

Athelstan Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107083
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	336806
Inspection dates	20–21 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carole Noble
Headteacher	Mrs Debra Halliday
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed 17 teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors and staff, talked to parents, carers and pupils and looked at lesson planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation, including minutes of governing body meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. They scrutinised 100 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those returned by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The effectiveness of senior leaders and governors in improving attainment, especially in mathematics and for more-able pupils, was examined.
- The team looked at how much attendance and the behaviour of pupils have improved since the last inspection.
- The quality of leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage and its impact on children's learning was investigated.
- The team also looked at how effectively assessment information is being used to plan appropriate work and accelerate pupils' progress.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average primary school. The accommodation is currently undergoing extensive refurbishment. About one in five pupils is from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and this proportion is just below the national average. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language but the number is increasing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. The school is designated as a children's centre with privately run childcare and Nursery provision on the site. These were inspected separately and a report published in December 2008. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school with caring staff and happy pupils. Parents and carers are positive in their views about the school, appreciating all that it does for their children. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are an effective senior team, creating a unity of purpose among staff. Rigorous monitoring of provision and outcomes for pupils gives everyone a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to improve. In their own evaluation of the school, senior staff and governors are realistic and honest, knowing that improvement is taking place but recognising there is still more to be done. Staff are aware of the need to raise attainment further, particularly for more-able pupils. Their actions to achieve this are proving most successful in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2, where progress is strongest and attainment rising the fastest. Given the current rate of improvement the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Behaviour management is a strength, ensuring that there is a quiet, calm atmosphere for learning in most lessons. Staff deal exceptionally well with the challenging behaviour of a very few pupils, ensuring that it does not have an adverse impact on other pupils and spoil their learning and enjoyment of school. Teachers set a clear message for all pupils on how to conduct themselves. The good care, guidance and support for individual pupils and the engaging curriculum are instrumental in fostering positive attitudes, good behaviour and caring relationships between pupils and with staff. Pupils' attendance has improved and is broadly average but there remains a small proportion of pupils who miss too much school time. This is a barrier to their learning and progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. Throughout the school punctuality is also an issue, with some lessons interrupted by those arriving late.

Teaching is good overall, enabling pupils to make good progress overall from their below average starting points, but there are some inconsistencies in its impact on pupils' learning and progress. Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching. In Key Stage 1 and 2 attainment is better now than at time of the last inspection, due to improvements in teaching. In Key Stage 2, where teaching is now stronger, overall attainment has risen significantly over recent years and is now broadly average by the end of Year 6. However, in both key stages too few pupils reach above average standards because teaching does not yet always provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils. There is effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those few pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a result, these groups of pupils make good progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment further by:
 - increasing the proportion of good teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - planning work which challenges and interests pupils of all abilities, particularly the more able
 - ensuring that introductions to lessons are not too long so that pupils do not lose interest in their learning.
- Improve attendance, particularly for those pupils in Key Stage 1 who are absent too often, and punctuality across the school, by working more closely with parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are well behaved in lessons and are keen to complete the tasks teachers set for them. Overall, they achieve well and enjoy their learning. They benefit from the close support of their teachers and support staff, especially when trying to learn new work. In the lessons observed there was a good atmosphere for learning. For example, pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lessons were quick to help and support those who were not sure about their work on algebra.

Throughout the school attainment is rising as pupils' progress improves. This is particularly so in Key Stage 2. For example, the current Year 6 pupils have made good progress from their below average starting points on entry to Year 3. Their attainment is broadly average. In all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, however, fewer than expected are attaining above average standards because teachers are not consistently challenging more-able pupils enough. The picture in Key Stage 1 is similar. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because they are targeted for additional support in lessons and given appropriately challenging work. The school works hard to improve pupils' attendance and has had a significant impact on the attendance of individuals. Attendance is improving throughout the school but this improvement is more evident in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 the progress of a small number of pupils is adversely affected by their poor attendance. Across the school the punctuality of a small number of pupils is not consistently good enough.

The vast majority of pupils respond well to the high expectations for their behaviour, making school a calm, safe and happy community. All know who to turn to if they need help and they say that they like their teachers. The challenging behaviour of a very small number of pupils is managed extremely well by staff but it raises other pupils' awareness that behaviour, while good overall, is not always as good as they would like it to be. Many pupils make a significant contribution to school life as school councillors or by enjoying the good range of after-school clubs. Pupils are also heavily involved in activities in the local community, recently gaining recognition for their film entries in the Steel City Globe Awards. Most know what they need to eat and about the benefits of exercise to live healthily but many still choose foods that contain high amounts of fat, sugar and salt. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In the majority of lessons teaching is effective and this ensures that pupils enjoy learning and usually make good progress. Most teachers succeed in making learning interesting and adapt their planning if pupils grasp new work quicker than expected. In one outstanding lesson seen, pupils were highly motivated following a brisk, purposeful introduction and clear instructions to write a formal letter of complaint. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, teachers' introductions to the whole class are too long and pupils' concentration wavers and they lose interest. On occasions work is not well matched to pupils' learning needs, particularly the more-able, and this slows their progress. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own progress, adding to their understanding of how to do even better.

The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning and is helping to raise attainment. Despite the focus on raising attainment in English and mathematics, staff have remained committed to planning and teaching a broad and balanced curriculum. Links between subjects are developing well to promote basic literacy and numeracy skills with increasing effectiveness. The curriculum is further enriched with

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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'Friday Learning' where pupils of all ages engage in activities such as sewing, chess, developing their computer skills or cooking. 'TASC' (Thinking Actively in a Social Context) provides an excellent framework for learning in a meaningful context. Two modern foreign languages are taught and strong partnerships with community organisations and a wide range of after-school clubs provide further valuable skills for pupils' future lives.

