and quiche from scratch, using ingredients.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Senior leaders and governors have created an ambitious curriculum. They have a relentless focus on school improvement. School improvement plans are detailed and informative. However, some of the information that is passed to governors is not clear enough. It does not help governors fully evaluate the quality of education in the school. Leaders and governors use other experts to check that their views are accurate. The headteachers support subject leaders with their part of the curriculum. All staff access high-quality training. They are proud to work at the school. They say that plans and support from subject leaders reduce their workload.

The broad and balanced curriculum begins in early years. Teachers use the local area to support the curriculum. In history, older pupils can talk about local coal mining. They understand how this affected children and their families. Leaders have identified the key knowledge and vocabulary that they want pupils to learn. This ensures that the curriculum works well for those pupils who are in mixed-age classes. In mathematics, pupils use the 'top 10' to explain their thinking. Pupils do not always get things right first time. They use their value of resilience to keep trying.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are supported well by skilled staff. Other pupils are aware of the different needs of pupils. This means that everyone gets on well.

Staff use assessment effectively to find any gaps that pupils have in their learning. Leaders know that the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that some key knowledge needs to be revisited. Staff present new information clearly. Pupils model this in their work. Staff make sure that pupils have the chance to recall things that they have learned before. In design technology, pupils remember the running stitch from last year. They used this stitch and the newly taught blanket stitch to make a quilt.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This starts in Nursery. Staff teach pupils to use their 'magnet eyes' to show that they are listening to the teacher. As a result, pupils concentrate well in class and listen attentively in lessons.

Leaders make reading a high priority. Pupils read every day. They enjoy their daily story time. Every room has a reading area. Pupils love the book-vending machine. They get to choose the books that they could win. This is one of the reasons that they are motivated to come to school. Staff are experts at teaching phonics. Younger pupils write the new sounds that they learn. However, some pupils do not correctly form their letters or numbers. This hinders their handwriting. Staff give weaker readers extra support. Teachers make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds that they know. This helps pupils to become confident readers. Staff listen to these pupils read every day.

Children get off to a strong start in early years. They learn to value differences. Staff help this by arranging for children to visit a local special school. Children rise to staff expectations and copy the good examples set. For example, children followed the staff example carefully when making sandwiches for their Queen's Platinum Jubilee picnic. Children respect their learning environment and know where everything is. Staff create predictable routines, which creates confident learners. Children wash up their own plates after use.

Pupils learn about fundamental British values in their lessons. They remember these as 'Dr Tim'. Staff use the local community shop as part of the curriculum. Pupils visit to buy food, learn how to run a business and meet people from their community. This promotes pupils' social skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding procedures are strong. Leaders know the risks that children may encounter in the local area. Leaders are tenacious in their pursuit of support when a child or family is in need. They work well with other agencies. Staff training is up to date and relevant.

Leaders thoroughly check the suitability of staff before they start working in the school.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They know not to share personal information with others. Parents and carers receive online safety information to help them at home.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff in early years and key stage 1 do not teach the physical aspects of writing and transcription as effectively as they need to. Some pupils struggle with their pencil grip. This has been further affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This causes problems with letter and number formation that can lead to unhelpful writing habits that are hard to change later on. Leaders should clarify how pencil grip is taught in early years and key stage 1. They should ensure that staff are trained to teach and model this effectively.
- Leaders provide information to governors that is too detailed on the key areas that governors need to know about. This makes it difficult for governors to use the plans and reports that they are given. Governors cannot easily check on the school improvement progress being made. Leaders should refine the information given to governors so that it sets out only the essential actions and milestones needed to further embed school improvement.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	131157
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10227436
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Iles
Headteacher	Kirsty Wordsworth and Clare Storr
Website	www.athersleynorthprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers a breakfast club and several after-school clubs.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders from the school, two members of the governing body (including the chair of governors) and a representative from Barnsley local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, design technology and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lesson visits and at breaktimes. Pupils expressed their views on behaviour in discussions. Inspectors also took account of the 56 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record. Discussions with staff and pupils were held to determine their understanding of safeguarding.
- The views of parents were sought in person, and inspectors considered the five responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff from meeting with staff and from the 22 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator to consider the curriculum for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss curriculum plans. They visited lessons, accompanied by senior leaders.

Inspection team

Ian Clennan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Ashworth	Ofsted Inspector
Juliet Wright	Ofsted Inspector

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