

Albany Village Primary School

Crossgill, Albany, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE37 1UA

Inspection dates

14–15 November 2017

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

- Under the strong and experienced leadership of the headteacher, an ethos of high expectations has been created. Leaders are doggedly determined to eradicate anything that is second best.
- Leaders' continuing ambition to eliminate underperformance and to provide the best teaching, outcomes and experiences for all pupils is translated into action, and this means the school is continuing to improve.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Current pupils are making strong progress from their individual starting points. Pupils' skills and attainment in mathematics are much improved following a significant dip in 2016.
- Children in the early years make a solid start to their learning. They work happily and co-operatively together, making strong progress to reach standards that are broadly average by the time they leave the Reception class.
- As a result of consistently good teaching and assessment, pupils learn quickly and are beginning to apply their skills across all subjects. Teachers are skilled at supporting pupils' progress in learning.
- Teachers generally match work accurately to pupils' abilities, but occasionally work can lack challenge, especially for the most able and children in early years.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of provision in English and mathematics is rigorous and detailed. Subject leaders' skills across the wider curriculum still require further development.
- Leaders' effective use of the pupil premium funding has resulted in the difference between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers diminishing rapidly, especially in key stage 1. A small difference still remains in key stage 2 and only a small number of disadvantaged pupils are working at a greater depth of understanding.
- The leadership of the well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils' visits across the region fire their enthusiasm for learning. The school's tracking of pupils' progress in creative subjects and in subjects other than English and mathematics is new and not yet embedded.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have respect and care for each other and are polite and friendly. They display good manners. There are occasional lapses in behaviour in lessons when pupils lose concentration as the pace of learning slows.
- Governors share the leaders' passion and ambition to improve the school further. They play a key role in the school's ongoing success and keep a sharp eye on actions being taken to ensure further improvements. They are very well informed, and know the school inside-out.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - continuing to diminish the difference between the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally who have similar starting points, including the most able disadvantaged pupils
 - developing and embedding current systems for tracking the progress of pupils in subject-specific skills across the curriculum
 - enhancing the skills of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision within their subjects.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and provides suitable challenge for all, including in the early years and especially for the most able pupils
 - checking that the pace of learning allows pupils to maintain their concentration and engagement in tasks.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has been unwavering in her determination to maintain an excellent standard of education for pupils in this school. She has been supported well by the new deputy headteacher, senior leaders, governors, external consultants and the local authority.
- The whole school team has worked very hard to eliminate underperformance, improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the rates of progress pupils make in their learning. The ambition and determination to improve all aspects of school life, including from dedicated and knowledgeable governors, are being maintained.
- The headteacher has taken swift and decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, current pupils are making improved rates of progress in their learning. As leaders themselves identified, after taking their eye off the ball regarding provision in mathematics, their rigorous and decisive action to improve teachers' skills and mathematical subject knowledge has resulted in rapid improvements in pupils' progress and attainment across the school.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of what the school does well, and what it needs to do to be even more successful. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's performance through checking the quality of teaching are incisive and detailed, especially in English and mathematics. The skills of other subject leaders across the wider curriculum need to be improved further for leaders to be able to rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. This also includes the tracking of pupils' progress in creative and foundation subjects, which is developing and not yet embedded.
- Leaders' plans for further improvements reflect a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, with which inspectors concur. The school improvement plan is very detailed and carefully monitors the effect of planned actions on outcomes for pupils in their learning. Regular evaluation and the tracking of actions ensure that no time is wasted to drive further improvements.
- The school's curriculum is rich and balanced, and reviewed regularly to ensure it meets pupils' needs and interests. The curriculum is designed to make sure that it provides many varied opportunities for pupils to benefit from visitors to school and to make visits out of school across the region, such as visiting Washington's 'F' Pit, Beamish Museum and a local gurdwara. The curriculum is enhanced by a suitably wide range of after-school clubs such as the school band, gardening, cooking and many sports clubs.
- Leaders are managing pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. This support is regularly evaluated for its impact on pupils' learning, and amended or changed as a result. The positive impact of this support is seen through the improving progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school, especially in key stage 1. However, differences still exist between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points. The school acknowledges that further work is required to accelerate this group of pupils' progress, and especially that of the most able disadvantaged pupils.

