

# Alverton Community Primary School

Mount Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1RB

**Inspection dates** 13–14 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Children are given a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 6.
- Standards are rising quickly and are broadly average overall in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Careful planning includes a variety of activities and pupils enjoy what they do.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they behave well. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary at times. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school because their teachers help them a lot.
- Very strong leadership and management, especially of teaching and learning, have successfully raised the quality of teaching since the school opened. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress and achievement.
- Governors know how good the school can become and challenge leaders determinedly to continue improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding overall and does not promote outstanding achievement, especially in writing. Sometimes the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Good marking is not consistent and pupils' work is not always presented well enough.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 15 lessons and part lessons, six of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, a representative from the local authority, members of the governing body and some parents.
- Inspectors took account of 19 responses from parents via the online questionnaire Parent View as well as the results of a recent survey of parents' views conducted by the school. Questionnaires completed by staff members were also taken into account.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation including: national assessment data and the school's own assessments; the school's own view of its work; local authority reports; minutes from governing body meetings; samples of pupils' work and safeguarding information.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Smith

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school in which almost all pupils are White British.
- The school opened in January 2013 as the result of the amalgamation of former separate Alverton Infant and Nursery School, and Bullamoor Junior School. The current school is on a split site.
- The headteacher took up her appointment in January 2013.
- The school has a specially funded unit for up to six pupils of pre-school age who have speech, language and communication needs.
- The school also works closely with a Children’s Centre which shares the school site.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is well above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average.
- Similarly, an above average proportion of pupils are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets current floor standard, which is the government’s minimum expectation for pupils’ attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- A breakfast club and an after-school club are provided for pupils during term time.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and thereby raise achievement further, especially in writing, by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length in subjects across the curriculum to enable pupils to correctly use the language associated with different subjects
  - making sure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged
  - improving marking so that the good practice seen in English books is matched in all subjects
  - raising expectations with regard to the way pupils present their work.
- Raise pupils’ attendance so that it at least matches the national average.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Nursery with well below typical development for their age. This is most noticeable in their literacy and communication skills, their physical skills and their personal and social development.
- Exciting activities planned for them and, at times, outstanding teaching gets them off to a good start. Although they do not quite reach the standards typically expected in all that they do by the end of Reception, they make good progress overall from their starting points.
- The school works effectively with the Children's Centre which shares the infant department site. Positive links with parents are established early. This helps the school to prepare well for children's entry into Nursery.
- The language resource base is managed well and provides well for those who attend. Staff have very good understanding of children's needs. Children make positive progress and they are well integrated into the school's Nursery provision.
- Good progress and achievement continues in Years 1 and 2. Year 1 pupils did well in their phonics screening check in 2013 and are on track for similar results this year. This has a good effect on reading standards in Year 2 as well as encouraging children to write more confidently.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 are currently average. This represents good achievement from their earlier starting points.
- When the school opened in January 2013, pupils who moved into Year 6 had considerable ground to make up. Standards attained in the national tests the following May were well below average. Nevertheless, due to strong leadership and better teaching those pupils made good progress over their short time in the school.
- Accurate school assessments, backed up by pupils' current work, show that standards are on track to be average overall in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6. Writing is the weakest of the subjects especially in the proportion of pupils expected to reach the higher Level 5.
- The school's focus on improved progress has been relentless. As a result, good progress is firmly established in Years 3 to 6 and pupils are set to achieve well.
- Pupils build well on the good start they make in reading in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 6 pupils read fluently from texts they have not seen before. They use good expression, for example, when reading dialogue and show good understanding of some 'hidden' meanings of the story. They recognise the importance of reading and are very clear about the authors they like.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their particular needs are planned for very carefully and overseen skilfully by a knowledgeable teacher in charge of their learning. Outside help from other agencies is provided, where necessary, to good effect and helps some pupils to make rapid progress.
- The school identifies the most able pupils and makes provision for their learning by enabling them to work in a higher class so that work challenges them more effectively. Generally, they make similar good progress to others but there are times when expectations could be even higher especially in writing and at time also in mathematics.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium do almost as well as others in the school. Gaps in attainment have closed quickly over the year because of the school's strong focus on progress for all pupils. Governors check the group's progress rigorously, as well as use of the funding, to make sure that it is effectively supporting equality of opportunity. Current school data for Year 6, for example, show that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are doing better than others in writing and are less than a term behind, in terms of expected progress, in reading and mathematics.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Staff have responded very positively to well-planned training and modelling of good practice by senior leaders since the schools were amalgamated. Teaching has improved significantly as a result and is now driving pupils' good achievement.
- Teaching assistants are very much a crucial part of the teaching team. They are trained well and provide good support for small groups and when working alongside teachers in classes.
- Pupils enjoy learning because activities are always lively, interesting and their time is filled with tasks and the next target for them to reach is never far away.
- Activities take account of varying abilities in the classes. Despite work being set at a higher level for the most able pupils sometimes expectations could be even higher in terms of them thinking more deeply and working things out for themselves.
- English and mathematics have a high priority in the school. Both are taught well and lead to good progress over the year.
- There is noticeable improvement in pupils' understanding and use of grammar, punctuation and spelling. There are some good examples of writing to be seen and good initiative shown, for example, by Year 6 pupils who used their holiday time to write an Easter-themed story for younger children. However, pupils do not write sufficiently at length across different subjects in order to fully test their writing skills and, importantly, their correct use of language associated with different subjects. Presentation of work, whether in writing or mathematics books is not always as neat and tidy as it could be.
- Expectations in mathematics are generally high and pupils respond well because they enjoy the challenges. They learn a variety of ways to calculate and use their knowledge of numbers well to solve problems. Pupils' work shows that over time they pick up skills at a good pace.
- Staff know their pupils' abilities well. Teachers check progress and revise pupils' targets at regular intervals. Work in progress is checked and corrected or improved effectively by adults. Literacy books are marked well so pupils always know how well they have achieved and what to do next so that immediate improvement can often be seen. Marking in other subjects is not as effective. Sometimes misunderstandings are not picked up and corrected, and untidy work is not sufficiently challenged.
- There is good learning in other subjects. When pupils' views about physical education were canvassed pupils were very positive. One response was, 'we couldn't be luckier!' Music has a high profile in the school and pupils' ideas and feelings were explored well in an art lesson before they learned to use water colours to capture some of Turner's use of colour in seascapes.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and sometimes their behaviour and enthusiasm in lessons is excellent.
- Attendance, however, although improving, is below the national average. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to raise attendance to help all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Pupils behave well around the school. Playtimes are enjoyable. Pupils are well mannered in the dining room and they keep their school building and playground clean.
- Pupils are invariably courteous and polite. They are mindful of each other and show respect for adults. They understand and respect others' different circumstances and cultural lifestyles.
- They contribute a lot to the everyday life of the school. The school council has some good ideas for improvement and makes sure that everyone has a say. All are very keen to carry out various tasks in school that help things to run smoothly.
- Most pupils arrive punctually, and dress neatly in school uniform.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and say that they are well cared for. That view is shared

