

Aycliffe Drive Primary School

Aycliffe Drive, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP2 6LJ

Inspection dates

9–10 July 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors know their school well. Over time, their work to improve provision has successfully raised standards and ensures that pupils achieve well.
- The headteacher leads a supportive staff team whose members work together well and are proud to be members of the school.
- Leaders have improved teaching, learning and assessment effectively, which has brought about greater consistency and better outcomes for pupils.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 was significantly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at both expected level and the higher standard and/or greater depth.
- In 2018, pupils at the end of key stage 2 made progress well above the national average in writing. This is because the teaching of writing is very effective.
- The early years setting is a strength of the school. Children in both Nursery and Reception get off to an excellent start, due to the engaging curriculum and highly effective teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and conduct around the school is good, due to the high expectations of staff.
- Confidence and self-esteem are promoted well because of the strong emphasis on pupil's emotional well-being.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy taking part in a range of subjects across the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
- The majority of parents would recommend the school. They agree that their child is happy, well looked after and feels safe at the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, because of the well-tailored, effective support they receive.
- In 2018, disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 made good progress. However, not all disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able disadvantaged, are making consistently good progress.
- Improvements in the teaching of mathematics ensure that pupils made stronger progress in 2018 than previously. There is a noticeable difference between the progress girls and boys make, with boys making more favourable progress.
- Attendance is improving and is now in line with the national average. However, despite leaders' efforts, some pupils are often late when arriving to school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and progress by:
 - improving the progress girls make in mathematics, ensuring that the in-school gap diminishes between the achievement of boys and girls.
 - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils achieve consistently well so the gap continues to diminish compared to other pupils in school.
- Continue to improve attendance and reduce lateness so all pupils attend school well and on time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have been determined to secure a good standard of education for pupils and, as a result, pupils' achievements have improved significantly.
- The headteacher, supported by her capable leaders, ensures that teachers and teaching assistants receive high-quality professional development. Staff feel well supported to deliver high-quality lessons to all pupils and, as a result, pupils' make good progress.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They gather detailed information about the quality of what teachers provide and on pupils' achievements. Using this information, they plan and implement effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school since the previous inspection. The school has been highly responsive to this support, which has assisted the development of subject leaders to confidently monitor and evaluate their area of responsibility as well as deliver training. As a result, the areas that required improvement at the time of the previous inspection have improved.
- Staff at the school are highly supportive of the leadership of the school. Staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire said that they enjoy working at the school and are proud members of the 'Aycliffe Drive' staff team. They appreciate the opportunities given to them for professional development.
- Subject leaders contribute to school improvement effectively. They undertake lesson observations, lead training, and scrutinise pupils' work and teachers' planning. This has helped to improve teaching and develop a culture of continuous improvement.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils with SEND is good. This is because the leader has a clear understanding of the pupils' individual learning needs. She works closely with the additional needs assistant and the teaching assistants to ensure that they are well trained to carry out support programmes. Interventions that are put into place are carefully monitored and adapted as needed. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding to provide additional support, both in the classroom and by developing pupils' emotional and social skills, particularly through the support offered by the pastoral and mental health leader. The funding is closely monitored by leaders, including governors, to ensure that the support pupils receive is effective. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils grow in confidence and most make good progress. However, this is not yet consistent across the school and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils, particularly the most able, do not achieve as well as other pupils in school.
- The sports premium is used effectively. The leader uses the relevant funding well to make a positive contribution to pupils' interest and participation in games, sports and physical activity. Staff have developed their skills in teaching physical education (PE) by

working closely with the sports apprentice.

- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, providing pupils with opportunities to develop skills and to explore key concepts and ideas. Whole school projects, such as 'Take one picture' in art and 'Take one tune' in music, provide opportunities for cross-curricular learning and collaboration. The curriculum is enhanced by visiting places of interest, such as Kew Gardens and a residential trip in Year 6, which supports pupils to develop a range of skills, such as teamwork and independence.
- Homework is used to support the development of reading, spelling and times tables. Pupils also enjoy taking part in the extra-curricular activities, such as gardening, choir, athletics and dance club.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven throughout the curriculum. Leaders utilise visitors well to enhance pupils' experiences, such as parents from different faiths coming into school to talk about their religion.
- Parents are very positive about the school and the majority who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent view, stated that they would recommend the school to others. Parents enjoy the many opportunities offered to take part in school life, such as the 'Mother's Day breakfast' and sports day. One parent stated, 'My child has really enjoyed his time at Aycliffe Drive and is sad it is coming to an end this year', while another summarised by saying Aycliffe Drive is an 'excellent school'.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a range of skills and experiences and know the school well. They check their specific areas of responsibility through regular visits to gather information. This helps them to ask the right questions to support and challenge leaders to improve.
- Governors review the school's use of additional funding. They ensure that extra expenditure is focused on improving pupils' progress. Governors are aware that there is more work to do to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils across the school make consistently good progress.
- Governors ensure that they attend regular training to fulfil the requirements of their roles. Governors fulfil their statutory role well, for example by completing safeguarding reviews.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There are four members of staff who are trained as designated safeguarding leaders. This ensures that there is always an effective safeguarding leader available to staff should any concerns arise. They know their pupils and families extremely well.
- Safeguarding leads work very closely with parents and external agencies to make sure that pupils are safe and that their welfare is assured. Leaders are tenacious in their determination to ensure that pupils and their families receive the appropriate and timely support they need.
- Appropriate checks are made on all staff before they begin work at the school, to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

- Staff are regularly trained in a wide range of safeguarding matters and risk assessment procedures. As a result, all staff know how to make a referral and pupils know who to go to if they have a problem.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school. Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe, and this includes fire safety and road safety, particularly older pupils who walk to school on their own. Furthermore, parents, who responded to Parent View, agree that the school keeps their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Senior leaders have provided effective professional development so that there is now a consistent approach throughout the school. Pupils say the way 'teachers teach things makes it easy to understand'. Consequently, this has significantly improved pupils' achievements.
- The teaching of writing is a strength of the school. Teachers ensure that pupils have many opportunities to write in a range of styles and for different purposes, through interesting themes.
- In key stage 1, the school has chosen the approach that pupils learn stories and rehearse them orally before writing. This has continued the good development of language which began in early years. Pupils use this knowledge in order to plan and write their own stories to a high standard. In recent years, boys have achieved less well in writing at key stage 1. However, boys talk enthusiastically about writing and said, learning a story 'really helps their writing'. One boy stated, 'I love it!' Consequently, boys' progress in writing in key stage 1 has improved this year.
- Pupils have also learned to edit their own writing through using a range of strategies, such as peer marking, using displays and dictionaries and proofreading. As a result, pupils can confidently talk about their work and how they have improved it, as well as what they need to do better next time.
- Reading is taught effectively throughout the school. Improvements to the teaching of reading, through the school's chosen approach, the 'Reading Fluency Project', has ensured that pupils read with speed, accuracy and expression. Teachers read interesting books to the class to introduce pupils to a range of genres and authors.
- The teaching of mathematics has been a focus for the school since the previous inspection. As a result, new approaches to teaching mathematics have been introduced. Documents to support teaching and learning have been reviewed to assist teachers in their planning for learning. Monitoring ensures appropriate coverage of the mathematics curriculum and that the work is adapted to meet the needs of pupils.
- Pupils stated that the use of resources and pictures has helped them learn mathematical concepts as well as learning the rules for calculations and times tables. They enjoy choosing their own challenge in mathematics. One pupil said, 'Challenge is good because it helps us learn'.
- In order to develop mathematical vocabulary, 'speaking frames', which have example sentence starters, have helped to structure pupils' thinking when talking about mathematics and further develop their vocabulary.

