

# Armitage CofE Primary School

Rostron Avenue, Ardwick, Manchester, M12 5NP

**Inspection dates** 2–3 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and their progress in reading is particularly good. Pupils enjoy reading, they see the purpose of it for their everyday lives and they value the focused support they receive from the dedicated staff in the 'reading bungalow'.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children also make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development and, by the end of the Reception class, are very well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding classroom practice in all three key stages. Relationships are strong and classroom walls are adorned with pupils' work. Marking is a strength. The progress of pupils is tracked regularly and accurately.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and speak highly of the support they receive from the adults who work with them and also from their classmates. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are very keen to work hard and to learn. Their conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are of the highest order. All staff use their initiative exceptionally well to ensure that pupils are safe and happy. Attendance is above average.
- Outstanding leadership and management from the headteacher and senior staff have brought about marked improvements in achievement in Nursery and Reception, in pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The governing body knows the school very well, supports it to the full and challenges the leadership with rigour.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils', particularly boys', performance in writing is not as good as it should be. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to talk about their work before they start to write and the topics sometimes do not interest boys as much as they could.
- On occasions, the challenge in the classroom is not good enough to ensure that pupils, especially the most able, reach the standards of which they are capable. In addition, the pace of learning in the classroom is sometimes too slow.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 21 part lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with senior staff. Inspectors also visited the breakfast club and attended a whole-school assembly. They spoke to staff in the 'reading bungalow', listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read and also visited the 'calm space' room.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils including members of the school council. They also had informal discussions with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- They held discussions with four members of the governing body, including the Chair, vice-chair, a parent governor and the community police officer. They spoke to the inclusion manager, the learning mentor and the family support worker. In addition, they met with support staff, subject coordinators and the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors took account of the 42 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and met formally with a group of 15 parents at the beginning of school on the second day of the inspection. They also considered the views expressed in the 29 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team observed the school at work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' work, internal and external pupils' attainment and progress data, the school's view of how well it is doing, improvement planning and minutes of governing body meetings. They also considered documentation in relation to safeguarding, child protection, attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Jim Kidd, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Shutt	Additional Inspector
Pamela Davenport	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school. There has been a 24% increase in pupil numbers since 2011.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above that usually found and is increasing over time.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is high at more than twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- Over four-fifths of pupils are of minority ethnic heritages, with Black African being the largest group. More than half the pupil population speaks English as an additional language.
- A much greater proportion of pupils than seen nationally join or leave the school other than at the usual times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Several members of staff, including the headteacher and senior staff, contribute to training within the local partnership of schools. The governing body administers breakfast and after-school clubs, which take place in the community room.
- Armitage Church of England Primary is a nationally accredited Healthy School. It holds Artsmark, Activemark and has been awarded the Eco School, Green Flag on four occasions.

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

- Further accelerate pupils' progress, especially that of boys, and raise standards in writing by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to consider their work before they put pen to paper, for example by talking about tasks with each other
  - ensuring that topics and resources for writing, including books, are interesting for all pupils, including boys, and motivate them to want to write.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that challenge in the classroom, particularly for the most able, always enables pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable
  - ensuring that the pace of learning is always as fast as it should be.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children generally enter the Nursery with skills which are well below those typical for their age. Their skills in communication and in personal, social and emotional development are particularly low. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average overall and slightly above average in reading. This represents good achievement of all groups of pupils from their starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage. All parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire believe their children are making good progress.
- As a result of high levels of care and support, vibrant classrooms and outdoor areas, a curriculum which encourages children to enjoy learning through investigation, and excellent teaching here, children make outstanding progress in both Nursery and Reception. Indeed, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is now approaching that seen nationally.
- High proportions of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times make judgements on achievement across the rest of the school difficult. However, school data, confirmed by classroom observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils who have remained in the school since their arrival in Nursery make good progress in their studies and particularly in reading.
- There are also examples of several pupils arriving in Key Stage 1 without any experience of formal schooling, who progress quickly as a result of focused individual support from teaching assistants and inclusion staff.
- In 2013, an above average percentage of pupils made the progress expected of them in both reading and mathematics but a below average percentage made the progress expected of them in writing. The most able pupils did particularly well in reading but the percentages reaching the higher National Curriculum Level 5 in writing and mathematics were below average.
- Inspection evidence shows that, in the current Year 6 class, percentages making the progress expected of them in reading and numeracy continue to improve but that boys' progress and attainment in writing are still not as good as that of girls.
- The work of staff in the 'reading bungalow' has an excellent impact on pupils' achievement in this subject. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read confidently and are fully aware of how to split up more complex words in order to be able to pronounce them correctly.
- The school spends pupil premium funding wisely on the appointment of extra staff to support small group sessions and also reading. As a result, gaps between how well pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils are doing are narrowing. Indeed in 2013, pupils supported by the pupil premium reached broadly average standards in writing and did even better in reading.
- As a result of very good support from teachers and teaching assistants, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates across the school.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching continues to improve and is good overall. There are examples of outstanding teaching in all three key stages. The teaching of phonics (sounds that letters make) is particularly strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage and gives children an excellent start to both reading and writing.
- Warm relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them are strengths in all classrooms and the colourful and vibrant display of pupils' work motivates them to want to learn. The progress that pupils make is tracked very closely.
- Pupils make good and sometimes better progress when the challenge in class requires them to think more deeply about their learning. In a Year 5 English lesson, for example, pupils were

required to use a relevant adverb to describe how Epimetheus said, 'You have ruined the world for humans!' The most able pupils in particular rose to the challenge and one used an adverbial phrase 'with no remorse.'