overwhelmingly by parents who unanimously would recommend the school to others. Parents appreciate the additional care provided via the breakfast and after-school clubs as well that provided sensitively by staff members for children who have particular additional needs.

- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and how hurtful name-calling can be. They say that any such incidents are very rare in school and are confident that they would be dealt with swiftly should they occur.
- Pupils also understand how to avoid possible risks outside of school and to keep themselves safe and healthy.

## **The leadership and management** are good

- One of the school governors said of the school's leadership, 'The headteacher leads from the front and encourages from behind.'
- In other words, the headteacher leaves no stone unturned when driving the school forward. Since the school opened, her influence on its rapid progress has been immense.
- The vision for the school's progress is fully shared by staff and governors. All work with determination to fulfil the ambition they share for every pupil.
- Robust checking of the school's work has provided an accurate picture of what is going well and what still needs to be done. Leaders know the importance of improving teaching further and encouraging better attendance in order to raise achievement to outstanding.
- The leadership of teaching and learning has been central to the school's work and has brought changes for the better in teaching quality and rates of pupils' progress. Teachers have successfully risen to the challenge of higher expectations underpinned by the Teachers Standards and are fully aware of how their performance is linked to increases in salary.
- In the relatively short time since the school was opened, intensive local authority support has been reduced to 'light touch'. Such is the local authority's confidence that school leaders are well capable of managing the school's further improvement on their own.
- Senior leaders are a very strong team. Their skills and ability to bring the best from colleagues has been crucial in the school's speedy development.
- Together they are improving the skills of teachers to lead subjects. Middle leaders have already made good headway in planning and preparing for the introduction of the new curriculum in September 2014. They currently provide an exciting curriculum that meets pupils' needs well and helps them to achieve well in many areas including their personal development.
- Allocated sports funding is used effectively to enrich the scope of sports and other outdoor activities. Teachers' skills in leading those activities are improving because of their work alongside the specialist physical education teacher employed by the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - There is a very good range of experience and expertise within the governing body. Governors' understanding of national assessment data, and how well the school works generally, equips them well to challenge the school effectively and help to set its clear direction for further improvement. Governors manage finances and other statutory duties efficiently. They are particularly watchful over the use of pupil premium funding and its impact on achievement as well as the school's actions regarding sports funding. Governors have a clear overview of teaching quality in the school and of how the school's pay policy is to be applied to ensure the best value. Safeguarding procedures are managed well and meet all of the government's requirements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121368
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	439924

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Josh Southwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01609 773524
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