

Albany Infant and Nursery School

Grenville Drive, Stapleford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG9 8PD

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a purposeful and business-like approach that is focused well on meeting the needs of each pupil. They have implemented successfully a range of improvements dealing with the recommendations from the previous inspection.
- The school's values are clearly expressed and promoted consistently and effectively, not least through a wide-ranging and carefully designed approach to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- The pupils respond well to what the school does. They are polite and well-behaved young people, who feel safe at the school, enjoy learning and take part readily in lessons.
- A combination of well-chosen topics and thoughtfully planned teaching stimulates the pupils. The tasks given to each pupil are selected carefully so that they are appropriate to each pupil's learning needs and current stage of development.
- The same approach is apparent in the early years. The children make good progress in the early years.
- The pupils continue to make good progress through key stage 1. The school works effectively to make sure that there are no significant differences between the amounts of progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Some differences are evident in the standards of attainment achieved by the pupils. In particular, the boys do not do as well as the girls in writing by the end of key stage 1.
- In the early years, the children do not make as much progress in reading and writing as they do in other areas of learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve boys' skills in writing, by:
 - embedding and extending the changes to the curriculum, activities and new ways of working that are starting to show a positive impact on the boys' willingness to write and interest in writing
 - making sure that the boys have the necessary skills to write well by enabling them to apply their learning from different subjects in more of the opportunities provided for them to write.
- Improve the progress that children in the early years make in reading and writing, so that it matches more closely the progress that they make in other areas of learning, by:
 - ensuring that all of the staff have the skills to question the children effectively, in order to develop the children's skills in both speaking and writing
 - identifying and using more systematically than currently the opportunities for the children to read and to write when learning outdoors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders at every level throughout the school demonstrate a clear commitment to helping all of the pupils to make as much progress as they can. They work methodically and effectively to bring about improvements, wherever they are needed.
- The progress in dealing with the areas for improvement from the previous inspection has been sure and steady, though not particularly rapid in all cases. Each area has been dealt with systematically and, for each, the benefits are demonstrable.
- The boys' attainment in writing has risen steadily each year. It is now slightly above the national average for boys.
- The leaders and managers astutely identify the things that need to be improved. They put in place plans for making the improvements that are well focused and fit for purpose. The plans are then put into practice diligently, for example in relation to improvements to promote boys' writing.
- The plans form the foundation of the school's approach to managing the performance of the staff. Individual targets are set in line with the priorities set out in the plans. The staff are provided with training and development opportunities that help them to meet their targets.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. It has particular strengths in the many and varied ways that have been created to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. It incorporates, as part of that approach, numerous opportunities designed to promote fundamental British values.
- The school provides a wide variety of activities which enrich the pupils' learning, from taking part in local community festivals, such as the 'Hemlock Happening', to working each week with African drummers, and organising visits to places of interest. Being educated at Albany is a stimulating and absorbing experience for the pupils.
- The school's curriculum has a markedly positive effect on the attitudes and learning of the pupils. For example, the boys talked to the inspectors quite animatedly about the interesting topics which have led to them taking more interest in writing. They explained how they enjoyed writing about a range of famous people, from George Stephenson to Rosa Parks.
- The school can point to good examples of deliberate and positive action to promote equalities and to challenge stereotypes, including in response to rare instances of concern among parents. Not only has the school acted directly to deal with concerns about possible racist attitudes and a rare instance of homophobic language, but it has also subsequently ensured that the curriculum has been changed to provide more opportunities for the pupils to learn about and to experience people different from themselves.
- The pupils' positive attitudes to learning, good social skills and behaviour, and the standards of learning that they reach overall by the end of key stage 1, place them in good stead for the next phase of their education.
- The school makes effective and sometimes innovative use of additional funding that it receives for disadvantaged pupils. For example, the pupils explained to an inspector how being able to take part in weekly yoga sessions had helped both socially and emotionally, so that they learn better in lessons than previously.

