

Albany Junior School

Pasture Road, Stapleford, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG9 8HR

Inspection dates

19–20 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are passionate and ambitious leaders. Working with staff and pupils, they have ensured that Albany Junior is a happy and positive place to work and to learn.
- Staff are proud to work at this improving school. Teachers particularly value the quality of training and support they receive to increase their knowledge and skills.
- Senior leaders have been highly effective in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. They keep a watchful eye over all aspects of school life and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The degree to which middle leaders are driving improvement varies between subjects. Some middle leaders, including those relatively new to their posts, have yet to have a significant impact on raising pupils' outcomes.
- Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They have benefited from a wide range of training, which enables them to support and challenge the school's leaders effectively.
- Pupils throughout the school now make good progress from their starting points. They reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics and are well prepared for their secondary schools.
- The great majority of teaching is purposeful and effective. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and their marking and feedback help pupils to improve their work.
- Generally, teachers match activities successfully to the range of abilities in their class. However, occasionally, lower attaining pupils struggle to complete tasks set and so make slower progress than other groups.
- Pupils apply their literacy skills well across the curriculum. Their work books show that they take care with their presentation, punctuation, grammar and spelling in all subjects.
- The teaching of reading has improved since the previous inspection and standards in reading have improved. However, not all teachers check carefully how regularly or widely pupils are reading.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They are friendly and polite with adults. They work and play together happily.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They exemplify the school's 'five golden rules', which promote resilience, respect and tolerance. They speak with pride about their school and see it as their responsibility to always be kind and 'include everybody and share a smile'.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, and so raise standards across the curriculum, by equipping all middle leaders with the skills to monitor, evaluate and develop the areas of the curriculum for which they are responsible.
- Further accelerate the progress pupils make in their learning by ensuring that:
 - work set for lower attaining pupils builds effectively upon what they know and allows them to work successfully without intensive adult support
 - teachers keep a close eye on pupils' personal reading and check that pupils read regularly and experience a wide range of texts.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is a highly visible and positive leader. Throughout the day, he visits all areas of the school, speaking and listening to adults and pupils. In this way he knows exactly what is going on in the school and invigorates others through his passion to provide all pupils with the best education possible.
- Teachers, especially those who are relatively new to teaching, praise the support that they receive from senior leaders and the training they get to improve their skills. Staff are also keen to share their appreciation for the high priority senior leaders give to looking after their well-being and providing any necessary individual support.
- The school offers an exciting curriculum that motivates pupils and contributes to their outstanding personal development. In many subjects, there are opportunities for pupils to show initiative and creativity. In addition, the curriculum very successfully promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit greatly, for example, through the strong links with an orphanage in Kenya and the good range of mid-day and after-school clubs.
- The team of middle leaders includes both experienced and more recently appointed post-holders. The most effective leaders check carefully how successfully pupils are learning in their areas of responsibility. They can support with evidence how they have driven up standards and they have appropriate action plans to secure further improvement. However, not all middle leaders are currently providing leadership of this quality.
- The special educational needs coordinator ensures that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective additional support. She is knowledgeable about their needs and works well with staff, parents and external agencies to review progress and plan next steps.
- Procedures for managing the performance of staff are effective. Senior leaders make sure that individual members of staff receive any training and guidance they need to improve their work.
- Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. The curriculum, enhanced by carefully selected educational visits and visitors to the school, ensures that they have an outstanding understanding of British values. Through their school council and pupil surveys, they learn about structures of democracy. More importantly, in lessons and assemblies they learn about the rights and responsibilities that are crucial aspects of living in a flourishing democracy.
- The pupil premium is used very effectively to ensure that pupils supported by this additional funding achieve well. Throughout the school, disadvantaged pupils are making accelerated progress and differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally are diminishing.
- The primary school sport funding is having a positive impact upon the quality of teaching in physical education and pupils' fitness. A specialist coach has helped improve the confidence and skills of staff taking gymnastic lessons. Staff use questionnaires to check the pupils' views about sporting activities and clubs. Across all year groups, pupils are increasingly participating in sporting clubs and competitions.

- The local authority has given the school good support since the previous inspection. In addition to quality assuring the work of the school, officers have provided valuable help to improve the quality of governance and the effectiveness of teaching.

