

Aine Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121369
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	380224
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glynn Moakes
Headteacher	Paul Platt
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2007
School address	Main Street Aine York YO61 1RT
Telephone number	01347 838427
Fax number	01347 838427
Email address	admin@aine.n-yorks.sch.uk

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Store Street
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons taught by six teachers. The inspection team held meetings with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including: assessments of pupils' progress; pupils' learning journals (self-selected examples of good work during their time in school); the school's monitoring of teaching and learning; and documentation relating to safeguarding. The team analysed questionnaires returned from staff and pupils, and 70 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The extent to which pupils lead their own learning in mathematics through questioning, investigation, problem solving and making decisions.
- The extent to which teaching promotes pupils' independent learning skills so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Whether middle leaders are sufficiently involved in evaluating the work of the school, especially in terms of teaching and learning.
- How far staff adapt provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to meet children's changing interests and needs and the impact on children's learning and development.

Information about the school

Alne Primary School is smaller than the average primary school. It serves several rural villages, including Alne, to the north of York. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A below average proportion are known to be eligible for free school meals. A very small minority of pupils are vulnerable because of their circumstances. A below average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities or hold a statement of special educational needs. The school holds several awards including the Eco Bronze award. It has Healthy Schools status.

The Kool club@Alne Primary School was not part of this inspection. It is inspected separately and the report can be found on the Ofsted website.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This school gives pupils an outstanding education. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is tangible. They work together with intense enjoyment, energy and concentration. Their attendance is high and their behaviour first rate. Older pupils are excellent role models for younger ones. They willingly take on responsibilities, demonstrating excellent skills as young leaders. At the same time, pupils clearly have a lot of fun and many memorable learning experiences. These excite their curiosity and foster their eagerness to learn. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as a result. With their first-rate knowledge of why it is important to stay safe, be healthy and help others, as well as their advanced literacy and numeracy skills, pupils are extremely well prepared for their future lives.

Pupils make outstanding progress from broadly average starting points because they are exceptionally well taught and teaching assistants give first-rate support. Attainment is high in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 because pupils work assiduously and know exactly what to do to improve their work. Pupils have many opportunities to lead their own learning and to make decisions, especially in English. Learning through questioning, problem-solving and investigation are key features of the way pupils learn in mathematics but they have relatively few opportunities to set their own challenges. An innovative curriculum underpins pupils' exceptionally effective learning. Parents and carers are extremely well engaged through weekly class newsletters and regular curriculum and progress meetings.

The school takes excellent care of pupils and gives them extremely helpful support and guidance so that they can make the most of their time in school. Leadership, management and governance are highly effective, ensuring that pupils have absolutely equal opportunities. Middle leaders make a substantial contribution to school improvement but rarely observe how their action points are implemented in practice. The school has built successfully on its good track record. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now outstanding and outcomes across the school consistently high. Self-evaluation is stringent. The school tends to undervalue its effectiveness because it is concerned to sustain its current high levels of attainment and outstanding achievement and so it is always seeking to improve further. The school demonstrates outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain high attainment and outstanding achievement by:
 - involving pupils in setting mathematical challenges
 - involving middle leaders in checking how well specific action points in literacy and numeracy are implemented in practice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Achievement is outstanding. The school resounds with pupils' cheerful voices as they discuss enthusiastically, ask questions and compare notes. They clearly enjoy learning. Typically, lessons involve pupils in tackling challenging, investigative tasks in groups after a brief introduction by the teacher to make clear the main teaching points. For example, Year 6, after a brief recap on how to calculate bearings, pored over world maps to plot the flight path from London Heathrow to Brisbane, Australia. They were told where the plane should refuel and to record their results in any way they chose. While some pupils plotted more direct routes, the most-able pupils suddenly found that their speedy route mapping needed instant adjustment as they had to factor in the conflicting flight path of a rerouted plane.

Pupils read extremely well. They write without hesitation because they are taught to put a dotted line under words they are unsure of and to return to them later to check the spelling. As a result, both boys and girls often opt to write instead of read in the daily literacy free choice time. Their writing is sensitively expressed and punctuated correctly. Typically, 70% of pupils exceed expected levels in national tests by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because they are encouraged to be ambitious and to see themselves as capable learners. They receive excellent support and individual tuition and often meet nationally expected levels.

Pupils are sure there is no bullying 'because there are lots of things to do.' At lunchtimes, older pupils lead line dancing and skipping games while boys and girls play pool or table football or change into their physical education (PE) kit so they can practise ball skills on the field. Pupils take their duties seriously as school or Year 6 councillors, house captains, play leaders and road safety officers. These entail real responsibilities such as managing a budget. Pupils are kind and considerate. They ran a toy animal hospital in order to raise money for charities. From this they learnt respect, compassion and social responsibility in its wider sense. Their learning journals are packed with instances they are proud of.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Highly effective features of teaching include: excellent use of time; skilful questioning; and good use of interactive technology to make teaching points clear. Teachers encourage pupils to question and find solutions to problems. This helps them to learn that there is not always just one answer or one way to find it. Teachers assess daily what pupils have learnt and use this information to plan what pupils need to learn next. Pupils are fully involved in the assessment process. For example, younger pupils checked each other's writing and suggested targets for improvement. Pupils were confident to say when they disagreed and to suggest an alternative such as 'more interesting connectives.' Marking is first rate. It gives praise but also indicates areas to improve. As a result, pupils learn to be self-critical and to mirror their teachers' high expectations.

