

Athersley South Primary School

Wakefield Road, Smithies, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S71 3TP

Inspection dates

23–24 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders are passionate about their school, and other adults share this passion.
- Leaders are acutely aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- All staff at the school have created an environment where pupils feel safe and happy.
- Relationships are good, particularly in the early years and key stage 1, where boys and girls play together extremely well.
- The teaching of sports is a strength which is demonstrated in the numerous sporting achievements the pupils gain.
- From their low starting points, across the school, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School staff have worked hard to improve attendance. However, absence rates remain too high and this requires further improvement.
- The roles of the leaders of learning are still developing. They do not yet make a fully effective contribution to bringing about school improvement.
- Children in the early years make good progress, especially in the Reception Year.
- Teachers use practical equipment proficiently to support pupils' understanding.
- Skilled teaching assistants are well used around the school to support pupils' learning.
- Senior leaders hold regular meetings with teachers, where rigorous assessment of pupils' progress helps plan next steps of learning.
- A proactive and tenacious approach to safeguarding ensures that all staff are fully aware of what to do if they have any concerns.
- Pupils are well educated about safety and confidently discuss the effect substances such as alcohol can have on their bodies.
- Pupils do not have a secure knowledge or understanding about British values, different religions, cultures and communities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders of learning have better opportunities to be directly involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and that they clearly evaluate the impact of their contribution
 - rates of attendance increase
 - the science curriculum is strengthened in key stages 1 and 2 to support better pupil outcomes
 - pupils have more secure learning in and a better understanding of British values, different religions, cultures and communities
 - development plans for the early years outdoor provision and nursery-aged children continue to be quickly implemented.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- A new deputy headteacher has, in a very short time, built an excellent leadership partnership with the existing and inspiring headteacher. They know their school extremely well and are zealous about providing opportunity for all pupils to excel, regardless of abilities and needs.
- A rigorous system of assessment and half-termly pupil progress meetings mean that pupils who are not making the school's definition of expected progress are identified and strategies put in place to support them.
- Teachers feel well supported by the leadership team and receive continual professional development to enable them to maintain quality in their teaching and to keep abreast of evolving and new learning strategies.
- The curriculum is greatly enhanced by several clubs, such as the gardening club, and by visitors. Pupils also take part in camping residentials and choir events. At least 90% of pupils are involved in at least one club.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is spent well. A key focus is on the professional development of staff which has, in turn, led to pupils being able to take part skilfully in clubs and inter-school events. Pupils have become the local netball champions, the Barnsley bench-ball champions and the multi-skills champions. These achievements testify to their proficiency and skills in these sports.
- Although pupils are taught about British values and different lifestyles and beliefs, they do not retain this knowledge well. This has led to some occasional stereotyping. Leaders acknowledge that more must be done to help pupils have a better understanding, tolerance and respect for those with different beliefs and lifestyles and a deeper knowledge of British values.
- Leaders of learning play a very active role in school improvement, particularly in the professional development of other staff. However, the time they spend working directly with individual teachers is often unplanned or limited to afternoon sessions. Their ability to effectively improve the quality of teaching is, therefore, restricted.
- These leaders use a range of strategies, such as studying pupils' books, to evaluate the quality of teaching and then to help teachers improve. However, they do not systematically follow up on the impact of this work or make clear in their action plans what evidence is used to form school improvement targets.

Governance of the school

- Governors support the school well. They are well informed by the headteacher about how well both teachers and pupils are performing. They have a range of skills and life experiences that they use well to support the school. They oversee government funding that is received and ensure that it is thoughtfully and well spent.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher, as designated safeguarding lead (DSL), ensures that safeguarding pupils is central to everything that happens in school.
- Governors and senior leaders have ensured that the safeguarding policy is a strong document that follows government guidelines and informs staff, parents, carers and pupils about policies and procedures.
- All staff are well trained and all those questioned during the inspection knew exactly what to do and who to turn to if they have any concerns. They are confident their concerns will be valued.
- School staff have good links with external agencies so that they can support vulnerable pupils and their families when needed.
- The DSL ensures that records are detailed, fit for purpose and kept securely.
- The approachability of the DSL and her staff enables parents and pupils to confidently and comfortably raise any concerns, however minor, in the secure knowledge that they will be dealt with sensitively.
- All parents who responded to a question on a recent school questionnaire, 'my child feels safe', responded positively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers take great care to build positive relationships with pupils. This has enabled pupils to confidently learn from their mistakes and has built a 'have a go' attitude to their learning.
- Teachers ensure that relationships between pupils are secure so that they can work well together and value the opinion of others, such as when their peers are being a 'critical friend'.
- Teaching assistants are an asset in the classroom and are used effectively by teachers to promote learning. They are highly flexible and work in a variety of ways to best suit individual needs. They are patient and sensitive to pupils' needs.
- Teachers appropriately use different strategies to help pupils learn. The use of 10p pieces being dropped into a tin can and other equipment supported counting in tens superbly. Using a 'boxing-up process' helped pupils when writing about evacuees, where pupils also included historical elements to their writing.
- Assessment systems are well developed and are used effectively to follow pupils' progress through each year group and plan work for them accordingly.
- Teaching in some year groups is not as strong as in others. Too many pupils do not have a firm grasp of basic concepts, such as number bonds and times tables, which holds them back in completing other work. However, this issue is already being addressed with different strategies, including regular mental maths exercises and teaching assistant support.
- Teachers do not give pupils regular opportunities to take part in practical science activities. This restricts pupils' progress.

