

Alvaston Infant and Nursery School

Elvaston Lane, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0PU

Inspection dates 28–29 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders' plans for school improvement do not have sufficient attention to detail and some important jobs are not finished before new ones begin. These plans are not always communicated clearly to staff and parents.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not contain clear milestones to help governors check the impact their actions are having on achievement.
- Subject leaders do not yet monitor teaching well enough. Their roles are not fully developed and they do not know enough about the school's performance to fully hold colleagues to account for their roles in raising standards.
- The quality of teaching, including phonics (sounds that letters make) and mathematics is not consistently good. This is because teachers do not match work to the needs of pupils well enough, particularly the most able.
- The subject knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants is not consistently good. Consequently, they do not always plan or deliver activities that build on what pupils already know and can do.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are not consistently high. This is reflected in the level of challenge of work they set and pupils' presentation of their work.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work does not consistently help them to improve quickly.
- The gap in achievement between disadvantaged children and their classmates is not closing quickly enough. This is because assessment information is not used well enough to plan work which matches their needs.
- Behaviour is not always good enough. There is some low-level disruption in lessons. Where this happens, it is because tasks are not sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities.
- Attendance is not as good as it should be. This is particularly true for children who are disadvantaged, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is not consistently good. Activities are not planned well enough and adults are not always deployed effectively to help children learn.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and her deputy are determined individuals who are focused on raising standards in the school and removing a legacy of complacency.
- Senior leaders, including the governing body, have a clear and accurate picture of the school and what needs to happen to improve it.
- Recent initiatives to improve teaching and pupils' achievement are beginning to have an impact on raising standards.
- Teaching is strongest in Year 2 and pupils make good progress in their final year at the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 12 lessons, including three observations carried out jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors also observed one assembly, talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work in all year groups to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, teaching assistants, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start and the end of the school day. They took account of the 42 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors took note of the 37 responses to the staff questionnaire and two anonymous letters regarding the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including: the school's own self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning; the school's most recent data on the achievement and progress of pupils; information provided to families; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils; and the school's most recent data relating to the attendance and punctuality of pupils.
- The inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Stephen McMullan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Drinkall

Additional Inspector

Michael Parker

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alvaston Infant and Nursery School is larger than the average-sized primary school and shares its site with the Junior school, including a joint dining hall.
- Children in the early years are taught in four classes. Nursery children attend on a part-time basis and Reception children attend full time.
- The majority of children are of White British heritage but there are small numbers from a range of other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is broadly in line with the national average. This funding provides extra support for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The current headteacher was not present during the school's previous inspection and returned to the school at the start of the present academic year after a prolonged absence. There is a new deputy headteacher, who took up post at the start of the current term. The school was undergoing a staff restructuring programme at the time of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - all teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how their work is presented
 - all lessons are based on what pupils already know and can do
 - assessment information from teachers and teaching assistants is used effectively to set work that is at the appropriate level to move learning on and challenge pupils, especially the most-able and disadvantaged pupils
 - pupils behave well in lessons as a result of work that is well matched to their abilities
 - teachers' marking is monitored across all year groups to make sure that it is being used consistently to help pupils move on in their learning
 - the daily teaching of phonics and mathematics is of the highest quality for all pupils
 - the subject knowledge and skills of all teaching staff, including teaching assistants, improve so that they have more impact on learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - identifying priorities for school improvement more clearly and seeing them through before starting new ones
 - monitoring the work of the school even more closely and ensuring that all adults are held accountable for their roles in raising standards
 - improving the quality and detail of school improvement planning so that plans contain clear milestones at regular intervals which governors use to check on the school's impact and progress
 - making sure that communication to all staff and parents is clear and understood.
- Improve attendance, especially of disadvantaged and disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs by further improving the school's newly established monitoring and enforcement systems.
- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - planning learning activities that make sure that children are able to make good progress in all areas of development