Governance of the school

- The previous inspection reported positively on most aspects of governance but found that governors did not have a good knowledge of how different groups of pupils were performing. This weakness has been resolved. Governors now receive high-quality information about the performance of different groups. This means that they can ask senior leaders searching questions about, for example, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Governors have a good understanding of their statutory duties. Staff performance, including that of the headteacher and other teachers, is managed rigorously. Governors are fully prepared to ask for additional information to ensure that decisions about pay increases are based on a compelling range of evidence linked to ambitious targets.
- Governors know well the local community the school serves. They have a deep commitment to the school and have worked successfully with senior leaders to establish a culture of high ambition. They recognise that their next challenge is to engage still more closely with parents so that together they can make Albany Junior an even more successful school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils, staff and parents all agree that safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders have successfully established a culture where pupils are confident to share worries or problems with staff. Staff keep a close eye on their pupils and report promptly any concerns that arise. Careful records are kept of all referrals of concern made by staff. These show that the school acts rigorously to ensure the safety of pupils. The designated safeguarding leaders meet every two weeks to consider the impact of actions to protect pupils and to discuss any emerging concerns. The leaders work effectively with families and other agencies to ensure the well-being of children whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable.
- Governors prioritise safeguarding. They have received all appropriate training and monitor the school's work in this area carefully. They are fully aware of their duty to protect pupils from the dangers of radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good. The previous inspection reported that the most able pupils were not consistently challenged and that the teaching of reading and writing did not lead to good progress. Both of these issues have been successfully addressed.

- The most able pupils are benefiting from lessons where teachers do not hold back on the level of challenge. For example, in a science lesson on light, the most able pupils were asked not simply to find out about the spectrum, but to investigate how the distance of the light source from the spectrum affected the quality of the colours produced. The expectation that the most able pupils will come up with their own ideas and explain their findings is increasingly found across the curriculum.
- The teaching of writing has improved as a result of training that has ensured that in all year groups, there is a structured and consistent approach to the teaching of sentence writing. Pupils are now very confident in discussing the structure of sentences and apply this knowledge successfully in their writing across the curriculum.
- Training in the teaching of phonics and guided reading has been key in improving the quality of the teaching of reading. The teaching of phonics in Year 3 is very effective because adults model the sounds letters represent accurately, provide prompt support for pupils at risk of falling behind their peers, and make sessions lively and fun. Guided reading sessions are successful because teachers choose texts which pupils enjoy and set activities which help them to become thoughtful readers.
- Teaching has been less successful in encouraging readers, including the most able, to develop a love of books. Once pupils become fluent readers, they are left to choose their own books. Their reading logs show that they are rarely heard reading aloud in school or at home. Conversations with pupils confirm that in some classes, they receive little encouragement to experience a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective use of resources almost always result in lessons which capture the pupils' interest. For example, one class followed up a visit to Creswell Crags to learn about life many thousands of years ago by creating their own cave paintings using crayons, pastels and paint. In another class, the teacher's insight into the diets of both humans and animals led to good learning about the human digestive system.
- There is a good range of helpful additional support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know the precise needs of individual pupils well and draw upon a wide range of resources and expertise to ensure that they all make good progress. One parent commented: 'The teachers have a 'can-do' attitude and never give up on a child. You can tell they really want them to succeed. They really care about the children in the school.'
- The previous inspection found that pupils were not clear about how to improve their work and therefore their progress. This is no longer the case. All teachers implement the school's assessment policy. Responses to teachers' marking show how pupils value the guidance provided by teachers. Pupils confirm that feedback is helping them become even better readers, writers and mathematicians.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils will behave and what they can achieve. In the great majority of lessons, this approach is successful. However, in a minority of lessons observed, the tasks set for lower attaining pupils were too difficult for them to get on with without adult support. Teachers did not identify quickly enough that these pupils were struggling. As a result, they worked slowly and some lost concentration.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- There are excellent systems in place to support pupils' welfare and safety. The school counsellor plays a crucial role in helping pupils understand and overcome issues in their lives which may be causing them difficulty, distress or confusion. The impact of her work is carefully recorded and the record shows that there is a very positive impact on pupils' well-being.
- Pupils are confident and friendly when speaking to adults. They have positive attitudes towards learning and are keen to do well. Pupils know that to achieve their ambitions, hard work and determination are essential.
- There are many meaningful opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school because the school values the pupils' opinions and perceptions. Pupil surveys are taken twice a year. The feedback from these, and views shared by the school council, play an important part in school improvement planning.
- The pupils' mature understanding of the unfairness and hurt caused by racist and homophobic attitudes reflects the school's commitment to rights and responsibilities. Similarly, as a result of the high priority given in the curriculum and assemblies to enabling the pupils to recognise the difference between right and wrong, pupils are kind to one another and feel very safe at school.
- Pupils' understanding of personal safety is outstanding because many lessons and assemblies highlight the issues around personal well-being. Online safety has a particularly high profile; pupils understand the potential dangers, and know what to do to stay safe online.
- Pupils speak thoughtfully about how a balanced diet and plenty of exercise contribute to keeping healthy. They understand the dangers to health posed by smoking and the drug and substance misuse. There is a good range of after-school clubs for pupils to enjoy.
- The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View also feel that their children are looked after well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is at the national average.
- The school promotes regular attendance through an imaginative range of rewards and celebrations. A breakfast club, introduced at the start of this school year, is successfully reducing the handful of instances of persistent absence and is improving punctuality.
- In lessons, pupils almost always sustain good concentration and try hard with their work. Work in their books shows that they take great care to present their work tidily.
- In the playground at break- and lunchtimes, pupils' behaviour is calm and considerate. Their conduct reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. These include the 'by invitation only' area. In this section of the playground, pupils who have struggled to cope with playtimes benefit from close supervision and an interesting range of activities. The pupils involved speak very positively about this provision and say that it helps to them enjoy their breaks.