Staff know pupils well and meet individuals' needs effectively, especially for those whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable. The caring approach of staff is a key factor in raising pupils' self-esteem, encouraging good behaviour and developing considerate relationships between pupils. The quality and effectiveness of the support for pupils are routinely evaluated and the expertise of specialists from other agencies often sought to ensure that needs are being met. Every effort is being made to encourage good attendance and punctuality and most parents and carers, although not all, are supporting the school's ongoing efforts to improve attendance. Transition arrangements are particularly effective in enabling pupils to settle quickly in new classes and pupils joining the school are supported very effectively until they make new friends.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is very successful in motivating staff. Her ambition for the school is translated into action by members of a staff team who work effectively together, sharing the same vision for the school's success. Subject leaders are increasingly involved in evaluating the quality of teaching in their subjects. Their evaluations are shared and discussed in depth, helping to make teaching increasingly effective.

The governing body is well led and organised. Most governors visit school regularly and are involved in setting challenging targets and evaluating how well they are being met through their monitoring visits. The steady improvement since the previous inspection reflects their effectiveness in challenging staff and their involvement in bringing about improvement.

The good partnership with parents and carers is reflected in the positive comments in the questionnaires and end-of-term messages. 'Words will never be enough to express our gratitude' and 'Thank you for your endless hard work' are typical comments. A wide range of external agencies is effective in supporting the care and welfare of pupils. Staff promote equality of opportunity well. Senior leaders are aware of the strengths in

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teaching and, for example, know that more needs to be done to ensure that more-able pupils are consistently challenged to attain higher standards; senior leaders have begun to take action to address this.

At the time of the inspection safeguarding procedures were judged to be good. The school adopts good practice across all areas of its work and has effective systems for assessing risks. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, having evaluated carefully each aspect and implemented action plans. Pupils engage well with others from different backgrounds and cultures. Assemblies are used effectively to highlight global issues and developing global links are ongoing areas for improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in Reception because of the good quality of support for them as individuals. Attainment on entry varies but overall it is below that typically expected and a rising number of children are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The good teaching and learning ensures that all make good progress. Daily sessions to learn letter sounds and an emphasis on promoting speaking skills mean that children who speak English as an additional language develop their English at a rapid rate and are fully included in lessons with others. By the end of Reception skills are now at least average in all areas of learning. This reflects an improving picture of children's attainment at the end of Reception. The strong focus on improving counting and calculating skills has been particularly effective this year in ensuring that a higher proportion attain the level expected.

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Staff show considerable expertise in managing the challenging behaviour of a very small minority of children. As a result, most children quickly settle in and enjoy the good range of activities planned for them. All confidently use modern technology such as computers, cameras and programmable toys.

The outdoor learning area is too small, but staff plan and compensate well for this with a good range of activities which match the quality of those indoors where possible. Children, for example, enjoy testing how waterproof materials are for Teddy's coat and thinking of ways to rescue Teddy when he is stuck up a tree. However, the limited space outdoors means that activities such as using large-wheeled toys and adventure play equipment are not readily available. This reduces opportunities for children to develop social, physical and language skills.

Leadership and management are shared between two experienced teachers. They work effectively as a team and their vision is to create an outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage setting in every respect. Their enthusiasm knows no bounds as they plan to enlarge the outdoor area and provide each class with the latest interactive whiteboard technology. The excellent transition arrangements ensure that children from as many as nine feeder nurseries are confident and happy about starting the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most of the parents and carers who responded have positive views about the school. A few want to see their children make better progress and to help the school more to achieve this. A very small minority think that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors consider that raising attainment should continue to be a school priority. They found that parents are effectively involved in all aspects of school life. During the inspection behaviour management was a strength of the school, ensuring that pupils feel safe and are happy at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Athelstan Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 448 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	42	52	52	5	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	53	53	41	41	3	3	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	32	59	59	4	4	5	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	32	55	55	9	9	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	38	38	53	53	4	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	35	50	50	9	9	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	23	66	66	7	7	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	36	45	45	11	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	27	55	55	7	7	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	25	60	60	10	10	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	18	67	67	11	11	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	25	25	61	61	7	7	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	40	49	49	8	8	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Athelstan Primary School, Sheffield, S13 8HH

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school. Yours is a good school. Many of you told inspectors how much you enjoy being pupils at Athelstan Primary. Well done to all of you for showing us how well you can behave in lessons and around the school and for making the school a happy place for everyone. It is a pity that, occasionally, a very few forget to be sensible or caring towards others. All of you like your teachers and were quick to tell us your favourites. The good care, guidance and support that they provide make sure that you feel safe and cared for each day. Your parents and carers also agree with you and had lots of positive things to say about the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. We know that all of you are trying your best to improve your work and standards are rising. We also know that many of you can do even better and we have asked the staff to do all they can to raise standards further, especially for those pupils who learn quickly. In the Reception Year it was good to see everyone enjoying all the exciting activities planned for you. We hope it will not be too long before you have more space to work and play outdoors.

Your headteacher, with the support of governors and staff, is helping to make school exciting and interesting every day. We know that your attendance is improving but there are still a small number of you, particularly in Key Stage 1, who do not come to school regularly enough. You miss out on a lot if you are absent and it stops you from doing as well as you can in your work. We have asked the school to continue its work with parents and carers to help make sure that you all attend regularly and on time. We hope that you will continue doing your best, get to school on time and play your part in helping to make it even better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joe Peacock

Lead inspector

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