

# Athersley North Primary School

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

## Inspection dates

16–17 October 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The governing body has not taken effective action to prevent the decline in pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- New leaders have brought about some recent improvements to pupils' outcomes. However, current pupils are not making consistently strong progress in reading and writing.
- Leaders' plans for improvement, while focused on the right priorities, do not contain precise enough success criteria to help leaders gauge the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.
- The quality of teaching is improving but is still variable. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high. This leads to tasks which lack challenge and limit learning. In key stage 1 especially, errors go unnoticed and this slows pupils' progress.
- Phonics teaching, while improving, is not effective enough in supporting pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to catch up quickly.
- Despite improving outcomes at the end of the early years, not enough disadvantaged children meet the early learning goals in reading, writing and mathematics. This hinders their achievement as they progress through school. The transition to Year 1 is not effective enough in helping these pupils to rapidly catch up.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. Subject leaders are new to post and have, therefore, had limited impact on improving standards in their areas of responsibility.
- Strategies to improve attendance have not had sufficient impact for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is not used effectively enough to support their achievement.
- Some pupils lack the resilience needed to be independent in their learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are committed to improving pupils' outcomes. As a result of new strategies, teachers are more accountable for pupils' progress and are taking action to improve their practice.
- Leaders have created a vigilant safeguarding culture. Vulnerable pupils receive effective support to meet their emotional needs.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils' attainment and progress continues to improve by ensuring that:
  - adults check pupils' learning during lessons to make sure that errors and misconceptions are quickly addressed and that pupils are appropriately challenged
  - staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' letter formation, handwriting and presentation
  - pupils develop the resilience needed to become more independent in their learning
  - the transition from Reception to Year 1 is more effective in building on pupils' prior learning and helping them to access the key stage 1 curriculum.
- Ensure that the teaching of phonics continues to improve by making sure that:
  - teaching strategies are consistently applied
  - the books which pupils read in the early stages of reading are phonically decodable and closely matched to their phonics knowledge
  - pupils who need to catch up receive additional support and regular opportunities to practise their reading
  - evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding results in targeted support to quickly secure disadvantaged pupils' phonics knowledge
  - adults insist on pupils applying their phonics knowledge in their writing.
- Continue to increase the proportion of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or have SEN and/or disabilities, who reach and exceed the expectations by the end of each key stage in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by making sure that:
  - subject leadership is developed so it contributes more significantly to rigorously addressing inconsistencies in teaching and learning, developing an effective curriculum and raising standards
  - school improvement plans have clearly identified measures of success to help leaders gauge the impact of actions taken and speed up the rate of pupils' progress
  - additional funding is used more effectively to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - governors hold school leaders more rigorously to account.
- Reduce absence and persistent absence for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Following a decline in pupils' outcomes and the school's overall effectiveness since its last inspection, extensive support from the local authority has begun to develop the capacity of leaders and governors. New leaders are beginning to address inadequacies in teaching.
- Due to a legacy of underachievement and remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, actions are not yet resulting in consistently good progress across the school. This is particularly the case in key stage 1 and for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Leaders are committed to improving the school, but, at times, their actions lack urgency. Leaders' action plans do not contain precise enough measures of success to help them check the impact of actions taken to improve pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not effectively evaluated the use of the extra funding to support disadvantaged pupils or those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Therefore, they have not been able to determine the impact of the support they receive on pupils' attainment and progress and make adjustments where necessary. However, leaders have used funding more effectively to provide support to meet pupils' social and emotional needs. This enables pupils to access learning more readily.
- Leaders have involved teachers in taking greater responsibility for monitoring pupils' progress and this has led to more effective identification of pupils' needs. Actions taken are supporting pupils to begin to make better progress.
- Senior leaders have used checks on the quality of teaching and learning to accurately identify training needs for individuals and the whole-school staff. The weakest teaching has been eliminated and staff feel well supported to improve their practice.
- A wider group of leaders are now beginning to take responsibility for improving pupils' outcomes. Subject leaders, many of whom are new to their roles, are only just beginning to make checks on the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. Therefore, they have been unable to contribute sufficiently to improving consistency in the quality of teaching and ensuring that the curriculum is effective. This has meant that their capacity to improve pupils' achievement has been limited.
- As a result of leaders' actions to address weaknesses in the teaching of reading and phonics, current pupils are making stronger progress than that seen in previous years. However, leaders have not made sure that pupils who need to catch up with phonics are receiving effective enough support. Pupil premium funding is not directed precisely enough to support pupils' phonics knowledge and reading development. Additionally, interventions are not checked to see how effective they are. This prevents leaders and governors taking a strategic approach to the use of funding.
- Leaders are not addressing pupils' absence with sufficient rigour and so it is not reducing quickly enough for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Leaders have put high-quality literature at the heart of the school’s curriculum to support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders recognise that the curriculum is not fully developed, as it is not having the desired impact on pupils’ outcomes. Sequences of learning do not support progression in pupils’ knowledge effectively enough.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding effectively to offer a range of sporting equipment and activities. This is helping pupils to understand the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.