- making sure that adults are involved in helping children to learn more of the time
- ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good across all classes.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses, its plans for improvement are not detailed enough to help governors monitor developments closely. Plans and the reasons behind them are not always shared well enough with staff and parents. This contributes to concerns about the quality of communication within the school community.
- Leaders have not done enough to make sure that pupil behaviour in lessons is good. Senior leaders and subject leaders have not ensured that lessons are well enough matched to pupils' needs and this has resulted in some pupils becoming bored and uninterested in their work. As a result, children are not always as well behaved in lessons as they might be.
- The school is recovering from a period of instability in its leadership. As a result, leaders are doing all they can to speed up improvements which are necessary to bring about better achievement for pupils.
- The headteacher is highly motivated and has shown great determination to improve the school in the face of significant challenges. She and her deputy headteacher make a formidable team and are clear about the improvements needed by the school. However, in their enthusiasm, they do not always identify priorities as well as they could and this can result in too many initiatives happening at once. There is not enough attention to detail, for example in the presentation of information on the school's website.
- Leaders have correctly identified that teaching requires improvement, particularly in mathematics and phonics. They know that this is important for pupils now, and for their future beyond the school. They have provided training opportunities and support for staff but the impact of this is not seen in all classes. For example, in phonics lessons, the subject knowledge of adults is uneven and this leads to some pupils' learning not moving forward.
- The majority of subject leaders are clear about their role. They understand what is required of them and are enthusiastic about how they can raise standards of achievement for pupils. Their confidence within their role is increasing and they are becoming more effective in supporting the changes needed by the school. They are not as effective in monitoring the work of their colleagues as they need to be. As a result, teaching practice and pupils' achievement is not consistent in all year groups.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils. It is reviewed regularly to meet school improvement priorities. Leaders have interwoven provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development into the curriculum. Tolerance and respect are taught from the moment pupils first enter the school and the school prepares children well for life in modern Britain. During an assembly which was observed by inspectors, pupils were invited to share their views on fairness, equality and opportunity.
- Leaders did not monitor the impact of pupil premium funding well enough in previous years. Disadvantaged pupils have consequently not made enough progress over time and there has been a lack of clarity about how well the extra money was spent. This has now changed and leaders are much clearer on where to spend the money and how they will know if it has had an impact. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress in their work but they are still behind their classmates and the gap is not closing quickly enough.
- The school is making good use of the primary physical education and sports premium funding to develop the coaching skills of teachers and increase participation rates for pupils. The school monitors this very effectively with parental surveys to show increased participation rates among pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the checks carried out on staff are effective and meet statutory requirements. The school is a safe place for pupils and adults, and senior leaders take their responsibilities very seriously.
- The local authority has provided significant and effective support to school leaders, particularly during the