- Teaching assistants are extremely effective and make strong contributions to pupils' learning. During the inspection, teaching assistants were observed asking searching questions and, as a result, pupils progress well in their understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on pupils' emotional well-being. Confidence and self-esteem are promoted well. Leaders have afforded a dedicated pastoral support and mental health leader within their inclusion team to support pupils and families, particularly for those who may have difficult situations to deal with. A great deal of work goes into making sure that all pupils are happy, safe and secure. An example of this is the introduction of 'Our club' at lunchtimes, which supports pupils to make friends and boosts their confidence.
- Pupils present their work well. This reflects the high expectations that teachers have. Pupils are proud of their work and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their work. They enjoy coming to school. One pupil said, 'The worst thing about school is that the day is too short!' They like the rewards and incentives that are on offer, such as team points, and enjoy the celebration assembly because they 'find out how well everyone is achieving'.
- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities, for example lunchtime leaders, buddy leaders and the eco council. Recently the school council organised a variety of activities for 'Feeling Good' week.
- A very small minority of parents who completed Ofsted's questionnaire raised behaviour and bullying as a concern. The inspectors considered a range of evidence, which shows that bullying and racist incidents are rare. Pupils who spoke with the inspector confirmed that this was the case. If an incident of bullying does occur, it is dealt with quickly by the school. Older pupils have taken part in sessions delivered by Watford football club to further raise their awareness and understanding of online bullying.
- The vast majority of parents say that their child is happy at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and conduct around the school are excellent. Their positive attitudes help strengthen progress within their learning.
- Pupils work collaboratively together. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils are not easily distracted from their learning and low-level disruption is extremely rare, due to understanding the school rule of 'not stopping others with their learning'.

- Pupils understand that from time to time they 'have fall outs' with their friends, but these are sorted out quickly. Staff are well trained to deal with any behaviour issues in a consistent manner.
- The majority of parents agree that behaviour is good at the school.
- In recent years, pupils' attendance has been lower than the national average. Leaders have worked hard at identifying ways it can be improved. Through rigorous monitoring, meetings with parents and the introduction of rewards, attendance this year is much better, especially for those who, in the past, were regularly absent. However, some pupils are often late when arriving to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress and attainment in key stage 2 have significantly improved since the school was previously inspected. Attainment in 2018, for key stage 2, was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected level and at the greater depth and/or higher level.
- In 2018, progress for pupils in key stage 2 was above the national average in reading and well above the national average in writing. Current pupils in key stage 2 are also making strong progress from their starting points in a wide range of subjects.
- As a result of the improvements in mathematics, in 2018 pupils made good progress in mathematics. However, currently girls' progress in mathematics is noticeably lower than the progress of boys.
- Pupils' outcomes in science improved at key stage 2 in 2018, due to the improvements leaders have made in the teaching and learning of science, for example through training, improved planning documents and monitoring of teaching.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2018, most Year 2 pupils attained the expected standards, with some reaching greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics in the end of key stage 1 assessments.
- The majority of pupils acquire the phonics knowledge and skills that they need by the end of Year 1. This is because the effective teaching of phonics starts as soon as pupils join the school. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge well when reading texts.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. In 2018, the progress disadvantaged pupils made at the end of key stage 2 was better than disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. As a result of the good progress, in 2018, pupil attainment in key stage 2 was also above the national average at the expected level. The school's current assessment information and pupils' work seen during the inspection show that most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their different starting points. However, this is not yet consistent across the school in all year groups and subjects.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their variable starting points. Tailored support designed to address their learning needs enables pupils to access the curriculum with success and confidence.

