

Albany Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122547
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380490
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Kath Campbell

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mick Worrall
Headteacher	Helen Webster
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
School address	Grenville Drive Stapleford Nottingham NG9 8PD
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 11 lessons taught by seven teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They also talked informally to parents and carers. They observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation, including information about pupils' progress, child protection and safeguarding procedures. They looked at pupils' past and present work and scrutinised responses from 39 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Does the school use assessment information effectively enough to identify and support pupils who make less than expected progress?
- Do recent curriculum innovations inspire all groups of pupils to achieve as well as they should, particularly boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- Is there enough evidence to support the school's view that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and community cohesion are outstanding?
- Can the school show it has driven through improvement at a fast enough pace during a period of change in teachers' roles and responsibilities, particularly at senior management level?

Information about the school

Albany is a smaller-than-average school on the outskirts of the city. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The school has gained several awards in recognition of its work, including Investors in People, the Eco Silver award and Healthy Schools Gold Standard status. There have been several changes to teachers' roles and responsibilities, particularly at senior level, since the previous inspection. Stapleford Children's Centre is situated on the school site. This facility is not managed by the governing body and is inspected and reported on separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Albany is a school that has maintained the good quality of education found in the previous inspection. Its success is largely due to the determination of the headteacher and staff to sustain improvement. They work together well as a team and create a warm, friendly and secure working environment. The teamwork between teaching assistants and teachers is impressive and makes a major contribution to pupils' learning. Attendance is above average because children like school a great deal. There is a strong sense of community, and parents, carers and staff rightly hold the school in high regard. Numerous appreciative comments, such as, 'The school provides an excellent environment for my child', aptly sum up the high level of satisfaction. Parents are unanimous in their view that the school keeps their children safe. In discussion, pupils have an excellent understanding of why they feel safe at all times. They are totally confident that any concerns they may have are taken very seriously, listened to, acted upon and dealt with very effectively and as a matter of urgency.

By the time pupils leave, they typically reach above average standards. After a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language achieve well because high quality support is accurately targeted at their individual needs. Recent initiatives, such as those to encourage greater enthusiasm among boys for writing have shown some success but have not secured a full impact on standards. This is because, although better motivated, boys sometimes find it difficult to write at length. Systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils have gone from strength to strength. As a result, boys and girls of all abilities make equally good progress because the work set more accurately matches individual needs and abilities. Potential underachievement is identified at an early stage and excellent intervention strategies quickly get pupils back on track.

Teaching and learning are of good quality. Teachers and other adults manage pupils exceptionally well, enabling pupils to settle quickly into their new classes. Staff do much to make learning enjoyable. As a result, classrooms are very positive environments, where pupils want to succeed. The curriculum is good. Pupils enjoy an impressively good range of sporting activities that make a major contribution towards pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. The curriculum has been adapted well to motivate and engage pupils' interest. However, there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to develop confidence with writing from an early

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stage or extend their literacy skills across different subjects. Information and communication technology is a far more integral part of learning than in the past. A particular strength of the good care, guidance and support is the wealth of opportunities provided to support pupils and families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

Senior leaders have adapted well to their new roles and responsibilities. They have a clear vision for improvement and the school has moved on at a brisk pace since its previous inspection. The monitoring of teaching and learning is of good quality. Strategic planning is good and is increasingly underpinned by precise data analysis of pupils' progress. Although the governing body is very supportive of the school, it does not have a prominent enough role in monitoring the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning outcomes. Senior leaders have a secure understanding of strengths and weaknesses. They know their school well and self-evaluation is mostly accurate. The overall picture for Albany is positive. Good leadership, combined with effective tracking systems that accelerate progress and good quality monitoring and evaluation procedures, ensure the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in boys' writing by:
 - extending the range of opportunities that are specifically designed to engage the interest of boys as well as girls
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to practise writing skills across the curriculum
 - developing boys' interest in writing at an early stage so that they sustain an enthusiasm as they move through the school.
- Extend the governing body's oversight of the school and develop its role in determining the strategic direction for the school by:
 - ensuring that the governing body gathers first-hand evidence about the school's work so that it is better informed to support and challenge the school in bringing about improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children typically join the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below the levels expected of children at this age. On entry to nursery, early literacy skills are particularly weak. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides well for the school's youngest children, enabling an average proportion to move into Year 1 having achieved the early learning goals. In Key Stage 1, the impact of initiatives, such as 'Expert Writing' groups, enables some pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress. Tailored support for pupils who speak English as an additional language enables them to enjoy success and participate fully in school life. Boys' writing is a whole-school priority and

