

# Arksey Primary School

Ings Way, Arksey, Doncaster, DN5 0TE

## Inspection dates

13–14 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils achievement is good. Most pupils throughout the school, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average.
- There is an improving trend in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. This has accelerated in the last year as weak teaching has been effectively tackled and consistently good practice is established in each class.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage class because the staff provide stimulating learning activities with a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills.
- In all classes, most pupils receive work that is well matched to their learning needs because teachers continuously check their progress and adjust the level of challenge where necessary.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe from bullying. This contributes to their good progress. They are keen to learn and they enjoy school, therefore attendance is above average. A typical view from a pupil is, 'This is my perfect school. I feel like I've been given the key; I've just got to open the door.'
- The headteacher and governing body use performance management effectively to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' standards of attainment. Challenging targets are set for school leaders and staff and they are supported in achieving them with constructive guidance and a well-planned programme of training.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing, though better than it was at the time of the previous inspection, is not improving as rapidly as it is in reading and mathematics. This is because recently introduced methods to stimulate pupils' ideas for writing and to support reluctant or underachieving writers are not firmly established in the practice of all teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector spent four hours observing seven lessons taught by four teachers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff with key responsibilities, groups of pupils and three members of the governing body including the Chair and Vice-Chair. A telephone conversation was held with the school's local authority adviser.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' work and read a range of documents including those relating to pupils' progress, self-evaluation, improvement planning, the curriculum and safeguarding.
- The inspector considered 16 questionnaires returned from staff and 21 responses from parents on Parent View.

## Inspection team

John Rutherford, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- One in seven pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- There is pre-school provision on the school site, known as the Willows, which is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.
- The school has recently undergone a period of significant disruption to staffing.
- The school has met the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure pupils' progress in writing improves at the same rapid rate as it does in reading and mathematics by:
  - providing and making more effective use of interesting stimuli for writing, for example; discussion, drama, pictures, film and first-hand experiences within curriculum topics
  - planning more effective support for reluctant and underachieving writers
  - ensuring pupils have sufficient time in writing lessons to practise and refine their new skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills and knowledge are broadly typical for their age. Most of them make good progress in their first year because teachers continuously assess their achievement and use this information to plan stimulating activities well matched to their learning needs.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result the most recent unvalidated data shows that pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. This data is supported by inspection evidence from school records, lesson observations and pupils' work.
- The very large majority of parents and carers who used Parent View agree that their children make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they receive well planned support.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium achieve well because the school uses the additional resource effectively to provide them with carefully tailored programmes of additional support.
- The more-able pupils achieve well because teachers continuously check that their work is sufficiently challenging.
- Any pupils who are beginning to fall behind are quickly identified through the school's thorough progress tracking system and they are given effective extra support to help them catch up.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been improving since the previous inspection. Progress in reading and mathematics has accelerated considerably in the last year due to the removal of weak teaching and the general improvement of teaching in all classes.
- Pupils at an early stage in learning to read have good skills in using letters and sounds to work out new words.
- Progress in writing has not accelerated at the same rapid pace because new approaches to teaching it are not firmly established in every classroom. Recently introduced support for pupils struggling to write fluently and accurately is having a positive impact but it is not helping all of them to catch up quickly enough. Pupils are increasingly developing their writing skills in a range of subjects. However, teachers have not fully developed their skills in using discussion, drama and first-hand experience to stimulate pupils' ideas for writing or to prepare them to write in different styles for different reasons.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good in all classes. While the large majority of parents who used Parent View agree that their children are taught well, this is an area of more concern than others. Comments provided to the inspector from a small number of parents indicate that this concern is likely to relate to the past two or three years when there was a high degree of staffing change and some weak teaching. These issues have now been largely resolved.
- All teachers effectively use recorded assessment information, and further assessment during lessons, to ensure that work is pitched at the correct level for each ability group and age-range within their class. This helps most pupils to make good progress and is, therefore, a very effective response to a recommendation in the previous inspection.
- While teachers accurately find out which pupils need additional support, they very occasionally do not probe into the reasons why and, therefore, tasks are not as finely tailored to every pupil's learning needs as they might be.
- Teachers provide stimulating and interesting lessons, for example, organising a word-hunt to consolidate pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds or using different types of bread as a starting point for learning about other countries.
- Teachers maintain pupils' attention during explanations by using skilful questioning, short

