

Albany Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122546
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380489
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Cathy Morgan

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Averil Wynne
Headteacher	Samantha Eyre
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2008
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Cathy Morgan

Additional inspector

Patricia Underwood

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed parts of 12 lessons taught by six teachers and made other observations of pupils' learning. Meetings were held with staff, representatives of the governing body, pupils and with the specialist advisor responsible for the welfare of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including that linked to safeguarding, the school's own self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, its records of pupils' attainment and progress, and pupils' work. The team scrutinised 63 parental questionnaires and others returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Albany is a smaller-than-average primary school on the outskirts of Nottingham city. It is a member of the White Hills Park Federation. The number of pupils on the school roll has declined since the time of the last inspection. Instability in staffing levels has now been resolved. The proportion of pupils joining the school after the start of Year 3 has recently increased. Most pupils are White British and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than average. The school has gained several awards in recognition of its work, including the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, the St John Ambulance award and Healthy Schools Gold Standard status. There are an infant school and an after school club on the same site, which are managed and inspected separately.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is a good and inclusive school. It is not outstanding because learning and achievement are not yet outstanding. There is an uncompromising and successful drive to improve the achievement of all pupils. They have excellent experiences which secure their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. School leaders ensure that pupils are well equipped to succeed academically and in their personal lives.
- Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously and underachievement tackled rapidly so that attainment continues to be above average when pupils leave the school in Year 6. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress. However, the good progress evident in writing does not emerge until pupils are older.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe, a view confirmed by parents and carers. Pupils are polite, respectful and have positive attitudes to learning. Staff, parents and carers work hard to ensure that pupils' high attendance continues to improve.
- Teaching is good. Teachers are skilled at using the outstanding curriculum to engage, enthuse and motivate pupils' interest in learning. They make excellent use of information and communication technology, and the school's assessment systems, to ensure that work is matched to pupils' specific needs. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to contribute their ideas and discuss their progress in lessons.
- Outstanding leadership and management underpin the sustained improvements made since the time of the last inspection. The inspirational headteacher has ensured that her clear vision and ambition are shared by a strong leadership team, an effective governing body and by all school staff. The rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and an insistence on high expectations, supported by expert professional development opportunities, have successfully raised the proportion of outstanding teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enable pupils to make more rapid progress in their writing in Years 3 and 4 by ensuring that activities are sufficiently focused on improving their spelling and writing skills.

- Increase the proportion of outstanding lessons by ensuring that:
 - pupils are actively involved in all lessons
 - pupils have sufficient opportunities to contribute their ideas and discuss their progress in all lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire rightly believe that their child is making good progress at school. One wrote, 'There is excellent communication and support for my child's learning.' Pupils' attainment and rates of progress have improved strongly since the last inspection, when they were broadly average. Since then, standards of attainment in English and mathematics have continued to be above those expected nationally. Pupils' attainment in reading is above average in Year 6 because this is a key focus for the school. Pupils understand an extensive range of vocabulary and they use it confidently when inferring and predicting meaning from text. Pupils' writing skills are slower to develop in Years 3 and 4 but their attainment accelerates sharply in Years 5 and 6, so that all groups make better-than-expected progress overall.

The rigorous and extensive analysis of assessment information by the school demonstrates that the rate of progress is continuing to accelerate for all pupils. Those in Year 6 are on course to meet their challenging targets and an above-average proportion of pupils are on track to reach the higher Level 5. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress. This is clearly reflected in lessons and shows the positive impact of the highly personalised intervention and support provided for these pupils. Those pupils who join the school at different times through the year, particularly those known to be eligible for free school meals, take longer to settle to their work, but, under the excellent support of all staff, sometimes with the support of outside agencies, they too make good progress.

Pupils make fast progress in most lessons because they concentrate well and work hard. In one mathematics lesson, Year 5 pupils quickly grasped the concept of probability through a lively and practical group activity and were able to use complex terminology to describe their results.

Quality of teaching

Almost all teaching is good and sometimes it is outstanding. Typically, lessons are well planned to include activities which engage pupils' interest. The outstanding lessons make learning exciting and challenge pupils to make excellent progress

because activities are stimulating and matched extremely well to their needs. An outstanding English lesson in Year 6 demonstrated all of these attributes. Pupils were inspired by the enthusiasm of their teacher when using alliteration to enhance their 'thrilling' stories.

Highly skilled teaching assistants play a major part in lessons, ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported very effectively to make good and often excellent progress. Assessment information is used extremely well to identify the specific learning needs of pupils and target specialist support. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely effectively in lessons and pupils develop excellent social skills through planned opportunities to work together. This was an outstanding feature of a highly successful dance lesson in Year 6. The teacher made effective use of inclusive resources to introduce pupils to a Greek dance. They thoroughly enjoyed working in teams to help one another to master the steps, regardless of their ability or any disability.

Senior leaders have worked extremely hard to ensure that teachers and their assistants design lessons which provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to learn actively in order to increase the proportion of lessons judged to be outstanding.