### **Governance of the school**

- Over time, the governing body has not exercised sufficient strategic influence to reverse the decline in pupils’ achievement.
- Following a review of governance, governors have restructured the governing body and have introduced working parties which make regular visits to school. These visits are being used to understand the work of the school and to challenge leaders about school improvement actions. Governors now have a much clearer understanding of pupils’ outcomes and the priorities for improvement.
- While governors are beginning to hold leaders more rigorously to account for pupils’ outcomes, this is not always recorded formally and sometimes results in actions being slow to take effect. For example, governors’ recommendations about leaders, including more precise and measurable success criteria in the pupil premium strategy, was identified, but has only begun to be actioned several months later.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors have put rigorous systems in place to keep pupils safe. These are understood and carried out diligently by staff. Regular training supports staff in being alert to the possible warning signs of abuse that pupils may present. Staff report concerns promptly and the designated safeguarding leader acts swiftly. The school works closely with external agencies to get pupils the help and protection they need as quickly as possible.
- Leaders have ensured that keeping pupils safe is threaded through all aspects of the school’s work. The very strong culture of safeguarding that is evident in the school ensures that pupils feel safe and secure and know how to ask for support.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Even though leaders have successfully eradicated inadequate teaching, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain.
- Adults do not always use assessment effectively during phonics teaching to check pupils’ understanding and address misconceptions. In the early stages of learning to read, the books which pupils read are not always well matched to their phonics knowledge. Furthermore, pupils who are not on track do not receive sufficiently

targeted support to help them frequently practise their developing reading skills. This prevents them from being able to read with accuracy and growing fluency.

- Teachers and teaching assistants do not always pick up on pupils' errors and misconceptions can go unnoticed. For example, in key stage 1, there are missed opportunities to check that pupils are applying their phonics knowledge for spelling and using accurate letter formation and appropriate handwriting. This results in incorrect skills being reinforced.
- In key stage 1, learning is not always sufficiently demanding, because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. This results in pupils taking a lack of pride in their work and not applying some of the skills they have previously been taught.
- Pupils who are working below age-related expectations when they enter key stage 1, do not receive the support they need from teachers and teaching assistants to help them quickly catch up. Consequently, their progress is hindered and they struggle to access the curriculum.
- A new approach to reading in key stage 2 is supporting pupils in being able to read with greater understanding. Pupils are enjoying reading the high-quality texts which they share as a whole class.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics is developing well and pupils are more frequently accessing age-appropriate learning.
- In Years 5 and 6, where some of the stronger teaching exists, teachers use questioning to good effect to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their knowledge. Pupils are more effectively challenged and supported through planning, which is accurately meeting pupils' needs. This planning is adapted and adjusted according to assessment of pupils' learning. However, some pupils are impeded by earlier underachievement and still have basic skills, which are not yet secure.
- Teachers are beginning to help pupils to develop good learning habits in upper key stage 2. Self and peer assessment, along with regular opportunities to edit and improve their written work, are starting to give pupils greater responsibility for their own learning. However, in other year groups, pupils tend to lack independent learning skills.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Pupils do not always take enough responsibility for their own learning. Some pupils lack the confidence to persevere with challenging tasks. They are overly-reliant on adult support and are unsure how to help themselves or seek guidance from others if they do not understand their work.
- Leaders actively seek and value pupils' views. Pupils are encouraged to make a contribution to school life, for example through the pupil parliament. As a result, pupils

are developing a sense of responsibility and are proud of their school and the opportunities it provides.

- Pupils say that they feel safe and that staff deal with the rare incidents of bullying successfully. The curriculum is resulting in pupils having a suitable understanding of how to stay safe, for example when crossing roads or when using the internet.
- Support for vulnerable pupils is strong. School leaders and staff know pupils and their families well. Links with a range of professionals and external agencies support pupils to be ready for learning. A whole-school approach to supporting pupils' social and emotional needs has had a positive impact on improving pupils' attitudes to learning and has contributed to decreasing exclusions.
- A calm and prompt start to school is encouraged through breakfast club and 'check-ins' for those pupils who are struggling to attend school regularly and on time.
- Pupils are encouraged to keep fit and healthy. They enjoy using the playground equipment and completing a daily mile to help them to be physically active.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils usually behave well in the classroom, listening to the teacher and applying themselves to their work. However, expectations from staff are not consistently high and, as a result, pupils do not always show good attitudes to their learning.
- Leaders' introduction of the catch-up club has significantly improved pupils' punctuality. However, a higher proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are absent, and persistently absent, than seen nationally.
- Pupils understand the behaviour system and feel that it helps them improve their behaviour. Pupils usually follow routines well and behave sensibly as they move around school. They play respectfully and positively together in the playground.
- Fixed-term exclusions have reduced consistently over the last four years. The inclusion team and training for staff have resulted in pupils being able to manage their feelings and behaviour more effectively.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Previous inadequacies in teaching, particularly in the teaching of phonics, have led to a legacy of underachievement for current pupils. This has affected pupils' reading and writing development as they progress through school, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN and/or disabilities.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved from 58% in 2017 to 73% in 2018. It improved from 32% to 53% for disadvantaged pupils. Despite this increase, not enough pupils secure their phonics knowledge quickly enough. Almost half of the pupils eligible for pupil premium funding did not meet the standard. This hinders their reading and writing development and their ability to access learning throughout the curriculum. Furthermore, pupils who need to catch up do not receive targeted enough support to help them do so rapidly.