past year. By committing a senior advisor to this role, it has acknowledged the recent challenges faced by the school. The local authority has confidence in the headteacher and governors, their vision and plans for improving the school, and their ability to achieve these.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors understand the importance of their role in bringing about improvements in the school. They understand their responsibilities and their role in holding the headteacher and the school to account. They are aware of nationally produced data on the school's performance and how this has an impact on the school's improvement priorities. They also use these data to inform the performance targets set for staff. This process has been improved over the past year and is now much more effective in ensuring that improving pupils' achievement is a priority.
- All positions on the governing body are filled and there are always more applicants than vacancies for parents' positions. The school benefits from the professional expertise of governors and the governing body always seeks to have a wide range of skills and backgrounds.
- Governors meet their statutory duties including those for the safeguarding of pupils. They are alert to the possible impact of wider safeguarding issues such as extremism and the need to prepare pupils for life beyond the school gates.
- Governors are aware of the views of parents and staff and do not shirk from taking difficult decisions. They understand the need for change and are unwavering in their commitment to making these changes happen. Inspectors found parental support to be very positive during face-to-face conversations and any criticisms regarding the governing body's ability to improve the school to be unfounded.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because pupils are not always fully attentive in lessons or focused on their learning. Usually this is the result of lessons not being well enough matched to the needs of all pupils. In these cases, they go off task and progress slows. Some children are slow to respond to adults' instructions and they do not always take pride in their work.
- Pupils are polite and considerate to others around school and their conduct is usually good. Records show that serious incidents including bullying and racism are rare and that these are dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. Pupils take on the role of 'Playground Friends', taking responsibility for the correct use of equipment and helping any pupils who have nobody to play with. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Pupils come to school ready to learn.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that they generally feel safe and well cared for. The exception to this is in the dining hall; pupils do not enjoy this environment as they say it is too noisy, a judgement shared by inspectors.
- Attendance is not as good as it should be. Overall levels of pupils' absence are above the national average. Attendance rates for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are particularly low and this has an impact on their learning. There is evidence that the school is beginning to take action, but this is not yet effective enough.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders place a high priority on keeping children safe and child protection record keeping systems are good. Leaders know what needs to be done to increase pupils' safety further and plans for further improvements are in place.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and how this can affect other children. They are confident that by telling an adult they will have any problems solved. Unsuitable language and name-calling are a rarity. Pupils understand the methods by which the school keeps them safe, such as e-safety and stranger danger, and generally feel safe around the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistent across the school. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Where teaching is strongest, for example in Year 2, pupils make progress which is at least good and sometimes better but strengths here are not consistently evident in other classrooms and year groups.
- Teachers' expectations and the level of challenge presented to some children, especially the more able, is too low. Where this is the case, pupils lose interest and become disengaged from the lesson, which results in some low-level disruption.
- Too often, teaching is based around providing an activity, rather than a focused task designed to improve pupils' knowledge and skills. This is because teachers do not use information about pupils' prior learning well enough to identify their next steps. This results in gaps in children's knowledge, for example in mathematics where work books show that pupils lack some basic calculation skills by the time they enter Year 2.
- Gaps in the subject knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants mean that teaching is not always effective. This is seen particularly in the teaching of phonics. The school has rightly identified this as a priority for improvement and training has taken place. However, it is still not taught consistently well as some staff are not clear about how to teach this aspect of pupils' language development effectively or to use it to identify the next steps in their learning.
- There is a high level of adult teaching support in school but this is not always well used. In some classes, too much teaching time is spent on tasks which could be undertaken when pupils are not present. In others, assistants work alongside pupils but do not extend their learning because they help them too much rather than using skilful questioning to develop pupils' learning. As a result, pupils who are given additional support such as those who are disadvantaged, disabled or have special educational needs do not make as much progress as they could.
- The recently introduced system of marking and providing feedback to pupils is inconsistently applied. Where teaching is best, pupils understand what they need to do next and are given time to respond to teachers' comments. This results in improved progress. This is particularly clear in the writing books of older pupils. Discussions with pupils show that they value this and feel it is helping them to improve their work. Where marking and feedback are less well used, pupils are unclear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This results in errors being repeated over a period of time and slower progress.
- The presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent. Older pupils take great pride in their work and the high expectations of their teachers are clear. However, there is no standard for handwriting or the presentation of work in mathematics books and this leads to inconsistencies in different classes and year groups.
- Where subjects capture their imagination and the work matches their ability, pupils are engrossed in their work and they learn quickly. For example during a Year 2 literacy lesson, the teacher recognised that the children were engrossed in their writing and extended the session. The task was well matched to pupils' abilities and they made good progress.
- Reading books are usually well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils enjoy reading and having someone to listen to them. However, the link between reading at school and at home is not as consistent as it could be. The school has taken steps to raise levels of parental involvement, but parents do not regularly sign reading records and not all parents understand how reading is taught in school.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement over time is not good because they do not make as much progress as they could. This is the result of teaching which is inconsistent and does not match work to the abilities and needs of pupils well enough.
- By the time pupils leave Year 2, their attainment matches that of children nationally. However, this is the

result of accelerated progress in that year group. Historically, children enter the early years at levels of development which are just below those typically seen for their age. When they leave the early years they have not caught up and are still below expected levels of development. By the end of Year 1 their performance in national phonic assessments is below the national average.