Pupils receive comprehensive feedback which helps them to understand how to improve. All pupils know their targets for English and mathematics, and they are proactive in using the target display boards in their classrooms. Excellent use is made of learning logs and partnership books for homework and to facilitate communication with parents and carers. Pupils are proud of these books and enjoy using them to set and monitor their own targets.

Teachers in the lower year groups often plan their lessons together and this usually works well but, sometimes, activities are not sufficiently focused on improving pupils' spelling and writing skills. Successful collaboration with the infant school has led to improvements in the teaching of mathematics for this group of pupils. By making use of resources that the children are already familiar with, teachers have improved pupils' rate of progress in numeracy.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All pupils, regardless of background, ability, gender or disability, get on extremely well and play and work happily together. Pupils are polite and very mature in their attitudes and incidents of bullying are rare. Many pupils are members of the highly effective school parliament groups which enable them to work together as peer mediators to secure the safety of all members of the school. One group, called the 'Bully Busters' is responsible for creating a range of exciting activities to prevent bullying such as 'no name calling week' and an anti-cyber-bullying poster competition. They say that they 'really enjoy making a difference to our school'. Parents, carers and pupils agree with the inspectors that behaviour is good. Nearly all pupils work hard in lessons and show good attitudes to their work. There is a strong school ethos about keeping safe and pupils have a good understanding of how they do so. The school has introduced a very successful play-therapy scheme to support pupils who have behavioural or emotional difficulties. This

support has equipped pupils with the skills to manage their emotions with greater self-control. All pupils recognise potentially dangerous situations well and take sensible precautions when dealing with them. The school, parents and carers have worked extremely hard together to improve attendance which is now high, and above the national average.

Leadership and management

The thoughtful and inspirational management of the headteacher and senior leaders is demonstrated by their uncompromising and extremely successful drive to succeed with every pupil and promote equality of opportunity. Their leadership is strengthened further by the effective support and expertise provided by the governing body. The governing body and the whole staff team, share the headteacher's pride and steadfast focus on improvement.

The senior leadership team has secured significant improvements in assessment, curriculum, attendance and behaviour since the time of the last inspection, despite experiencing the challenges brought about by falling rolls. They are tenacious and creative in their endeavour to find cost-effective solutions to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential academically and personally. Examples include: campaigning strongly with outside agencies to ensure individual pupils receive timely and bespoke support; creating 'chill and chat' sessions to engage parents and carers in literacy and mathematical activities; providing 'dads' and lads' book bags' to encourage boys to read more. Strategies to support children who do not join the school at the start of Year 3, those who are particularly able and those with particular disabilities, special educational needs or behavioural difficulties are outstanding and have a significant impact on improving their achievements.

Senior and middle leaders are highly critical when evaluating the work of the school in order to ensure that all actions are based on an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff are challenged positively and constructively so that the pace of improvements is sustained, particularly in teaching and assessment. All staff make excellent use of computer-based systems to regularly and accurately monitor pupils' progress and to target bespoke and often intensive support for individuals and groups of pupils.

The curriculum is outstanding. It is successfully designed to provide extensive and exciting opportunities for pupils to enhance their experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. Pupils participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, themed projects, trips, competitions and residential visits. This provision is carefully evaluated to enable school leaders to identify patterns of attendance and determine the impact on pupils, particularly those whose circumstances mean they may be vulnerable. There is clear evidence to demonstrate an improvement in pupils' self-esteem, social skills confidence and academic progress. The whole curriculum promotes pupils' good behaviour and safety and their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and all current government requirements are met. Pupils feel safe and secure, and relationships between pupils of different ages are harmonious and respectful.

The school leadership team demands high professional standards and insists that providing the very best for the pupils is the responsibility of all staff. An extensive programme of expert professional development is provided to support all staff and is successful in developing their leadership capacity. This has led to sustained improvements since the previous inspection and demonstrates the excellent capacity for the school to continue to improve further.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Albany Junior School, Nottingham, NG9 8HR

Thank you for the wonderful welcome you gave us when we carried out our recent inspection. Thank you to those who talked to us and filled out our questionnaire. It was very useful to have your views. We were particularly impressed by your positive behaviour and how kind you are to one another. We agree with you and your parents and carers that yours is a good school. You obviously enjoy school and take every opportunity to become actively involved. The school parliament is working very well and we were very impressed by the work of the 'Bully Busters' and the contribution you all make to school assemblies.

Here are some of the best things we found out about your school.

- You are making good progress and mostly doing better than other pupils of the same age in similar schools.
- Your teachers help you to learn well because teaching is good and sometimes it is excellent.
- Your behaviour is good and you try your best in lessons.
- You stay safe, you are kind and you do your best to help each other.
- Your school is managed extremely well and all of the staff are outstanding leaders, helping your school to keep on improving.

Your headteacher wants to make the school even better, so we have asked her to help you to make faster progress in writing in Years 3 and 4 and to make every lesson an excellent one by always involving you in activities and giving you the opportunity to contribute your ideas and discuss the progress you are making.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Morgan
Lead inspector

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