

Alburgh with Denton Church of England Primary School

School Road, Alburgh, Harleston, Norfolk IP20 0BW

Inspection dates

8–9 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Significant changes in staffing since the last inspection have led to a decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' learning, particularly in mathematics.
- A new headteacher has managed this period of turbulence effectively. She has ensured that the school remains a safe, stimulating and enjoyable place to be. Standards in reading and writing remain consistently high.
- Leaders show a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs improving.
- Phonics teaching is usually good, but it varies because some support staff have not had adequate training.
- Expert leadership of mathematics is having a significant impact on pupils' learning. Current assessments show that all pupils are making improved progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are exceptional. All pupils follow the school's values enshrined in its 'top 10 learning behaviours'.
- Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy school.
- The school's caring and supportive ethos and the broad range of curricular and enrichment opportunities provided for pupils make an excellent contribution to their personal development and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support they need to achieve well.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium to enable disadvantaged pupils to engage fully in school life and achieve as well as others do.
- Governors know the school well and provide good support and challenge for leaders. They oversee the school's development effectively and ensure that it remains popular and oversubscribed.
- All safeguarding arrangements are securely in place.
- Strong leadership to improve teaching and the curriculum is lacking in the early years. Staff do not always plan learning that makes full use of the facilities and resources available.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that the school’s new approach to teaching mathematics becomes firmly established across all classes
 - spreading the good practice that is clearly evident in upper key stage 2.
- Gain consistency in the teaching of phonics by:
 - ensuring that all support staff receive adequate training in using the school’s chosen procedures and resources to teach phonics
 - sharing good practice so that staff can learn from one another.
- Improve the quality of provision and leadership in the early years by:
 - ensuring that decisive action is taken to resolve absence and provide strong leadership in the early years
 - checking routinely that staff provide children with a suitable balance of teacher-led and child-initiated learning and play
 - making better use of the outside area to promote children’s learning and enjoyment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following the last inspection, the headteacher left and a senior teacher was appointed to lead the school as the substantive headteacher. Successive attempts to recruit a strong teacher for pupils in Years 5 and 6 were unsuccessful. This led to a period of turbulence and a deterioration in pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics and in the teaching of phonics.
- Leaders were unable to prevent a decline in overall standards in 2018. Since then, new appointments and the reorganisation of staff have stabilised the school and led to pupils' improved progress.
- During this time, the headteacher has maintained the school's strong supportive ethos, kept pupils safe and ensured that good teaching of reading and writing has been sustained. Pupils' attendance and standards of behaviour have remained high.
- Routine monitoring ensures that leaders know the school well. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and is used effectively to inform plans for improvement. The headteacher's high expectations of pupils and staff permeate much of the school's work.
- The leader of mathematics has taken charge of the Year 5 and 6 class to fill gaps in pupils' learning and accelerate their progress. She is using her expertise to promote new ways of teaching mathematics to raise achievement in all classes. This approach is leading to improvement but not enough time has passed to embed it fully across the school.
- Other teachers and support staff have been given opportunities to take greater responsibility to lead. They have received training and encouragement to enable them to make improvements. This has increased the school's capacity to improve. For example, under the leadership of an experienced support assistant, outdoor learning developed in regular forest-school lessons has become firmly established. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school.
- Good use of additional funding has raised the profile of physical education (PE) and sport in school. PE lessons are taught by a well-trained leader. Pupils enthuse about the wealth of after-school clubs and competitive sporting opportunities provided for them.
- The pupil premium is used effectively. Careful spending ensures that disadvantaged pupils participate fully in all aspects of school life, including the breakfast club, enrichment activities and off-site visits. Their progress is carefully monitored and prompt action is taken if signs of underachievement appear.
- Funding for pupils with SEND is used effectively to provide daily support in lessons. Teachers deploy support staff well to teach and support small groups of pupils and to provide one-to-one support for pupils who need more help so that they make good progress.
- A broad and balanced curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of activities to capture pupils' interest and inspire them to learn. All pupils take part in an off-site visit each

term to increase their understanding of science, history, music and theatre. All of them have an opportunity to learn a musical instrument. They all participate in a short residential visit and a further week's residential experience in an outdoor adventure centre during key stage 2.

- Parents' and carers' views shared during the inspection show that most – but not all – of them are satisfied with the school. However, leaders' own survey last year and the messages received during the inspection confirm that the vast majority of parents support leaders' actions to improve the school.

