

Albert Pritchard Infant School

Crew Road, Wednesbury, WS10 9QG

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher, with strong support from the local authority adviser, has led to considerable improvements in the effectiveness of the governing body and senior leaders during this school year.
- As a result the vast majority of teaching is now good, and some is outstanding. All staff have worked hard with the senior leaders to remove weaknesses, and this has strengthened the progress made by pupils.
- Outstanding organisation and teaching in the nursery enables children to make rapid progress in learning and social development from very low starting points.
- Leaders, including governors, check accurately the quality of teaching and learning. These checks show that the overall progress of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Their behaviour is good and well managed by staff. Attendance has improved considerably.
- All groups of pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, receive good-quality support and care, and as a result they make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra activities, with good support provided for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school, and pupils know how to support one another.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The role of subject leaders in checking teaching and giving guidance to staff is not yet fully developed.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently and solve problems and research topics without the help of the teacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a total of 22 lessons, seeing every teacher and class from Nursery to Year 2, and made other briefer class visits. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about their learning, and many were heard reading.
- The school has a small number of pupils (allocated places by the local authority) who suffer from complex learning needs.
- Meetings were held with governors, a local authority representative and various groups of teaching staff. The questionnaire responses from 40 staff were considered.
- The views of 28 parents and carers, from the online questionnaire Parent View, were also taken into account, together with views expressed directly to inspectors during the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' books, observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information regarding pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and policies and records relating to attendance, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Keith Shannon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Judith Tulloch

Additional Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most other infant schools.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language, although the number is rising.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average, as is the proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which in this school usually applies only to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- As part of a federation with a local junior school, the infant school shares the same senior leadership team of headteacher (who took up her post as executive headteacher in January 2013) and governing body. The junior school was inspected in 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching to raise pupils' achievement, by:
 - giving pupils good, regular opportunities to improve their independent learning and research skills
 - making sure pupils respond to marking of their work, so they can practise and improve their skills.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on raising pupils' standards by:
 - increasing the opportunities for all leaders to check teaching and learning
 - involving them all in identifying and implementing improvement priorities, and monitoring the effectiveness of such measures.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below the levels expected nationally for this age group. They make outstanding progress and enter Reception with standards just below the levels expected for their age.
- Pupils' progress slows from Reception to the end of Year 2, but is still good. Most pupils leave school with levels at or just below national expectations, showing good overall achievement. Opportunities for pupils to work with a greater degree of independence, and to research, are not as strong after they leave the nursery.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics dipped last year, though the Year 2 test results still reflected good progress. In the past few terms the rate of pupils' progress has risen considerably. Staff provide many booster classes, understand pupils' individual needs much better than in past years, and are learning from the high-quality example and expectations set by the headteacher.
- Standards of reading are good. Pupils have a good understanding of phonics (the links between sounds and letters) and many speak about reading for pleasure at home. Pupils have a home reading diary that is monitored closely. The developments in reading have been supported by many improvements to the library and the creation of a computer suite and non-fiction area for research. Pupils are generally very confident in speaking with adults and are encouraged to always do so in full sentences.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well thanks to effective help and guidance that is matched closely to their individual needs.
- Pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding make similar progress compared to others. The school provides extra support for them in classrooms, booster classes and opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life. There is a gap of approximately one term of learning between the attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and their classmates in English and mathematics, but this is closing.

The quality of teaching is good

- During their time in the nursery children are encouraged to develop language in all situations. They choose many of their own learning tasks, and staff question them skilfully to ensure learning is taking place. Opportunities for social interaction and learning through role-play generate imagination, enjoyment and development.
- The majority of teaching is good, and it is sometimes outstanding. The high expectations teachers have of pupils' behaviour are generally clear. In most of the lessons seen, pupils were intent on learning and finding the answers to problems set, all in a very lively, structured and enjoyable atmosphere.
- The best teaching encourages pupils to ask questions and these are followed up. Pupils in these lessons listen very well. All pupils develop good basic skills, and teachers are constantly improving the way they use previous data to plan work for pupils. For example, where phonics is taught well the teacher uses flash cards, linked to pictures, to ensure that the correct pronunciation is used, and follows this up with songs and rhymes.