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'independent writing books' have greatly improved pupils' enjoyment of writing because they can see how much progress they have made. Good quality assessment and effective focus group activities also make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. A good example of this was seen in a successful Year 2 numeracy lesson, where the pupils were developing their counting skills. The teamwork of the teacher and teaching assistant in their focus group work was of the highest quality, enabling pupils of all abilities to make rapid progress. Tasks were skilfully adapted as the teacher assessed pupils' levels of understanding. Good quality questioning, combined with the effective use of mathematical vocabulary and a security with the subject that allowed pupils to discover number patterns for themselves, contributed greatly to good learning.

Pupils are very proud of their school and know they are part of a caring community. They have a highly developed sense of what constitutes feeling safe. Initiatives, such as 'Stranger Danger', are particularly effective in promoting pupils' awareness of the risks they may meet beyond the school gates. Pupils greatly enjoy their school meals and say they particularly like all the vegetables. They know how important drinking water, eating healthily and participating in activities such as 'Wake and Shake' are in helping them to learn. Strong links with providers, such as Nottingham Forest Football Club, combined with coaching sessions in tennis and hockey, make a major contribution to pupils' awareness of how to keep fit and active. The school richly deserves its Healthy Schools Gold status. Behaviour is good because pupils like and respect each other. Playground pals help to make playtimes harmonious social occasions. Pupils' moral and social growth is particularly strong. Creative and artistic opportunities greatly enhance pupils' cultural development. However, there are missed opportunities for the school to strengthen pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of culture that exists within close proximity. By the time pupils leave, their good academic and secure personal skills ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Parents and carers rightly believe their children are taught well. There are many strong features within teaching and learning. Teachers' professional, calm approach aids good learning. Planning is of high quality, reflecting teachers' accurate assessments of pupils' next steps in learning. Good use of questioning successfully prompts pupils to find out more and explain what they think. Staff develop highly effective relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils' enjoyment motivates them to do their best. Occasionally, some tasks lack sufficient challenge, particularly when pupils are working on independent activities.

The curriculum is innovative and exciting. Themed events, such as 'Healthy Living Week', promote key skills in a meaningful way, because they combine learning across a range of subjects. The introduction of whole-school topics has provided greater creativity and enabled curriculum coordinators to oversee continuity and progression more effectively. Much learning is practically based, with numerous opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate. This approach engages boys' interest well. A strong personal, health and social education programme makes a major contribution to pupils' good personal development. Pupils particularly appreciate the numerous visits and visitors that greatly enhance their learning. Effective curriculum links with the adjacent junior school, and a good quality transition programme, aid continuity and help pupils to transfer confidently at the end of Year 2.

The school is a supportive, caring community, where pupils' welfare is given a high priority. Pupils know that staff have their best interests at heart and that they are valued as individuals. Sensitive and well-targeted support enables pupils who may be potentially vulnerable to enjoy success. The school works well with external agencies to access additional guidance when this is required. As a result, pupils thrive, both in their academic and personal development. Attendance is monitored with great rigour and pupils are made very aware of the beneficial impact good attendance has on their learning. Good links with the adjoining Children's Centre enable a smooth transition.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where	2

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relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The relatively new leadership team has been instrumental in instilling the ambition to bring about improvement. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear view of what is working well and where further improvements can be made. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good and has resulted in the development of a consistently strong teaching team. Written feedback for staff on their performance is of high quality. Professional development for all staff is a key feature in the school’s success. Partnerships, such as the school’s current collaboration with Nottingham Trent University on a project to develop the teaching and learning of reading and writing links, make a good contribution to pupils’ learning.