- Similarly, progress accelerates when pupils are given opportunities to talk and share ideas with each other, particularly before they begin their writing exercises. When this happens, pupils learn from each other and approach their work with much more confidence.
- Pupils' progress is fostered well and sometimes exceptionally well by the talented and committed team of teaching assistants and other support staff. Pupils who sometimes find things difficult in the classroom are supported and challenged at just the right level and, as a result, learn just as well as their peers.
- In Year 3, for example, pupils with special educational needs were supported so well by teaching assistants, that they were surprised at how effectively they could use verbs to describe actions and also just how quickly they learned to divide numbers by three.
- The leadership and management of teaching and learning are impressive and senior and middle leaders have an accurate understanding of where teaching could improve and how this can raise achievement. They are aware that the speed of learning in the classroom is sometimes not fast enough and that the most able in particular are not always challenged as well as they should be. They know, also, that pupils, particularly boys, write better when they have had opportunities to talk about their work and when the topics and resources for writing capture their interest.
- Marking is outstanding. Pupils receive accurate advice on how they can improve their work and there are many examples of pupils responding positively to what their teachers have written.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' conduct in lessons, around the school site and also in the well-attended and popular breakfast and after-school clubs cannot be faulted. The behaviour, too, of children in Nursery and Reception, in the Early Years Foundation Stage areas and also in the dining hall is a joy to behold.
- Pupils are very proud indeed of their school and have the highest regard for their classmates and for the 'grown ups', who, they say, 'Make us feel happy and safe in school.' Pupils' respect for each other, for example, was evident in a Year 1 class, when they were delighted at the writing some of their classmates produced.
- Pupils' support for each other was further demonstrated during the outstanding Easter assembly, when they applauded to the rafters the efforts and talents of Year 3, who acted out a new interpretation of the Easter story with skill and verve.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils refer to the 'calm space', the security of the school site, to the many visitors, police officers and fire fighters for example, who explain how they can keep themselves safe and also to the advice they receive on road safety. They and their parents also speak positively of the work of inclusion staff, the learning mentor and the family support worker, who, they say, have such a positive impact on their lives.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different kinds of bullying, including that based on prejudice, and they say that such behaviour is very rare indeed, but that when it does occur, it is handled quickly and sensitively by staff.
- Older pupils take on a range of opportunities to support younger ones. School councillors advise pupils on how to eat healthily and represent the views of their classmates to senior leaders. Peer mentors and peer mediators play an important role in fostering good relationships and 'buddies' recognisable by their waistcoats, lead play activities at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Pupils show an impressive social conscience and their work for charity is well known in the local community and beyond. They make regular donations to the Manchester Food Bank and support a variety of local, national and global charity appeals.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now above average.

## The leadership and management are outstanding

- Pupils, parents and staff speak highly of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, who leads by example and who is supported exceptionally well by the dedicated senior team. In the words of staff, 'Our leaders have the highest expectations of what we and our pupils can do.'
- Leadership and management are only enhanced by the sterling work of the pastoral, inclusion and support teams, by the very well-informed subject coordinators and by talented teachers, for whom the well-being of their pupils lies at the heart of everything they do.
- As a result of excellent leadership and management across the school, results in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now outstanding, pupils' personal development is of a high order and attendance is now above average.
- However, the school knows itself very well and leaders are aware that, although improving, pupils' and particularly boys' performance in writing is not as good as it could be and also that the most able are not always challenged as well as they could be in class.
- The school's rapid growth is due, in no small part, to its impressive reputation within the community. As parents comment, 'The school communicates with us so well and it promotes a real feeling of togetherness within the whole community.' The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well. For example, pupils play an active part in supporting others less fortunate than themselves.
- Performance management arrangements are secure and, in the words of subject coordinators, 'are designed solely to move our pupils' progress forward!'
- Pupils enjoy the different subjects they study and they particularly enjoy the wide variety of extra-curricular clubs, educational visits and the 'Saturday Shine On' project. The school uses the primary school sports funding very effectively. Through the junior sports leadership programme, the appointment of sports captains, lunchtime sports coaches and opportunities for staff to be trained in the delivery of physical education lessons, the school is attempting to make sure that the impact of the funding is long-lasting.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and rejects all forms of discrimination. As a result, the school is a racially harmonious community and pupils from a wide range of cultures and heritages get on exceptionally well together. Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice fully meet current requirements.
- The local authority provides only 'light touch' support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The experienced governing body has an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing. Governors support the school to the full, but are never afraid to challenge the leadership if they feel it is necessary to do so. As a result, governors hold the school fully to account for the decisions it takes and for performance in all areas of its work.
  - Governors keep a close eye on the spending of pupil premium funding and are fully aware of its impact on the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In addition, they have many opportunities to consider pupils' progress and attainment data, which they analyse effectively. As a result, they have an impressive understanding of the school's areas for improvement.
  - Governors are fully aware of how the school attempts to improve the quality of teaching and even visit lessons themselves to look at how well pupils are learning. They make sure that staff receive financial reward only if their pupils reach their progress targets.

## 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>	105502
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	443952

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	340
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Geldard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gaynor Stubbs
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 219 6600
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