- Teachers are skilled at questioning pupils to inspire enthusiasm for learning and to check their understanding. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson, when the work was adapted for four different ability groups and pupils were able to continue their learning independently through well-planned extension tasks.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to respond to marking, and teachers do not always check to see how the pupil has responded to their advice. A training programme is already in place, with weekly sessions to show staff how to develop these skills further.
- Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to work independently or to research topics. This can mean that some pupils do not achieve their full learning potential, as tasks are not always set at an appropriate level of difficulty.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, along with those known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, are all well supported in their learning. Their progress is good as a result of this well-planned support by staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils understand of how to keep themselves safe, and their general behaviour is good. Even on the odd occasions when some are distracted because teaching does not fully engage them, they do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Parents support the school very well, and the vast majority are very happy in turn with the support they get from staff. As with views of pupils, parents say that they are happy with safety. There are strong relationships across the community, and parents highly appreciate the training classes run by the school on a variety of issues.
- Pupils understand about bullying, and are very quick to say how well teachers look after them. They also look after one another, and inspectors saw many examples of this and of sharing in the school.
- Clear guidance is given to pupils on a range of issues about keeping themselves safe. The school has strong working partnerships with external professionals, such as speech and language specialists, and quickly identifies how to find that support when it is necessary.
- Overall attendance has risen considerably in the past year, and is now broadly average as a result of the school's concerted drive to improve it. Celebration assemblies are promoted weekly, and over 40 parents attended the one seen by inspectors. The headteacher visits parents to challenge poor attendance and to improve punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- The focus on raising standards of education for the pupils and the professionalism and skills of adults in the school have improved significantly since the headteacher was appointed as executive headteacher. Her passion and leadership skills are welcomed by all staff, as reflected in their questionnaire replies.

- After its last inspection the school underwent considerable changes and standards overall suffered. There is now a far more accurate process for monitoring performance at all levels and evaluating needs. For example, newly appointed senior staff have already had an impact on raising staff expectations, and this is improving what pupils are achieving. They share the headteacher's vision to create an outstanding school. The headteacher ensures that they have sufficient time and opportunity to develop their improving skills.
 - Staff have improved the way subjects are taught so it more closely matches pupils' needs, and this is part of the reason why achievement is good. This work in the classroom is supported by a range of activities that enrich the pupils' experiences. Every day there is a breakfast club and a number of other clubs and activities out of school hours. These help towards the development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills and understanding.
 - Leaders value the ideas and input of all, including the pupils, and opportunities to share are regularly encouraged.
 - Leaders, including governors, regularly observe lessons, and where appropriate give constructive feedback to show how they may be improved. They manage the performance of staff very well, and the staff questionnaires show that they appreciate the support leaders give. Subject leaders are not yet confident in regularly checking pupils' progress and attainment, or, of using the resulting information to help them plan for improvement.
 - There is a very clear belief from all that each child is equal and deserves the best education they can get. Discrimination of any sort is rare, and dealt with effectively when it has happened.
 - Safeguarding policies and procedures are fully meet current national requirements. They are managed effectively by the senior administration staff and overseen by the governors, and all staff are aware of child protection and risk assessment issues.
 - The local authority, through its support partner, is effective in helping leaders to take improvements forward. Assistance is given in training in identified areas of development and general advice. The local authority is very confident that the actions taken by the executive headteacher since her appointment are already having an impact on improving the effectiveness of learning.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been reorganised effectively in the past year. It is now better placed to offer its support to the school and to challenge with understanding. Following focused training, the governors are now able to use data about pupils' progress to ask the right questions, provide strong community links and show a strong understanding of the links between teaching and learning. They contribute to the plans for how pupil premium funding is used and assess its impact appropriately, carry out their statutory duties efficiently, and support the headteacher in ensuring that any underperformance is challenged.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	103906
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	413322

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lesley Turner
Headteacher	Carla Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2010
Telephone number	0121 556 0858
Fax number	N/a
Email address	carla.clarke@albertpritchard.sandwell.sch.uk

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