

Inspection of a good school: Athelstan Primary School

Richmond Park Way, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S13 8HH

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 March 2023

Outcome

Athelstan Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a vibrant, happy and welcoming school. Pupils speak very positively about their school with one saying that they would like to come to school every day! Pupils engage with their learning enthusiastically and there is a lively atmosphere at social times as pupils enjoy playing with the equipment provided. Leaders also provide quieter spaces for these times such as 'Buster the reading bus' and the butterfly garden where there are organised mindfulness sessions.

Pupils are kind to each other. Bullying is a rare event. If it happens, it is dealt with promptly by staff. Pupils trust their teachers and are confident that they will be supported if they have a problem. There are a wide range of clubs available which pupils enjoy, including several sports clubs, choir and science and ukulele clubs.

Pupils relish the leadership opportunities that they can hold which include mini police, science ambassadors and mindfulness champions. Pupils talk confidently about the work that they do and show great maturity. Parents are highly positive about the school. The vast majority would recommend the school and all of the parents and carers who spoke to the inspectors were positive about the school.

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

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They have developed a wide-ranging curriculum. It is designed to reflect the diverse community that the school serves, so that pupils are equipped with the knowledge and skills that they need to progress.

Reading is a priority. Staff are highly skilled at teaching phonics and the curriculum for this is well led and monitored. The programme starts in Reception and pupils progress at the pace that is right for them. If pupils are having difficulty or fall behind, there are regular catch-up sessions. The books that early readers use to practise match the sounds that they know. There are imaginative initiatives to encourage a love of reading such as

the reading bus. However, when pupils move from reading to writing in Reception and key stage 1, they are less proficient. Pupils' writing in other subjects is less strong.

The curriculum is equally well planned in other subjects. The Year 1 curriculum in mathematics, for instance, builds on the models and images introduced in early years. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For instance, in mathematics, pupils with SEND are well supported by concrete resources and adult support. This helps these pupils to access the lessons.

Leaders have carefully considered what they expect pupils to know and remember. 'Need to know sheets' are produced and shared with pupils and parents. In talking to pupils, it is clear that they remember what they have been taught, although there is some variation between topics. In history, pupils in year 6 showed good knowledge of the Mayans and, more locally, the Sheffield blitz. Year 4 pupils were able to ask good questions about local history using maps taken from different times, but were less secure in answering questions about the Vikings. The focus on local history is a particular strength. New vocabulary is prioritised when pupils are being introduced to new topics in history and geography. As such, pupils use new words with understanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Subjects are well led, and teachers feel supported in developing curriculum materials and in trying out new ideas.

Leaders are aware of improvements that are needed in pupils' written skills. Pupils in key stage 1 cannot always express their answers fully in the written word. Pupils in key stage 2 do not always fully develop their ideas in extended pieces of writing in subjects such as history and geography. Leaders have plans in place to address this, for instance the youngest children are now creating their own story books using age-appropriate supports and guides. This is already showing an improvement.

The personal development of pupils is a priority for leaders. There is a strong personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum that pupils enjoy. Pupils could speak maturely about what they have learned. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is enriched by the many clubs on offer. Attendance at these clubs is carefully monitored to ensure that everyone has opportunities if they would like them. Trips are used to enhance pupils learning, both locally and further afield. Year 6 were very positive about their residential visit this year.

The emphasis on pupils' personal development also supports the positive behaviour of pupils. Good behaviour is based on the excellent relationships between staff and pupils, and on the clear routines that are consistently used by staff. Pupils are polite and courteous, and this is consistently acknowledged by staff.

Staff are proud to work at Athelstan. The headteacher and senior leaders are well respected. Staff feel part of a team. The governors know the school well and provide support and challenge to senior leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that the correct procedures are followed when appointing staff. Thorough records are kept of any concerns. Prompt referrals are made if required. Leaders are prepared to be relentless in pursuing concerns if they believe that children need support. Staff receive regular training and understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe, both off and online. There is very good pastoral support for all pupils. Staff check in with pupils every day and staff are on hand if extra support is needed.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils are not as proficient in writing as they are in reading. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is developed so that pupils have the opportunity to write with increasing independence and proficiency in the foundation stage and key stage 1. Leaders should ensure that there are more opportunities for extended writing in key stage 2.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

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.

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	107083
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	10240370
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	619
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs of governing body	Sarah Horsfield, Jules Jones
Headteacher	Deb Halliday
Website	www.athelstanprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	June 2017

Information about this school

- Following a review of governance, the governing body was reconstituted with co-chairs in May 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy and assistant headteachers, subject leaders and other members of staff. The lead inspector met with those responsible for governance, including one of the co-chairs of the governing body, one governor and two associate governors.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. They gathered pupils' views from both formal and informal discussions.

- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The inspectors checked the school's single central record of recruitment checks, met with the school's designated safeguarding lead, and reviewed safeguarding information.
- The inspectors met with parents and carers. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Parent View. The inspectors also took account of the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Andrew Cummings, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Angela Sweeting Ofsted Inspector

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