- Records kept of poor behaviour show that, since the previous inspection, there has been a notable decline in the number of incidents that disrupt learning or play. Staff who completed the staff questionnaire, or who spoke with inspectors, agreed unanimously that the school manages behaviour successfully and that pupils consistently behave well.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The quality of work in pupils' books, learning observed in lessons and assessment information provided by the school all show that pupils currently in the school are making good progress. In the last school year, their progress in reading, writing and mathematics accelerated considerably as a result of stronger teaching.
- At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' progress from their starting points to the end of Year 6 was significantly below average. In the 2016 tests and assessments, the picture was much more positive and pupils' progress was in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in all three areas was close to the national average.
- The recent focus on raising standards in writing has had a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Their books show good progress in improving sentence construction and applying the rules of grammar and spelling accurately. Pupils have many opportunities to apply these skills across the curriculum and these opportunities are driving up standards in writing.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the progress of pupils in mathematics was particularly low. Since then, the school has focused on building pupils' fluency with, and understanding of, mathematics. This focus has improved outcomes. Pupils of all ages and abilities are now increasingly prepared to grapple with problems that test their understanding. They are confident in explaining the reasons for their answers.
- The school uses pupil premium funding effectively. In all year groups, disadvantaged pupils are making at least expected progress. Indeed, a good proportion of disadvantaged pupils are now making progress from their starting points that is better than expected. As a result, the difference between their outcomes and those of other pupils nationally is reducing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because expectations of what they can achieve are high and the support they are given is well matched to their specific needs. The judicious use of information technology is proving very effective in helping pupils who have previously struggled in literacy and numeracy to catch up with their peers.
- Pupils who start the school with skills in reading, writing and numeracy below those that are expected are also making good progress. In the last school year, improved teaching and carefully targeted interventions have led to a higher proportion of pupils gaining the skills and knowledge expected for their age.
- Training provided to teachers to ensure that their most able pupils are challenged throughout the curriculum has had a positive impact upon the pupils' outcomes. Teachers routinely build additional challenge into lessons to motivate and stretch this group. Across the school, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, consistently make more than expected progress.

School details

Unique reference number	122546
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	10019579

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gemma Marshall
Headteacher	Craig Robertson
Telephone number	0115 9176550
Website	www.albanyjunior.co.uk
Email address	office@albany-jun.notts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 April–1 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes to observe teaching. Some of these visits took place with school leaders.
- Inspectors asked pupils about their learning and what it is like to be a pupil at the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work books and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of 24 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and had brief discussions with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Nine responses to the staff questionnaire were received and analysed, as were 11 pupil responses to their questionnaire.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Documents were analysed, including the school's self-evaluation statement, school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and information about pupils' achievement.
- Records relating to attendance and safeguarding were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Janis Warren	Ofsted Inspector

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