Governance of the school

- Experienced and effective governors have supported leaders in tackling weak teaching in the past. They acknowledge that the school is no longer outstanding and have challenged leaders to make improvements.
- The governing body is fully supportive of the headteacher and her actions to improve the school. Minutes of meetings show that governors have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the actions needed to improve it.
- Finances are managed carefully to ensure that staffing levels are maintained, resources are readily available and the school site is well maintained.
- Governors ensure that additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND and to promote PE and sport is used effectively.
- A governor responsible for overseeing safeguarding makes periodic checks of the school's records and procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and have forged good relationships with the local authority, other support agencies and local school leaders to foster their support.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All necessary checks are made when appointing new staff to work with pupils. The single central record is maintained well.
- The headteacher and a senior teacher are trained as designated leads for safeguarding. They ensure that incidents and concerns are recorded in a timely way and are stored securely.
- Staff training on safeguarding pupils – including the 'Prevent' duty – is carried out at the start of each year. Additional training is provided for those who join later in the year.
- Pupils' health and safety on the school site are a priority. The school has effective procedures and systems in place to ensure their safety as they move around the building.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The headteacher evaluates teaching as good. Observations carried out by the inspector and headteacher – and scrutiny of pupils’ work – supported this view.
- Since September 2018, changes have been made to bolster teaching and raise achievement. New teachers have taken over responsibility for teaching pupils in key stage 1 and upper key stage 2 classes. They have quickly established themselves in their new roles, while the teacher in lower key stage 2 has provided ongoing stability and consistency.
- All teachers know their pupils well and forge good working relationships with them. Expectations of pupils are high, and their behaviour is managed well. Most pupils display positive attitudes towards learning. Those who lose concentration in lessons are given a gentle reminder which promptly brings them back on-task.
- Teachers are adept at organising learning so that pupils who know what to do can get on and work without the support of adults, and those who need more help can work alongside the teacher. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to teach and support small groups of lower-ability pupils and those with SEND.
- Good modelling of learning using interactive whiteboards – coupled with questioning and discussion – helps pupils to quickly grasp what they are expected to learn. Pupils choose different challenges to do, depending on their abilities. This ensures that the most able are suitably challenged. At times, a few pupils choose tasks that are too difficult for them. Without sufficient guidance, their progress slows.
- Testing and periodic assessments enable teachers to gain a clear overview of which pupils are likely to meet their targets and to focus additional support towards those at risk of underachieving.
- Literacy is taught effectively. Pupils’ books show a range of good-quality writing. Off-site visits are used well to gather information that pupils can use back in school to develop their writing. Some progress has been made since the last inspection in improving pupils’ handwriting but this remains a focus of the school’s work.
- Reading is popular with pupils. Older pupils can articulate clearly what they are reading. Reading logs show that younger pupils read regularly, often to their parents. Pupils in Year 3 who read aloud to the inspector lacked fluency but they knew how to use letters and sounds to read words unfamiliar to them.
- Results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have fallen recently. Systematic procedures are in place to teach early reading skills but not all support staff have received adequate training in using them. Senior leaders have recognised this, and further training is planned this year. The good practice seen during observations of teaching phonics has not been shared fully to enable staff to learn from one another.
- New approaches to teaching mathematics are effective but are not fully established, mainly because their introduction has been disrupted by changes in staffing. Training and guidance provided by the leader of mathematics are enabling other staff to improve their teaching. All teachers provide pupils with a good range of practical resources to help them calculate and solve problems. The good practice evident in

Years 5 and 6 in developing problem-solving and reasoning skills and in developing mastery does not extend fully into other classes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's small size means that pupils know each other well. They take care of one another. Pupils take turns to act as the 'class greeter', welcoming others into class each morning with a high five, a hug or a thumbs up. Pupils are well cared for. They say that 'If you get stuck or feel sad, teachers are always there for you.' They know that if they have concerns, they can drop a note in the headteacher's 'worry box' and staff will follow this up.
- Positive attitudes are rewarded and celebrated. When teachers spot pupils displaying one of the school's 'top 10 learning behaviours' – such as perseverance, resilience, cooperation or independence – they pin a personal note of praise on the wall. Pupils who see these qualities displayed by others also take time to write a personal note and pin it up on the display. Pupils value stars and house points awarded for good work and helping others. They wear their badges for good attendance and achievement with pride.
- Pupils enthuse about the after-school clubs in sport, music and creative arts, and the 'cool trips' provided for them. They readily volunteer as sports leaders or school counsellors and raise funds for local charities.
- Regular personal, social and health education lessons inform pupils about leading healthy active lives, and how to stay safe online. Pupils learn in detail about people from diverse backgrounds who have different beliefs and values. However, they show a limited understanding of the risks attached to extremism and radicalisation.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The school's strong ethos underpins much of its work. School is a calm, caring and purposeful place to be. Pupils are pleasant, polite and respectful. Throughout the inspection, pupils conducted themselves well in lessons. At breaks and lunchtimes, they played games or chatted together in friendship groups, and enjoyed each other's company.
- Records show that very few incidents of poor behaviour occur. No pupils have been excluded from school for the past three years.
- Pupils feel safe in school and free from all forms of bullying. When minor incidents of name-calling occur, pupils have confidence in staff to stop it from happening. An annual anti-bullying week and other teaching help them to understand the consequences of bullying and what to do if they are exposed to it.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in their regular attendance, which is consistently