- The school's most recent assessment of pupils' progress and work in their books suggests that the rate of pupils' progress is improving. This is particularly clear in the early years, where the rate of children's development is on track to show an improvement this year.
- The most-able children do not achieve as well as they should in English and mathematics. They are not always sufficiently well challenged in their learning. For example in mathematics, calculation tasks do not build on their prior learning well enough and, as a consequence, they are unable to explain the thinking behind their answers. In English, pupils are less strong in their comprehension skills.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates increased last year. However, they were broadly in line with national averages. The school has taken steps to address this through improved recording which monitors this group more closely and using termly pupils' progress meetings to hold teachers to account for their progress. Targets for the achievement of pupils have also been included in the performance objectives of staff. The result is that disadvantaged pupils are now making similar progress to other children. While this will not be sufficient to close the gap this year, it will stop the gap increasing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs perform less well than similar pupils nationally in writing. However, they are generally in line with national averages for similar pupils in reading and mathematics by the time they leave Year 2.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the early years require improvement. The role of the early years leader is not yet fully developed and, while she understands the data relating to the children, she is inexperienced in monitoring lessons and identifying the next steps to improve teaching. The result is that routines are inconsistent and learning is not as effective as it should be across the early years classes. For example, in some of the classes, children are allowed to move freely into the outdoor learning areas while in others, they are less independent and wait to be directed. Improvement priorities have been correctly identified by school leaders but plans for improvement are not sufficiently detailed or embraced by all staff.
- Children are safe and well cared for. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is catered for through direct teaching opportunities and more informal work with teachers and key workers. Children work and play together harmoniously, sharing and taking turns, and are encouraged to respect and appreciate each other.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is not consistently good. Activities are not well enough planned and adults are not effectively deployed to help children learn. Teachers do not always plan activities provided in the continuous provision in response to ongoing assessments. While activities engage the children, they are not sufficiently well matched to challenge them. Opportunities to experience challenging activities, indoors and outdoors, which are appropriate to the children's developmental stage, are limited. They do not always reflect the children's interests so children do not maintain sustained concentration. This also has an impact on behaviour which is not always as good as it could be when children change from one activity to another because they are unclear about what they are learning.
- Adults are not always deployed effectively. Too much learning time is lost as a result of timetabling that takes adults away from supporting children's learning and supervisory activities which do not support children working on their own.
- Historically, the majority of children entering the Nursery and Reception classes for the first time do so at levels of development which are below that which is typical for their chronological age. Current school assessment shows that the majority of children entering Nursery this year do so at levels of development which are typical for their chronological age. Data for the current Reception class shows that children

entered below typical levels of development. Progress through Reception classes has been uneven and not consistent in all areas of development. As a result, a smaller proportion of children have reached good levels of development than is expected for their age by the time they leave Reception.

- Not enough children have been well prepared to enter the next phase of their education in Year 1. Progress has typically been stronger in Reception than Nursery. School leaders have acknowledged this fact and have set performance targets for staff to address this.
- Achievement is inconsistent as a result of teaching not being consistently good. Teachers' planning and conversations with children indicate that learning intentions are not clear enough to adults or children. This is the result of teachers not using assessment information to identify appropriate next steps in learning for children. Children's Learning Journeys show evidence of assessment but do not indicate the corresponding developmental stage or next steps in learning.
- Girls' achievement is broadly in line with girls nationally in all areas of development with the exception of reading, writing and number. Boys do not match national indicators in any area of their development, although they are closer than girls in reading and writing. The proportion of disadvantaged children achieving a good level of development is around half the national figure and they also achieve less well in reading, writing and number when compared to other disadvantaged children, nationally.

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	112744
Local authority	Derby
Inspection number	461543

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chairs	Mat Da Silva, Amy Jones
Headteacher	Mrs S Atwal
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2009
Telephone number	01332 571704
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	head@alvastoni.derby.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2015

