

Annfield Plain Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114024
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378785
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2012
Lead inspector	Martin Pye

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michele Hodgson
Headteacher	Inez Burgess
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Martin Pye

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspector visited 11 lessons taught by five different teachers, attended a school assembly, observed break times and listened to pupils reading. He held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement, pupils' work and assessment information, teachers' planning, monitoring of teaching records, attendance and safeguarding information. The inspector analysed 52 questionnaires from parents and carers together with questionnaires from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Anrfield Plain Junior School is smaller than the average sized junior school. Most of the pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils that are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than that found in most schools. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Anrfield Plain Junior is recognised as a Rights Respecting School and has gained a number of awards including: Eco School Bronze Award, International School Award, Anti-bullying Accreditation, Artsmark Silver and Enhanced Healthy School status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school because teaching is effective. The carefully planned curriculum meets pupils' needs well and, together with the many partnerships with other organisations, makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's overall effectiveness is not yet outstanding because teaching is not yet outstanding and the school's tracking of pupils' progress in mathematics is not as precise as the systems used in English.
- Pupils achieve well. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and, by the end of Year 6, reach standards in English and mathematics that are at least in line with those expected for their age. The school is particularly successful at supporting pupils who find learning difficult. Attainment in writing is improving but, particularly for the more able pupils, is not as strong as the higher standards achieved in reading.
- The quality of teaching is good and there is a positive climate for learning in all classrooms. All staff place a high value on the development of pupils' effective work habits and behaviours. In the best lessons, carefully tailored tasks and opportunities for pupils to work together and discuss and share ideas, help them to build successfully on their existing knowledge and skills and to develop independence in their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school, as is clearly shown by their above average attendance.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, and other school leaders, monitor and evaluate teaching and learning very effectively and use this information to manage teachers' performance and drive school improvement. Staff and the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development and provide good quality information to parents and carers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue with the whole-school drive to raise attainment in writing particularly for the more-able pupils so that by the end of Year 6, it is in line with the higher standards achieved in reading.
- Sharpen the tracking of pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - implementing a more consistent format of target setting across the school
 - using the good quality on-going assessment information from marking in books to inform whole-school tracking.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that all tasks in lessons are always carefully tailored to build successfully on pupils' prior learning
 - making full use of every opportunity for pupils to share and discuss their work and ideas.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Year groups are small and pupils' attainment when they start in Year 3 varies from year to year but, over time, it is broadly average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. As soon as pupils start at the school, their progress in English and mathematics is routinely monitored and tracked. Any slow progress is quickly identified and appropriate support put in place. Consequently, all pupils make good progress and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, reach standards in writing and mathematics that are at least in line with age-related expectations and above average in reading. The good quality support, both pastoral and academic, given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, means that these pupils grow in confidence, make good progress and achieve well at school. Any gaps between the achievements of different groups of pupils are narrow.

In recent years, attainment in writing, particularly for the more able pupils, has not been as high as that seen in reading. The school's current data and work in pupils' books shows the rate of pupils' progress in writing is now improving. In class, pupils speak enthusiastically about their writing and enjoy the many opportunities to write for a range of purposes. This is because there has been a whole-school drive to raise standards in writing. Sharp, diagnostic marking informs on-going assessment and planning for next steps in learning and, as a result, progress is accelerating. Nevertheless, while the use of regular assessment to track pupils' progress is well established and, for reading and writing, is sharp and helpful, the routine tracking of progress in mathematics is not as precise as it could be. This is because the school relies heavily on test data rather than assessments made from work in class. In addition, the use of targets to guide pupils' progress in mathematics is inconsistent. Different classes are trialling different systems and this means that pupils do not yet get precise guidance about what they need to do next in order to improve.

Inspection findings confirm the views of parents and carers that pupils achieve well and make good progress in all classes. Pupils' attitudes are positive and they thoroughly enjoy learning. In lessons, pupils are given imaginative challenges that grab their attention and make them keen to participate in active learning. In one science lesson, for example, a relay race to collect and assemble parts of a model skeleton required pupils to work together to solve a problem. The thoughtful organisation of the lesson made learning fun and purposeful, stimulated plenty of discussion, and built successfully on pupils' existing knowledge. Consequently, they made rapid progress.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good and during the inspection, some outstanding teaching was seen. School monitoring records and work in pupils' books confirm that over time, teaching is helping all pupils, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs, to make good progress. Parents and carers also praise the quality of teaching.

Teaching in all areas of the curriculum is well-organised and imaginative. Pupils are interested in learning and approach class work with lively enthusiasm. This is because teachers' high expectations help pupils to develop mature and hard-working attitudes. Whether they are working studiously on an independent task, cooperating with others on a practical activity or sharing their ideas in group discussion, pupils engage with learning and do their best. The teaching of reading is particularly effective because it is structured and systematic.

