

Atkinson Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108445
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	337075
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Wood
Headteacher	Mrs Andrea O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment information about pupils' progress, records of the school reviews of its actions for improvement, current school development and updates of progress towards meeting identified priorities. Inspectors also considered questionnaire responses from parents, pupils and staff.

- pupils' attainment across the school
- how well pupils progress in their learning
- how well the care, guidance and support the school provides impacts upon the personal development and well-being of pupils
- attendance
- how well leaders and managers work together towards school improvement and high expectations for pupils.

Information about the school

Atkinson Road Primary School is one of average size in which 77% of pupils are of White British heritage. About a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language. There is high mobility of pupils. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is considerably higher than that found nationally, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school hosts one speech and communication unit and one communication disorders unit, which are accessed by pupils from across the city of Newcastle. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a reception class. The school holds awards including: Healthy School, Investors in People, FMSIS, Activemark, Smoking Education Gold, Environmental Schools, Clean Air and the Schools Sports Partnership.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Atkinson Road is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. The headteacher has high expectations and under her strong and purposeful lead, other school leaders and managers work with a common purpose towards better provision for its pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Issues from the last inspection have been successfully tackled and pupils demonstrate good improvement in a number of areas, including their attendance and behaviour. This has had a positive impact upon their attitudes to learning. The developing curriculum is starting to provide more creative and practical opportunities for pupils. This more engaging curriculum, alongside the development of improved teaching strategies are motivating pupils to learn and raising their confidence and self-esteem.

Overall, standards are low in mathematics and English, particularly in writing. However progress is satisfactory and there is clear evidence of this accelerating as targets become more challenging. Performance data shows that the rate of pupils' progress has improved year-on-year for the past three years and this is reflected in the satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress observed in lessons. Attainment at Year 6 has also improved over the past three years whilst there was a significant rise in attainment at Year 2 in 2009. Progress in Key Stage 1 is not as rapid as that made in the Early Years Foundation Stage or in Key Stage 2. The assessment and tracking of individual pupil's ability is rigorous and teachers have a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. However, not all pupils are given enough challenge at appropriate levels because some teachers do not use this information effectively enough to inform their planning for pupils' next steps in learning. The effective support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for those who speak English as an additional language and those identified with higher abilities, helps these groups to make good progress as they move through the school. In addition, the very effective work of the two speech and communication units supports pupils well. As a result, there is a good record of pupils returning to mainstream education because of the good progress they make.

Leaders work together to develop a clear sense of purpose which builds upon the child-centred approach within the school. The school has a good understanding of where it wants to go and what it needs to do to improve. However, the range of expertise amongst school leaders and managers means that at present, not all are working to their full potential as they are at different points in developing their roles and responsibilities. Over the past year, a range of good quality systems have been introduced which have targeted these areas and the positive impact of the resulting actions is now being seen in steadily rising standards and sustained improvements in

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pupils' progress. The quality of pupils' learning observed in the classroom provides further evidence of these improvements. Overall, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics across all key stages, especially in writing in order to bring standards at least in line with the national average.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching to be good throughout the school by:
 - - ensuring that activities provide practical opportunities for pupils to engage in learning
 - - using the information of what individual pupils can do well to plan their next steps in learning.
- Increase the role of all middle managers to lead school development through effective monitoring, planning and evaluation.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning are satisfactory. The relationships between staff and pupils are good and as a result, pupils' improved attitudes to school means that they are better motivated to learn. Behaviour is mostly satisfactory and where pupils actively engage in learning through problem solving and creative activities, behaviour can be good. In these lessons, pupils participate well and their rate of progress increases.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those of higher ability make good progress overall from their starting points. As pupils begin Key Stage 1, they have too few opportunities to learn actively and this means that after the good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage their progress is satisfactory rather than good. However, the significant improvement in attainment in reading and mathematics in 2009 shows that the success of the school's actions to secure improvement are now becoming evident in Key Stage 1. Best progress is in Key Stage 2, where opportunities for pupils to engage in activities specific to their individual needs result in greater challenge. There have been sustained improvements in progress at Key Stage 2 over the past three years. Although standards in Year 6 have remained lower than the average over a three year period, they are improving, especially in reading and mathematics, as a result of the better progress pupils are making. Writing standards are weak across the school.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They are confident that where they have concerns teachers are always there to help. Pupils talk extremely well about the need to eat sensibly, the benefits of regular exercise and the consequences of not doing so. A small

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minority show signs of not liking school. However, improvements in behaviour and attendance, both of which are satisfactory, indicate that more pupils now want to take part in the opportunities the school is offering. Pupils have many opportunities to serve their school as school councillors, playground buddies and monitors. They are extremely proud of their roles and learn about taking responsibility whilst developing a good understanding of how they can help to improve their school and look after each other. The strong links within the local community and the extensive mix of pupils who have joined the school from several countries outside the United Kingdom enables pupils to have a good understanding of other cultures and beliefs as they learn to work and play effectively together.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

How effective is the provision?

Warm relationships support pupils' learning effectively. However, there are inconsistencies in aspects of practice in teaching which means that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good or better there is good pace. High expectations are linked to clear learning opportunities which reflect pupils'

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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individual needs and pupils are active in assessing the quality of their own learning. Pupils learn best when they have good opportunities to engage in problem solving and investigative activities. In such lessons, pupils are engaged, motivated and progress well. In less effective lessons, there is inattention and behaviour can deteriorate. As a result, progress slows. New systems support the accurate assessment of pupils' work which means that teachers have a good understanding of different abilities. However, not all teachers make best use of this information on a daily basis to match the wider range of learning needs.