- In the early stages of reading, books are not well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge and some books are not phonically decodable. This means that pupils are not able to read all of the words and are hindered from developing in confidence and fluency.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading in key stage 2 and have raised the profile of reading throughout school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were able to explain why reading is so important and how teachers encourage them to read regularly. In 2018, there was an increase, to just below the national average, in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 2.
- A large proportion of children leave the early years not well enough prepared for the challenges of the national curriculum in Year 1. Inconsistent teaching in key stage 1 and ineffective use of early years assessment information lead to pupils not catching up as quickly as they should do.
- Current pupils are not making consistently strong progress. However, in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is most effective, pupils are making faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher expectations and increased challenge resulted in above-average proportions of pupils achieving the high standard in the reading, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation and spelling assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2018.
- A new approach to the teaching of mathematics has been introduced. Pupils' books show that they have more opportunities to reason and solve problems. Key stage 2 attainment has been in line with the national average for mathematics in 2017 and 2018.
- The leader of provision for pupils with SEN and/or disabilities has identified the right learning targets to support pupils in making the progress they need to. However, the impact of this on pupils' progress is limited for some pupils by inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the early years has been consistently well below the national average over time. In 2018, the figure increased to 65%, but remains below the national average of 72%.
- Leaders' actions to improve achievement for disadvantaged children have resulted in an increase in the proportion of this group reaching a good level of development, from 29% to 56% between 2017 and 2018. Despite this improvement, almost half of this group did not meet the early learning goals in reading, writing and number and were not sufficiently prepared for the demands of the curriculum in key stage 1. Transition between Reception and Year 1 has not been effective enough to support these pupils in quickly catching up as they enter key stage 1.
- Leaders have taken action to address the previous weakness in boys' achievement. As a result of more mark-making opportunities and activities to support children's motor-skill development, particularly in the outdoor area, boys' achievement in 2018 was much closer to that of boys nationally than in previous years. However, when children are working independently, adults miss opportunities to encourage them to practise

their newly developing reading, writing and mathematics skills. This means that their progress is not as fast as it could be.

- Children in both Nursery and Reception receive phonics teaching which is accurately pitched to build on their prior knowledge. However, adults within the early years unit are not consistent in their approach to the teaching of phonics. There are missed opportunities for staff to model correct letter formation and to check children's work and intervene as necessary. This slows children's progress.
- Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They ensure that children are well cared for and that the legal welfare requirements are met. Relationships between adults and children are strong and, as a result, children feel secure and gain in confidence during their time in Nursery and Reception.
- The outdoor area offers a wide range of learning opportunities and assists children's creativity and independence. Children use the resources provided effectively to explore and investigate their environment. Children's physical development is strongly promoted.
- There are effective links with parents. Parents are welcomed into Nursery for 15 mins at the start and end of each day. Parents join in their child's learning activities and this helps them to know how to support their child's learning at home. Additional home visits for identified children are used to raise parents' awareness of how they can support their child to succeed at school.

## School details

Unique reference number	131157
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10053220

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	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lodge
Headteacher (co-headteachers)	Kirsty Wordsworth and Clare Storr
Telephone number	01226 288 674
Website	<a href="http://www.athersleynorthprimary.co.uk">www.athersleynorthprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@athersleynorthprimary.co.uk">head@athersleynorthprimary.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	13–14 December 2012

## Information about this school

- Following the retirement of the previous headteacher and a restructure of the leadership team, two co-headteachers were appointed from September 2017. Many other leaders are also new in post.
- Athersley North is a little larger than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from other mixed backgrounds. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are supported by an education, health and care plan are much higher than the national average.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.

- The school has received extensive support and training brokered by the local authority. This has included support from national, local and specialist leaders of education.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Several of the observations were undertaken jointly with one of the co-headteachers. Inspectors listened to some pupils read and talked to several pupils about their experience of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and subject leaders. A meeting was held with the chair of the local governing body. A meeting also took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Discussions took place with a group of teachers about the support and development they receive.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work in books, along with the school's information on pupils' achievement, to determine the progress that they are making.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records, and minutes from governing body meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding were also considered.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day to seek their views about the school. The 24 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were also taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Knox	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Keefe	Ofsted Inspector

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