In the most effective lessons, tasks are finely tuned to meet all pupils' needs and they are given time to discuss their work. In one successful English lesson, inspired by the Titanic for example, skilful teacher questioning prompted pupils to talk confidently about the letters they had written and to evaluate the features of their own and others' writing. As a result, they were able to identify ways to edit and refine their writing. However, on some occasions opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking are missed. This means that teachers are not always absolutely clear about what pupils already know and this limits their ability to adjust teaching in lessons so that all tasks build successfully on prior learning.

The quality and impact of teachers' marking, especially for written work, is a particular strength; clear diagnostic feedback helps pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

A thread running through many lessons and activities is the importance paid to thinking skills and the development of positive attitudes to learning, to life and to each other. Many lessons, including sessions about life skills or philosophy, provide time and opportunity for pupils to reflect and share ideas. This thoughtful approach, coupled with the many exciting and relevant learning experiences provided by the curriculum, helps them to develop an interest in others and the world around them.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

School records and inspection observations confirm the view expressed by many pupils, parents and carers that behaviour, over time, is managed well and is good. Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school, as is clearly demonstrated by their above average attendance.

Pupils and staff do report some lively behaviour on the playground and say that, from time to time, some pupils do fall out with each other and there can be arguments. However, pupils say that any upsets that do occur are dealt with well and they can explain how disagreements differ from bullying. Pupils have an informed understanding of what constitutes bullying and are confident that any rare instances that might occur would be stopped. They are aware of the different risks that they face in and out of school, such as when using the internet or when walking or cycling, and know how to respond to these in order to stay safe. Pupils feel that the school takes account of their views and are proud of their role in creating the recently built quiet area on the playground. Older pupils take on roles such as playground buddies and other helpful responsibilities around the school.

A particular feature of the school's work is its commitment to supporting pupils who find it difficult to manage some of their behaviour at school. These pupils receive extra support from trained mentors and this, together with liaison with home and other organisations, is successful in helping them to cope well in lessons and around school. Staff act as good role models and through lessons, assemblies and the many reward systems at school, they help pupils to develop calm, courteous, interested and responsible attitudes to their work and each other.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, governing body and staff share high ambitions for the school. Regular monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and other school leaders provides clear feedback to teachers and this has helped to improve teaching. Pupils' progress is checked at frequent intervals and actions are taken to improve their achievement, training for staff or extra support for pupils, for example. While the school has identified the need to sharpen the quality of assessment in mathematics, leaders have not yet fully incorporated teachers' on-going assessments into the system to track pupils' progress, and a uniform system of target setting has yet to be agreed. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and links well with development planning and the performance management cycle for staff. Members of the governing body have effective systems for receiving and evaluating information about the school's work and make regular visits to the school, with some members of the governing body participating in joint staff training, lesson monitoring and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and all staff have received appropriate training.

The curriculum is outstanding because the imaginative range of subjects allows pupils to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful ways. In addition, it is enriched by many visits, partnerships, celebrations and events which add interest and excitement to learning and make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The recently published 'Annfield

Appletree' newspaper and a project with a local business provide two examples of how the school makes an extra effort to provide pupils with lively and memorable experiences. In addition, links with schools further afield for example, in France, Ghana and Japan, help pupils to find out about the wider world.

The school provides a lot of helpful information for parents and carers. The informative website, newsletters and curriculum guidance leaflets help to strengthen the partnership between home and school and support pupils' learning beyond the school day. The good pastoral care and academic support, assisted by links with specialist agencies, means that the school is successful in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Parents and carers appreciate the inclusive nature of the school with one parent commenting, 'My child has gained so much confidence since starting at Annfield Plain Juniors.' Improvements made since the last inspection and the well-informed development planning by school leaders, demonstrates that the school has good capacity 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



11 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Anrfield Plain Junior School, Stanley, DH9 7ST

Thank you for your welcome when I inspected your school. I very much enjoyed my visit. Thank you for telling me about your work and all the other things you do at school. I was very impressed by your high attendance and good behaviour.

Anrfield Plain Juniors is a good school where you feel safe. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and they plan many exciting activities for you. This helps you to enjoy learning and to do well. Those of you who find learning more difficult make good progress because you receive good care and support.

In most lessons, teachers plan tasks that are just right for you, not too easy and not too hard, and give you plenty of opportunity to talk about your own ideas. This means you make good progress. In order to help you make even better progress, particularly in your writing, teachers are going to make sure this happens in every lesson.

In addition, teachers are going to check your progress in mathematics in the same detailed way that already happens with your reading and writing. This will give you more information that will help you to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to try your best in lessons and by behaving and attending so well.

Thank you again and my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Pye
Lead Inspector

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