written tasks and opportunities to discuss new ideas with partners. Occasionally, the explanations go on for too long and this leaves pupils with insufficient time to practise and extend their new skills. This is particularly noticeable in writing lessons.

- Teachers give pupils very effective feedback on their work to help them improve it, often through detailed one-to-one discussion. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' ability to review and edit their own work and it is a very effective response to a recommendation in the previous inspection.
- Teachers enable pupils to develop good skills in working as part of a team, learning through discussion and persevering with challenging problems.

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

- Pupils behave well in lessons and during break times. This is a view shared by the very large majority of parents who used Parent View and all staff who returned an inspection questionnaire. There are no permanent or fixed-term exclusions and school records show no incidence of serious misbehaviour.
- Pupils' good behaviour in lessons contributes to their progress. They can be trusted to get on with work independently and they stay on task when collaborating with a partner.
- Pupils come to school to learn and they try their hardest in lessons. Occasionally, some pupils are reluctant to answer questions or discuss work with the teacher, although this is at a time when they are still settling into their new mixed-age classes.
- Pupils say they feel safe from all forms of bullying. If they have concerns they are confident that any member of staff will help them. Following recent work with a visiting specialist, they have a very clear understanding of cyber-bullying and how to respond if there is any threat of this happening.
- Pupils have a sound understanding of the different groups within society and the importance of respect and tolerance. They say, for example, that they would correct any pupils who used racist language.

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

- The headteacher and governing body are determined to improve the school and are working hard to bring this about. Inspection questionnaires, returned by every teacher and teaching assistant, show that they have the full support of the staff in this endeavour.
  - The headteacher involves all staff in identifying priorities for improvement and developing more effective teaching methods, which is a good response to a recommendation in the previous inspection. Their accurate focus on the most important priorities for raising pupils' achievement and their teamwork in tackling them have contributed significantly to the school's recent improvement.
  - Decisions taken by the governing body and headteacher have considerably improved staffing stability. The performance management targets set for the headteacher and all class teachers ensure that everyone is contributing to raising standards significantly. Staff are helped to meet their targets with a well-planned programme of professional development which enables them to learn from training courses and good practice in other schools.
  - The headteacher regularly observes teachers' work and gives them very useful guidance to help them improve.
  - The curriculum is good because interesting topics, such as the Great Fire of London, motivate pupils to develop their skills in a range of subjects, including literacy and numeracy. The curriculum makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was particularly evident in the pupils' written reflections on the example set
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by athletes in the recent Paralympic Games, such as 'everyone taking part' and 'helping each other'.

- The local authority has provided effective support and challenge in recent years. However, recognising the school's increased capacity to raise standards independently, their support is now light touch.
  - The headteacher and the governing body actively seek parents' views about the work of the school and its future direction, both through questionnaires and from a well attended parent-partnership group. A particularly useful response to the views expressed by parents is a 'homework club' for them to attend with their children so they can find out how to support learning at home. The very large majority of parents who used Parent View agree that they are well informed about their children's progress.
  - The school meets requirements for safeguarding the pupils.
  - **The governance of the school is good:**
    - The governance of the school is good. Members of the governing body are well informed about pupils' achievement and they ask searching questions, not only to ensure that the school is continuing to improve but also to check that they are doing everything possible to support it.
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## 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>	106676
<b>Local authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	400854

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ed Allen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shelley Fisher
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01302 874432
<b>Fax number</b>	01302 820844
<b>Email address</b>	admin@arksey.doncaster.sch.uk

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