high. A daily breakfast club ensures that pupils are nourished and ready to learn. Daily assemblies provide opportunities to promote pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and for sharing of achievements. Pupils learn and think about British values such as respect and tolerance in assemblies and during weekly reflection time in class.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the last inspection, outcomes achieved by pupils by the end of key stage 2 have been consistently strong. However, changes in staffing have had a detrimental effect on pupils' learning, and results dipped in 2018. Pupils did not make enough progress in mathematics. Reading remained strong but their progress in writing slowed.
- Leaders have acted swiftly to resolve this. New teachers in key stage 1 and upper key stage 2 have stabilised teaching. Improvement plans for mathematics and English have been implemented. This is leading to better teaching and improved progress made by pupils. Pupils who met with the inspector recognise the improvements and said they feel they are doing well in all subjects.
- Current assessment information shows that the majority of pupils in key stage 2 are meeting the expectations of them in reading and writing. They are quickly catching up in mathematics. Expert teaching of mathematics in Years 5 and 6 is accelerating their progress. Recent retests in arithmetic show that pupils' knowledge and understanding are much more secure.
- Different tasks provided for pupils in all lessons ensure that the most able are sufficiently challenged. The proportions of pupils achieving the higher standard in reading and mathematics and greater depth in writing have remained above average for the past three years.
- There are very few pupils who are disadvantaged or with SEND. Their needs are met well, and they make good progress.
- The turbulence caused by staffing changes also affected outcomes achieved by pupils in key stage 1. Consistently above-average results in reading, writing, mathematics and science were not sustained in 2018. Although the proportions of pupils attaining the expected standards in writing and mathematics were above average, outcomes in reading fell, but remained above average.
- Current assessment information indicates that pupils in the Year 1 and 2 class are benefiting from improved teaching. Inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics are being ironed out and this is leading to better outcomes.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- At the last inspection, the early years provision was judged to be good. This has not been sustained. Leaders have been unable to ensure good leadership of the early years since the last inspection due to staffing issues that have been beyond their control. The prolonged absence of good leadership in the early years has restricted the efforts of

school leaders to make improvements to teaching and the curriculum, and maintain continuity in children's learning.

- School leaders' accurate overview of the strengths and weaknesses has informed new plans for improvement. As an interim measure, they have appointed a temporary teacher until permanent staffing is resumed. With good support from an experienced and effective higher-level teaching assistant, standards of behaviour and safeguarding have been maintained and children are making progress from their starting points.
- All children are known well. Excellent behaviour and established routines ensure that children enjoy learning and play together well. They listen attentively to stories and eagerly respond to questions. The classroom is a positive environment in which to learn, with good resources and vibrant displays of their work.
- Teaching is variable. Observations carried out jointly between the inspector and senior leaders confirmed that the balance of teacher-led and child-initiated learning and play is not always achieved. At times, learning is too formal, with too few opportunities to reinforce children's learning through role play, discovery and finding out for themselves.
- Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The proportion of them attaining a good level of development is consistently high. Children's achievements are collated and recorded to show what they have been doing and what they have learned. This information is shared with parents each term. Staff identify the next steps and recommend what parents can do to aid their child's learning. The latest assessments show that most children are making sufficient progress across most areas of learning, but their language and communication skills are not developing quickly enough.
- The outdoor space is not used well for learning. Children's use of the outdoor space is limited. It lacks a rich range of resources and exciting activities so there is little to attract them to use it for learning and play. Children thoroughly enjoy playing on the scooters and tricycles and show real pride in riding their bicycles safely.
- Children have positive attitudes to learning. Most of them are at an advanced stage of using tools to make marks and to form letters. Many of them can write their names and construct short sentences. They can explain what they are doing, sort shapes and use good wrist and hand control to colour, draw and paint.

School details

Unique reference number	121025
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10085474

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Brown
Headteacher	Hayley Sonnex
Telephone number	01986 788 678
Website	www.awdps.co.uk
Email address	head@alburgh-with-denton.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school's religious character was last inspected under section 48 arrangements in May 2016.
- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed to lead the school.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was scheduled initially as a one-day inspection because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector had concerns about a decline in overall standards. The lead inspector found evidence to confirm that standards had fallen and returned the following day to complete a full inspection.
- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. All observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspector held meetings with senior leaders, the leader of mathematics, a newly qualified teacher, the school council, four members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work. He looked at a range of documentation, including safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, self-evaluation and improvement planning, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, and other information shared by school leaders.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books in lessons and scrutinised a sample of books of pupils in Years 3 and 6. He considered 67 responses from parents to Ofsted's questionnaire, Parent View, and a letter and an email from parents.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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