Developing pupils' well-being and increasing their enjoyment of learning is central to the curriculum. New approaches to cross-curricular learning mean that pupils understand better the links between subjects although the quality of this ranges across different classes. Literacy, in particular, is used more effectively to support other learning opportunities. Enrichment of the curriculum is a developing strength of the school. Pupils enthusiastically welcome opportunities to widen their understanding of the world. They take part in visits, welcome visitors and engage in a number of clubs which offer a wide range of activities through which pupils extend their knowledge and skills.

Staff know pupils very well and this enables them to provide good quality care and sensitive pastoral support at the right time. The high mobility of pupils is dealt with effectively through good induction and transition arrangements as pupils enter and leave the school. A range of systems including tracking and progress meetings supports all pupils to increasingly good effect as they move through year groups. Specific interventions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language are very good, particularly for those who exhibit challenging behaviour or have complex needs. As a result these pupils make good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has worked with the staff to identify quickly the school's main strengths and put in place actions to bring about rapid improvements in identified areas of weakness. Improvements can already been seen in the quality of teaching and learning, extending the skills of other leaders and managers and accelerating pupils' progress. Staff who have middle leadership roles take responsibility for planning for development and there is a strong sense of commitment toward improvement.

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However, some staff are further along this path than others who are newer to the profession or who have raised their expectations more recently. The introduction of a new tracking system is helping teachers to understand the rates of progress of individual pupils, but there is not yet enough use of this information in the planning of lessons. The monitoring of teaching and learning is becoming more rigorous and is demonstrating a positive impact upon the progress pupils make.

Safeguarding procedures are good and meet current government requirements. These high standards of care are reflected in the confidence pupils and their parents have of the care provided. Effective steps are in place to ensure that the school is a safe and healthy environment and regular checks are made to minimise risks. The promotion of equal opportunities and the way in which the school tackles discrimination is good. As a result, there is no significant difference between the overall achievement of different groups of pupils and gaps are closing between the performance of different learners. The school promotes community cohesion very well and this results in pupils having a good understanding of cultural differences and in good relationships between groups of pupils. Strong links with the local community support a range of initiatives for pupils to develop good citizenship skills through the work of special projects, such as Junior Street Wardens project, which encourages pupils to take responsibility within their local community. Links have been established with a school in Spain, demonstrating the school's engagement with communities beyond its immediate and national localities. Governance is satisfactory. Key members bring a range of expertise and knowledge to the governing body. However, others are less experienced and are at an early stage of understanding their roles and responsibilities. Some key personnel on the governing body have particular strengths which are guiding and enabling other governors to play an increasing role in their challenge to the school. There is a growing understanding of the identified priorities and how actions impact upon improvement. Outcomes for pupils are satisfactory. As a result, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities well below expectations for children of their age. As a result of good quality teaching, they make good progress. On entry to Year 1, many still work at levels below those expected for their age especially in writing, creative and emotional development. Children are happy in this setting because adults take good care of their needs which helps them to settle quickly. They are encouraged to make independent use of a good range of resources and activities both indoors and outdoors and in so doing they use apparatus safely. Adults encourage children to make healthy choices of snacks and develop their understanding of simple hygiene routines. They quickly become confident learners as they play together and share activities within this secure environment. A balance of learning opportunities enables children to learn independently and engage in individual interests. Good quality assessment procedures inform children's 'Learning Journeys' and inform future planning. However, their interests are yet not fully taken into account to guide planning of the next steps in learning. Good leadership and management enable a strong sense of purpose within the Early Years team. There are clear actions to effectively develop links with parents, especially with those from diverse cultures, through the use of an interpreter and the provision of workshops and information. As a result, parents are well informed and partnerships are effective.

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

There was a low response to the parental questionnaire. However, of those returned, parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school. They know that their children are safe and report that their children enjoy school. They feel that teaching is good and that their children make good progress. However, a very small minority feel that more could be done about unacceptable behaviour when it occurs and that more notice could be taken of their concerns and suggestions. Inspectors judged that the school has made good progress in improving behaviour and is working

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effectively to engage with increasing numbers of parents. A good proportion of parents take advantage of the breakfast clubs on offer. All are happy with their child's experience of school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Atkinson Road 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 353 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	60	32	38	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	58	32	40	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	43	40	50	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	53	36	45	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	53	36	45	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	48	38	48	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	38	44	56	4	5	0	0
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)	32	41	42	54	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	45	44	55	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	41	38	48	6	8	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	36	42	54	4	5	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	30	38	46	58	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	53	38	48	0	0	0	0

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



Inspection of Atkinson Road Primary School

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the other inspectors and I when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to many of you and we liked the way in which you care for each other and for your school.

Yours is a satisfactory school which is improving very quickly. The staff are working very hard to make sure that you have lots of opportunities to enjoy your learning. We know that you feel that your school is a happy place to be and many of your parents agree with you.

The adults who care for you in school make sure that you are well looked after. This means that you feel safe and confident. Your teachers plan lots of things for you to do. Because they know you well, they understand what each of you is capable of achieving and this has made a big difference to your reading and mathematics.

To help you school become even better, I have asked your headteacher and other teachers to help you by concentrating on the following things in particular.

- Helping you to make even better progress and achieve higher standards, especially in writing, so that you do as well as other children of your age.

- Making sure that all teaching is good by:

giving you activities to do that are practical so that you can learn by doing things through, for example, investigating and problem solving

asking teachers always to plan what you need to do next by looking at what they know you do well.

- Helping all teachers in the school to be responsible for their different areas of your learning by:

making sure that they understand what is good and what needs to improve, and then to plan and consider how well they have achieved just like we ask you to do in your lessons.

I'm sure that you will be able to think of more ways to help your school become even better than it is now.

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