- The school has used the physical education (PE) and sport premium sensibly, including by providing for staff training, to ensure that the subject is provided for well within the curriculum, and other sporting activities.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has made good progress in dealing with the areas for improvement in relation to governance identified at the last inspection. It, now manifestly, takes responsibility for the strategic direction of the school, most notably by ensuring that the school fulfils its stated aim to be a happy, safe, secure and stimulating environment, where effective learning takes place.
- It ensures that, through a range of appropriate means, it is well informed about various aspects of the school's work. It is alert to variations in the pupils' achievement, including within the early years and between the different groups of pupils at the school, such as those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The governing body ensures that pay progression is linked with evidence of successful performance by the headteacher and the staff.
- It checks routinely on the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements. It has been involved actively in supporting the school's successful efforts to improve attendance.
- The governing body has not ensured that the information about the PE and sport premium, which it has published on the school's website, includes all of the details that are required.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's policies and procedures for safeguarding the pupils are fit for purpose. They include the careful maintenance of admissions and attendance registers, appropriate assessments of the risks associated with different activities, and the completion of accident records. The school also nominates more designated leaders for safeguarding than is often the case, so that there is always someone available at the school to whom the staff can turn.
- The staff are trained regularly in safeguarding matters. They are provided with further information more frequently than the formal training through staff meetings and written briefings. They understand about high-level concerns, such as child sexual exploitation and the 'Prevent' duty.
- The staff are equally alert to the small things that can be an indication that a pupil is experiencing difficulty. They use the school's procedures for reporting and recording such concerns dutifully. They know also how to contact external agencies, if necessary.
- The designated leaders for safeguarding work well with external agencies to help pupils and their families who may be experiencing particular difficulties. These members of staff can talk through in detail the records of the individual cases with which they deal.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Lessons are sometimes animated and lively, sometimes measured and studious – varied skilfully by the teachers so that the pupils’ interest and concentration are sustained. The consistent response by the pupils helps them to make good progress.
- The teachers give clear and precise instructions to the pupils. The pupils respond promptly, as for example when Year 1 pupils were observed starting and stopping playing musical instruments on demand. This helps the pupils to understand precisely what is expected of them and contributes to the pupils acquiring knowledge well.
- The teachers use their knowledge about how well the pupils are doing to make sure that tasks are designed and work set for each one that is appropriate to their stage of learning and needs.
- The most able pupils are given work that clearly involves a greater level of challenge than that set for other pupils. They make progress similar to that of other groups during lessons.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils work alongside their similarly-able peers in lessons.
- The needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are catered for substantially within routine lessons. Suitable adaptations are made so that this can happen; for example, by providing individual pupils with specialist equipment that they need.
- The teachers and teaching assistants provide helpful support to the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They do not ‘spoon-feed’ the pupils. Instead, the pupils are helped to think for themselves, which makes their learning secure.
- The teaching assistants provide good additional and individual support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, the inspectors observed an able pupil who has particular needs being provided with a good level of challenge through the questions asked by a teaching assistant, so the pupil made good progress with the learning.
- The teachers use practical equipment well to develop the pupils’ understanding of mathematics. They question the pupils effectively, which helps to improve the pupils’ mathematical reasoning.
- The teachers and teaching assistants provide helpful feedback to the pupils in ways that help the pupils to think for themselves.
- Occasionally, the teachers do not pick up quickly enough that the pupils have not grasped the intended learning and so do not take effective action to help the pupils. In one example of this, observed by the inspectors, the result was that the most able pupils were not helped to deepen their mathematical understanding.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The pupils' manner and behaviour show that they feel safe and happy within the school's well-maintained and secure site and accommodation. The pupils will tell you, in a very positive sense, that you cannot get out of the school!
- The pupils learn some important things about how to keep themselves safe, such as being wary of strangers and how to cross a road safely.
- The pupils learn well also about how to live healthily. Seeing so many of them at morning break munching merrily through the apples, pears and carrots provided by the school was an impressive sight.
- The pupils' attendance has returned to the level of the latest national average after having fallen in the years after the last inspection. The school has worked successfully, to improve attendance, particularly with boys. Notwithstanding the efforts made to deal with it, the level of persistent absence among disadvantaged pupils is still too high.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The pupils pick up on the values promoted so consistently by the staff and reflect them in their general conduct and in how they relate to the different groups of pupils at the school. For example, comments written by the early years children on a 'friendship tree' showed how they had gained, even at that early stage, a good understanding of the characteristics of friendship.
- The pupils develop a good sense of personal responsibility towards each other and to the school community by taking seriously roles such as playground pals and register monitors, and carrying out activities such as an environmental review of the school's outdoor areas.
- The pupils demonstrate good levels of self-control. Typically, they concentrate well in lessons. There is little evidence of any disruption to learning.
- The school is generally calm and orderly. The pupils are polite and friendly. They enjoy taking part in conversations and were confident in approaching the inspectors and talking with them.
- Pupils from the various backgrounds represented at the school mix, work and play together well, in lessons and at breaktimes.
- They show respect for each other, for example, by expressing interest sensitively in the work of classmates who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- They show similar concern, caring and support for pupils with English as an additional language who are at an early stage of learning English.
- Occasionally, they lose a little of their self-control and can be silly, or do not identify possible risks when playing on equipment, but the staff deal with such behaviour effectively.
- Exclusions for serious misbehaviour are unusual, although the school had to deal with some examples of such behaviour last year.