The governing body monitors specific areas of the school’s work, such as safeguarding and child protection, well. Safeguarding procedures are secure, meet requirements and follow good practice. All documentation is meticulously kept and procedures for child protection training are of high quality. Good links with parents and carers do much to enhance pupils’ learning. The school is strongly inclusive and promotes equality of opportunities well. By providing individualised support, it breaks down any potential barriers to learning. There is no discrimination and every pupil has the same opportunities to join in with school activities and make a contribution. Community cohesion is very strong at a local level. Albany is a harmonious and happy school. It takes an active part in community life through, for example, its participation in the local carnival. Responsibilities, such as involvement in the school council and Eco groups, give pupils a good understanding of how they can enhance the quality of life for others. The school reaches out to the community beyond the school gates through its many links with partner institutions. At a national level, links with a culturally more diverse school are developing well. At a global level, there are plans to develop a link with a school overseas but this is not fully established.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress. The strong focus on personal, social and emotional development enables children to grow in confidence. Staff create a warm, nurturing environment where children feel very secure. A calm atmosphere prevails, and adults develop firm relationships with families, enabling children to settle quickly into routines. Parents and carers value the opportunities they receive to become involved in their child’s education right from the start. Those children who need additional support make rapid progress because staff give them highly effective one-to-one attention. The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are fun places to be and learning is exciting. Children develop a good early understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They are provided with a wealth of motivating experiences to explore and investigate for themselves. During the inspection, despite only being in nursery a few days, children were already inquisitive and eager to search for the frog in the outdoor learning area. Staff make good use of outdoor space but the layout of the building sometimes makes it difficult for staff to supervise children working in different areas. This sometimes restricts children’s freedom of choice to work indoors or outside. The balance between independent and adult-led activities is just right. Teaching is consistently good and is at its most effective when children are working in small groups. However, there is not always enough challenge for the higher attaining children when working independently. Careful observations provide valuable insight into the progress of individual children. Assessment information contained in, for example, children’s ‘Look How Clever I Am’ books are particularly effective because children enjoy a good visual record of the progress they have made. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Staff have a firm understanding of strengths and weaknesses, share the same vision and have a clear direction for improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A lower than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the

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questionnaire. Some explained that, because their children were new to the school, they did not feel they had enough information to answer all the questions. Those that replied are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They particularly like the fact that their children feel safe and enjoy school a great deal. They believe the quality of teaching is good and are confident the school meets their child's particular needs.

Very few parents or carers expressed concerns and these tended to be of an individual nature. The lead inspector followed up with the school any matters raised. Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers informally to gain a wider view and found a high level of satisfaction.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Albany Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 175 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	58	16	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	68	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	50	14	37	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	58	11	29	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	63	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	21	55	14	37	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	63	11	29	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	47	15	39	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	22	58	14	37	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	45	17	45	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	50	16	42	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	66	10	26	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	27	71	9	24	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



14 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Albany Infant and Nursery School, Nottingham, NG9 8PD

I am one of the inspectors who came to your school not very long ago. We found you happy and friendly, and you made us feel welcome. You told us that you want to come to school or nursery every day because your work is fun and you learn a lot. That is why your attendance is so good. You like the adults who teach you and look after you and you work and play together very well. You care about each other and your behaviour is good. You have a very good understanding of how to keep safe and you know exactly what to do if you are unhappy about anything. Your understanding of how to keep fit and healthy is excellent.

You should be very proud because you go to a good school. We enjoyed talking to some of you about your work and we liked looking at your independent writing books. Some of your writing is very good. You make good progress because most of you try very hard to do your best. Everyone expects great things from you and all the staff help you to do well.

We have asked your school to improve some things. The boys are getting much better at writing but some of you need more help to do even better. We want you to enjoy your work so that you feel confident to write more without help. We have asked for you to be given more time to practise your writing in different subjects. We also want the school governors to help keep a more careful check on how you are doing.

Please help by trying even harder with your writing, keeping up that good attendance and always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell
Lead inspector

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