- Teachers are quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Teachers then make effective provision for them, either within the class, in small groups or individually. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary school, both in terms of their achievement and in their knowledge of how to be a successful learner.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The early years leader has high expectations and aspirations, which are shared by the early years team. This is clearly evident in the quality of education provided in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Most children join the school with skills that are lower than those typical for their age. Leaders have identified particular barriers to learning, such as communication and language skills, and have ensured that additional support is in place in order for children to develop these skills quickly. As a result of highly effective teaching, learning and assessment children make very strong progress. The proportion of children who attain a good level of development by the end of Reception is broadly in line with the national average.
- The early years leader has an accurate view of the many strengths in the provision. However, she is not complacent and has taken appropriate actions to further enhance children's learning experiences since the previous inspection, for example developing the teaching, learning and assessment of phonics in the Nursery. As a result, children make rapid progress in learning letter sounds, which they apply to read and write words.
- In recent years, boys have not achieved as well as girls. However, adults have ensured that the curriculum is based around exciting themes, such as dinosaurs and space, to particularly engage the boy's interests. The classrooms and outdoor areas are richly resourced to spark curiosity and interest, such as the spaceship role-play area. As a result of the carefully planned provision and environment, current school information shows that boys are now achieving equally as well.
- Adults plan purposeful learning activities that equally support all aspects of children's development. Adults make sure that the activities provided in sessions where children choose their own activities provide ample opportunities for children to develop their early writing, reading and number skills. These build upon adult-led, focused literacy and mathematics sessions, but also provide opportunities for children to be creative and collaborate with one another.
- Adults are particularly skilful at adapting activities to support the learning of individual children. They have an accurate knowledge of each child's development and those areas that they need to strengthen. Activities are appropriately challenging to children, whatever their capabilities, and support is well placed for children who need it. As a result, children make very strong progress whatever their starting points and are well placed to start Year 1.
- Children's behaviour in the early years is exemplary. Adults have high expectations of behaviour and children respond well. Children are highly motivated and eager to join in. During the inspection, nursery children were seen thoroughly enjoying the retelling of

'We're going on a bear hunt' in their forest school session. Dressed in wellies, they happily splashed through water, stamped in the mud and went through a bubble storm. All of the children wanted to do it again when they had finished.

- Leaders ensure that transition arrangements quickly help children to settle into the early years. Parents welcome the opportunities to be involved in their children's learning, for example through open mornings and the 'mystery reader', where parents come into early years to read to the children in a disguise and children guess who it is.
- Children are kept safe and are well cared for. Safeguarding arrangements in the early years are effective. All of the required welfare arrangements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	117335
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10103370

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

Type of school	Primary and Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	337
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pam Gent
Headteacher	Maria Green
Telephone number	01442 404 008
Website	www.aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk/
Email address	head@aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 May 2017

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school. The school runs two nursery classes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There are two reception classes, which operate together in one large room. In key stage 1, there are two single-age classes and one mixed-age class. In key stage 2, there are three single-age classes and two mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average. Levels of deprivation are also above those seen nationally.
- The majority of pupils are White British. There are several groups of pupils from a range of ethnic minorities.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below that seen in other schools across the country. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is also

below the national average.

- The school operates a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class at least once. Several of these observations were undertaken alongside the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and when moving around the school site at breaktime and lunchtime. During these times, inspectors held informal discussions with pupils about their learning and play.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books in lessons and with groups of pupils. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with five groups of pupils, the headteacher and other senior leaders, curriculum leaders, the leader for pastoral support and leaders responsible for special educational needs and the pupil premium. The lead inspector met with the vice-chair of governors, along with two other members of the governing body and also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 39 responses to Ofsted's free-text service, alongside 41 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as views expressed by parents spoken with at the start of the inspection. Inspectors also considered 29 responses submitted to Ofsted's online questionnaire by staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's documentation, including that relating to the school's curriculum, safeguarding and child protection, pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour, school development and improvement plans, leaders' self-evaluation, school leaders' allocation of pupil premium funding and leaders' plans and evaluation of the PE and sport premium funding.

Inspection team

Rachel Welch, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Brenda Watson	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Walker	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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