- The pupils raised few concerns about bullying, though their understanding of bullying is rather basic, and the school's records indicate that it is rare. The pupils express confidence in the staff to deal with any issues or concerns that they may have.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The pupils enter key stage 1 on average below the levels of knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age, particularly in writing. They make good progress, so that, by the time that they complete key stage 1, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is typically average, or slightly better.
- The good progress is equally evident in the pupils' books.
- There are no significant differences between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils at Albany and of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. The difference varies each year, so that sometimes the disadvantaged pupils at Albany do not do quite as well as the non-disadvantaged pupils, but occasionally they do better. This is a notable achievement, given that disadvantaged pupils start key stage 1 with levels of development generally below those of their peers.
- The disadvantaged pupils benefit from a wide range of additional help, which contributes to the relatively small differences between their attainment and that of other pupils.
- Historically, the proportion of pupils from Albany achieving levels above those expected generally for their age by the end of key stage 1 has been below average. While the most able pupils currently are making steady progress, the rates of progress in the past have not been sufficient to reach the national averages for higher levels of attainment.
- The pupils' scores in the Year 1 phonics check have been consistently below average. A good level of improvement in 2016 means that they have started to get closer to average. The pupils catch up well by the end of Year 2, so that the great majority of them have reached the required level by that time.
- The pupils read confidently. They develop an interest in and liking for reading, including the boys. Pupils who find reading difficult, pupils learning English as an additional language, disadvantaged pupils, and the most able persevere when reading and use their knowledge of phonics effectively to overcome difficulties.
- The differences evident previously in the achievement of boys and of girls are starting to reduce, though still apparent. Writing remains the weakest subject at the school, particularly among the boys.
- Generally, the standards that they reach mean that the pupils are reasonably well prepared to enter key stage 2.

Early years provision

Good

- A significant majority of the children begin in the early years with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding below those expected for their age, particularly in relation to their personal, social and emotional development, their understanding of the world, and in literacy, most notably writing.
- The children make good progress. By the end of the early years, the proportions of children who have reached the levels expected for their age have at least doubled in all areas of learning, and in most areas trebled, so a significant majority have done so.

- The children make less progress in number and in writing than in other areas of learning. This contributes to the proportion of children reaching a good level of development overall being consistently below average. In particular, the proportion of disadvantaged children achieving a good level of development is noticeably below that of non-disadvantaged children.
- The proportion of boys reaching a good level of development is, similarly, noticeably below that of girls. The most recent information held by the school indicates that the boys are currently making better progress than the girls; in other words, the differences are being dealt with effectively, though they are not reducing particularly rapidly.
- The children settle into the early years quickly, leaving their parents quite confidently even at the relatively early stage of the year when this inspection took place.
- The children rapidly become well-motivated learners and evidently enjoy what the school has to offer. As in the main school, their good behaviour shows that they feel happy and safe.
- The early years leaders make sure that the curriculum and the planning for children's learning focus closely on meeting individual children's needs. The children's learning is assessed in detail. As a result, staff tailor learning opportunities to meet the particular needs of each individual, including the most able.
- The staff enable parents to contribute to the assessments and ensure that the parents get detailed information about how well their children are doing.
- The staff ensure that their colleagues in key stage 1 get an equally full picture about the achievement and learning needs of each child. The children adapt rapidly to the requirements of learning in key stage 1, helped by the school's work to support that transition, and continue to make good progress thereafter.
- The staff do not take advantage sufficiently of the opportunities for the children to improve their writing, reading and number skills when the children are learning outdoors. On these occasions, they do not question the children skilfully enough, or involve the children in purposeful conversations. This restricts the progress that the children could make.

School details

Unique reference number	122547
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10019138

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 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jackie Allen
Headteacher	Helen Webster
Telephone number	0115 9179212
Website	www.albanyinfants.co.uk
Email address	office@albany-inf.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 September 2011

Information about this school

- The school does not meet all of the requirements on the publication of information about the use of the PE and sport premium on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- About one third of the pupils are known to be disadvantaged – those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is well-below average.
- Several changes in leadership roles and responsibilities have taken place since the previous inspection and a number of members of staff were new to or fairly recently appointed to their roles at the time of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons in all phases of the school and in all classes. They looked at small-group sessions and times when pupils were receiving additional support. They carried out other visits to classrooms to look at particular aspects of the school's work and scrutinised examples of the pupils' work.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders, managers and other staff at the school, and with representatives of the governing body.
- They spoke with pupils in groups, in lessons, and around the school. They listened to pupils reading.
- The inspectors checked the 32 responses on Parent View, looked at the text comments submitted by parents, spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and at the request of individual parents, and took account of the responses of more than 30 parents to a recent survey carried out by the school and other individual comments provided to the school.
- No inspection questionnaires were received from the staff, or the pupils.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records relating to safeguarding, records relating to the pupils' behaviour, the school's information about pupils' progress, and records of monitoring work carried out by leaders and managers at the school.

Inspection team

Clive Moss, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Chadwick	Ofsted Inspector
Pete Strauss	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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