The highly imaginative curriculum, enriched by a full range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits, often gives a real-life context for learning. Consequently, pupils use their literacy, numeracy and computer skills in very varied situations. Rather more curricular time is given to literacy than numeracy. This restricts the opportunities pupils have to set themselves and each other mathematical challenges. Outstanding features such as the Duke of Alne award challenge pupils in diverse subjects such as current affairs and cookery. Extremely well-targeted support for all pupils enables them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. The school persists in getting the right support for those whose circumstances make them vulnerable or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Transition arrangements between different educational stages are first rate. As a result, pupils are confident, outward-going individuals.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are highly successful at embedding ambition and driving improvement as shown in the consistently high outcomes. Promoting equal opportunity lies at the heart of the school's work. There is no evidence of discrimination or unequal progress. All staff strive to make pupils' time productive and enjoyable and to see education from the child's point of view. This has led to innovative practice and an enthusiastic staff team, brimming with ideas on how to challenge and engage pupils' further. Just as the headteacher does his fair share of teaching so the pupils contribute to leadership, including development and curriculum planning. Middle leaders have stimulating action plans for literacy and numeracy but, although they are keen to do so, have yet to observe how these work out in practice. Teaching quality is checked regularly and incisive points for improvement ensure that excellent practice is sustained.

The knowledgeable governing body offers high levels of challenge. It checks the school's performance against agreed targets and queries any shortfall. Action planning, as a result, is of a high order. The school has excellent safeguarding practices which are constantly reviewed and updated. Child protection is especially good. The school demonstrates a reasonable and proportionate response to safety. As a result, pupils feel safe but not fearful. The school's collaborative working with key and partner agencies is exemplary. Partnership working is extremely good value for money because it makes a consistently excellent contribution to pupils' confidence and spirit of adventure. Pupils are keenly aware of local, national and global communities because of the school's extremely successful promotion of community cohesion within the school and beyond.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make rapid progress in a short time as a result of inspiring teaching. They quickly learn to be independent, confidently taking charge at lunchtimes to ‘make sure everyone washes their hands properly’. They relish learning a new letter each day and how to write it because this is introduced to them in memorable ways. For example, the teacher set a large fan whirring at the back of a make-believe boat and together with ‘Floppy the dog’ told a brief tale of getting stuck at sea. The children joined in, shouting, ‘Ahoy! Ship ahoy!’ They quickly grasped the new sound ‘oi’ and assiduously practised letter shapes at different points of the day as they set sail with ‘Floppy the dog’ on imaginary voyages. Mighty challenges such as transporting water from buckets back to the water tray, a distance of some 10 metres, without carrying a full bucket of water, taxed children’s ingenuity as they rigged up a safe means of conveying it using crates, ramps and guttering.

The provision is extremely well led and managed. Daily observations of children’s learning give a clear picture of individual progress and are used to adapt the provision each day to children’s changing interests and needs. Very informative, weekly class letters to parents and carers ensure that they are fully engaged in their children’s learning. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of children are confident communicators with a good grasp of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all expressed extremely positive views about the provision made by and the performance of the school. This comment typifies many: ‘The school provides an excellent learning and pastoral environment. We’re a lucky community.’ The inspection team saw many examples of this. A very small minority expressed concerns about the size of classes in relation to the small classrooms, especially as the number of pupils is continuing to grow. The governing body is aware of the problem and is dealing with it. There are no health and safety issues because the tables are grouped together sensibly and ingenious chair backs hold pupils’ stationery and reading books which minimises clutter.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alne Primary 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 inspector received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 141 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	79	15	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	76	17	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	61	25	36	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	64	20	29	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	52	74	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	74	17	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	64	25	36	0	0	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)	42	60	24	34	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	61	24	34	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	49	31	44	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	57	28	40	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	74	16	23	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	73	19	27	0	0	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 is 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.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alne Primary School, York, YO61 1RT

Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome. We really enjoyed our time in your school. A special 'thank you' goes to the groups of pupils who spent time talking to me and my colleague and showing us their work.

Your school gives you an outstanding education. You make excellent progress because you are extremely well taught. You read and write exceptionally well for your age and you are extremely good mathematicians too. Your behaviour is outstanding and helps you to learn. We were impressed at how interesting your lessons are and at how well you work together in groups. We also liked the way you are so busy at lunchtimes and that you sensibly change into your PE kit when you practise ball skills on the field in your free time. What a lot of responsibilities you have! You have so many different jobs to do. These help you to turn into confident young people who are extremely well prepared for your future lives. Your school takes every opportunity to make sure your parents and carers know what is going on so they can help you too.

This is what we have asked your school to do next so it can continue to be as outstanding as it currently is.

- Involve you in setting challenges in mathematics.
- Involve your teachers in checking how well their good ideas are working in practice.

You can help by continuing to work and play hard and by coming to school every day.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Clark
Lead inspector

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