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 very proud of their school. When asked during the inspection, 'Your school would be even better if...?', pupils struggled to think of ways to improve their school. A small group suggested that it would be better 'if it was painted pink'.
- Pupils take part in 'philosophy for children' lessons and some older pupils take part in extensive training to become 'young leaders'. Among other initiatives, these strategies help them to become considerate, polite and thoughtful young people.
- Pupils are taught to be resilient and to value their education. Pupils told inspectors that 'we get a lot done if we try really hard' and 'trying hard is what matters.'
- Pupils' knowledge of safety is extensive, and they say that they feel very safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe when using social media and are keenly aware of the dangers of drugs, such as alcohol.
- Pupils say that they can tell adults about any concerns surrounding the behaviour or possible bullying of other pupils, and trust them to sort things out.
- Pupils have little understanding of British values, different religions, beliefs, lifestyles and communities. This is leading to some pupils building stereotypical views about others and not being as well prepared for life as they could be.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils manage their own behaviours well with little direction from adults needed. Even when they were excited about the forthcoming Halloween disco, pupils still concentrated and returned to the task in hand when asked.
- Pupils move around the school well and are considerate to others. Etiquettes, such as holding doors open and saying please and thank you, are automatic to them.
- Adults manage behaviour very well, and the strong relationships mean that different situations with individual pupils are handled particularly well. A range of strategies, such as worry boxes and friendship benches, help pupils if they are worried.
- In key stage 1 breaktimes, boys and girls play well together in a large outside environment with some good-quality equipment. They are well supervised by adults, who quickly pick up on any friendly boisterous play that may escalate into something more. In key stage 2, girls say that occasionally football games, generally being played by boys, will dominate the outdoor area.
- Pupils quickly settle down to learning when they return from break or from a different lesson. However, low attendance of some pupils remains a cause for concern for senior leaders. The school spends a great deal of time encouraging better attendance. They acknowledge that more must be done so that parents understand the importance of regular attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress from generally low starting points due to the good teaching they receive and the caring ethos in the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is below average and, therefore, pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they could be.
- Pupils achieve well in physical education as it is well taught and there is a wide range of opportunities on offer, both in lessons and in clubs.
- The progress made by pupils in Year 6 in 2018 in reading, writing and mathematics through key stage 2, although based on provisional information, was above average. The progress of pupils through key stage 2 has improved consistently over the last few years.
- School information shows that, in 2018, across the various year groups, pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this information also shows that progress was not as strong as in the previous academic year.
- Teachers hold regular pupil progress meetings with senior leaders, where individual pupils' needs and actions are noted on a 'commentary sheet'. This analysis of needs helps all pupils make good progress and particularly those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress, as great care has been taken and investment made in resources, both environmental and human, to meet their very individual needs.
- Pupils read well. A commercial reading and writing scheme is used across all year groups to support pupils' acquisition of literacy skills. All staff are well trained to deliver this scheme. A large library is available, with a wide range of texts, and pupils learn through a range of interesting texts in lessons.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in science as they could due to the lack of opportunity for practical and physical science activities.

Early years provision

Good

- The leader for the early years, alongside the deputy headteacher, knows the strengths and weaknesses of the early years well.
- She has worked quickly with the deputy headteacher on a well-crafted action plan designed to develop the outdoor learning environment as well as ensure that the quality of provision for nursery-aged children matches the high quality of provision for Reception-aged children.
- In both classes, children willingly share resources and play cooperatively. In the Nursery class, a child made the inspector a cup of tea and confidently counted 'two sugars' before stirring the cup.
- Staff focus on the development of language skills through strategies, for example a comprehensive programme of phonics teaching in the Reception class. This is ensuring that children are becoming confident in tackling the new words they encounter every day and that they are well prepared to start Year 1.

- The early years leader recognised that there is a need to provide nursery-aged children with opportunities to experience the good-quality teaching of phonics that the Reception class benefit from. This is beginning to take place, with the intention of increasing the proportion of children making better progress by the end of year.
- Senior leaders have established clear and rigorous assessment procedures. This ensures that, in the main, work is well matched to the children's needs.
- The early years leader is acutely aware that the development of the outdoors has stalled in her absence. The action plan identifies how more exciting and creative opportunities for the children to engage in imaginative play and purposeful learning can be offered in the expansive outdoor area.
- Children make good progress from low starting points. However, disappointingly, the proportion of children, including disadvantaged children, achieving a good level of development dipped last year and was below average. To ensure that this is not repeated, the leader is providing opportunities to focus all children on developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

School details

Unique reference number	131160
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10002573

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kath Bostwick
Headteacher	Emma Sanderson
Telephone number	01226 284223
Website	www.athersleysouthprimary.co.uk/
Email address	e.sanderson@as-primary.net
Date of previous inspection	28–29 June 2012

Information about this school

- Athersley South Primary School is a larger than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- For the last four academic years, the school has been led jointly by two headteachers. Following the departure of one of the headteachers last academic year, the leadership structure has changed so that the school is now led by a headteacher and a deputy headteacher.
- The deputy headteacher was new to post in September 2018.
- The leader for the early years returned in September 2018 following an extended secondment.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are supported by an education, health and care plan is higher than the national average.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups and in a range of subjects. Many of the observations and the scrutiny of work in pupils' books were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. They also met with leaders of learning, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors also considered learning in pupils' books in all subjects and spoke to pupils about the work in their books. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed at different times of the school day and inspectors spoke to pupils about behaviour in school.
- Documents were scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress, attendance and evaluations of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through responses to Ofsted's parent free-text facility and the school's own very recent parental questionnaire. There were not enough responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to be able to take those views into consideration.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
James Reid	Ofsted Inspector
James Kilner	Ofsted Inspector

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