- The strong leadership of the special educational needs coordinator has resulted in high-quality provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported extremely well. Their needs are identified early and their good progress, often in small steps, is tracked accurately. Consequently, the SEN funding is used effectively by leaders.
- The physical education and sport funding for schools has been used well. Teachers benefit from the expertise of one of the school's senior leaders, and pupils benefit from high-quality lessons and engage regularly in competitive sports, as well as participating in a range of after-school clubs. Effective links are made with local sports clubs, and pupils' sporting involvement and achievement are celebrated in the termly website sports report.
- The school receives targeted challenge and support from both the local authority representatives and a range of external consultants from another local authority. This support has been very effective in driving forward improvements in school.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school that enhance their effectiveness and impact. They share the passion and commitment of the headteacher and senior leaders and have effectively managed changes in staffing and to the deployment of some current staff. Governors' half-termly challenge meetings allow them to question school leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for pupils' outcomes.
- Governors make it their business to know about the work of the school and have an accurate and incisive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured, along with the headteacher and senior leaders, that the school's priorities are intrinsically embedded in the performance management of all adults. Governors participate in monitoring activities alongside senior leaders, such as analysing work in pupils' books and making short visits to classes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very effective. The long-established culture of keeping pupils safe remains very evident. Leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff and they leave no stone unturned in their duty to keep pupils safe.
- The school has a tangible ethos that is positive and caring, putting the welfare and well-being of each pupil at the heart of all that it does. This is clearly seen in the friendly and confident manner of the pupils in school. The curriculum supports pupils well in maintaining their own safety, including keeping themselves safe online.
- Policies, procedures and records are of extremely high quality. Staff training is thorough and up to date, including training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from the risk of extremism and online dangers. Registers of staff training are completed diligently. Staff have access to well-written policies and guidance and, as a result, have a very secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the school was previously inspected, and continues to improve. The impact of teaching on learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is reflected in the strong progress pupils now make in each year group.
- Lessons are usually lively and interesting, capturing pupils' imagination. For example, in Year 2 the teacher's use of a team drawing game quickly captured pupils' engagement in a geography lesson to identify countries within the United Kingdom.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to structure learning effectively. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to solve complex mathematical problems using brackets, squared and cubed numbers as the teacher broke the task down into manageable steps.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and stick closely to the school's behaviour policy. Very occasional low-level disruption, often as a result of the slowing of the pace in learning when pupils lose concentration, is addressed quickly and effectively.
- Work is usually pitched well according to pupils' abilities, and teachers are skilled at adapting and changing plans based on ongoing daily assessments of how well pupils grasp learning. Teachers are becoming adept at assessing subject-specific skills across all curriculum subjects as systems develop and become embedded. On some occasions, work does not provide sufficient challenge, especially for most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils.
- In mathematics, basic skills of number and mental calculation are taught daily and consolidated regularly. For example, Year 4 pupils were able to accurately divide sums of money such as £14 among 10 people because they could apply their knowledge of place value. Pupils in Year 5 used reasoning to justify whether number statements were true or false, using their skills in finding factors and multiples of given numbers.
- Pupils write with enthusiasm and imagination, often because their writing is linked to the topic they are studying. Year 1 pupils enjoyed learning how to improve sentences using adventurous vocabulary based on their class book, 'Peace at last' by Jill Murphy, and enhance their own story writing.
- As a result of the rigorous and systematic teaching of phonics, children are getting off to a fast start in their reading. Adults are skilled in teaching well-structured lessons, pitched well according to pupils' reading skills. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above that found nationally.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well, and are skilled at giving timely help and support to individuals and groups of pupils. They work well as part of the teaching team and play an important part in pupils' progress in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions, and are used to working happily and cooperatively in lessons. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening in paired and group discussions are good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and most are very keen to succeed and to always produce their very best work, although some pupils' handwriting skills require further improvement. They take their roles of responsibility in the school community very seriously. They are proud to be school councillors or playtime buddies.
- Pupils thrive in the well-ordered, positive and caring school environment. Displays are of good quality, bright and attractive and support learning well. The school's work to ensure that pupils' physical and emotional well-being are valued and developed is very effective.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at all times, including when working online. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development are very good. Pupils talked convincingly to an inspector about how they learned about people and their faiths from other countries and cultures, especially within the Commonwealth of Nations.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured in school ensure that pupils usually conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and have good manners. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together with a wide range of equipment at lunchtime, and no one is left out.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and mostly work conscientiously. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning and the few incidents of misbehaviour are swiftly and deftly addressed.
- The relationships pupils have with adults and with each other are warm and trusting. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their attendance. The school has worked hard to eradicate low rates of attendance, which is now broadly average with no group of pupils disadvantaged by low rates of attendance or persistent absence.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' progress and attainment have remained strong since the school was previously inspected, apart from a significant dip in the progress and attainment in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2016. The school has rigorously addressed this issue, and evidence from provisional 2017 statutory assessment data, work in pupils' books and

the school's own tracking data show clearly that current pupils are making consistently strong progress in English and mathematics, as well as in other subjects across the curriculum. The decline in mathematics has been successfully reversed.

- Pupils are making consistently strong progress across Years 1 and 2. The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2017 provisional Year 2 national data was above national figures in reading, writing and mathematics for 2016. A slightly smaller proportion of pupils than that found nationally were working at a greater depth of understanding, especially most-able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils make a solid start in their early reading skills, and a very large majority of pupils achieved well in the 2016 and 2017 national phonics screening check. The proportion who met the standard in both years was above that found nationally.
- Progress is continuing to accelerate across key stage 2. In the 2017 national assessments, provisional data shows that the proportion of Year 6 pupils who met the expected standard was in line with that found nationally in mathematics and writing, and just below in reading. Current pupils are making strong progress in their learning from their individual starting points in most year groups, with a much larger proportion working at expected standards for their age across the school.
- The progress of the current most-able and most-able disadvantaged pupils is improving, and has accelerated since the start of the school year. The proportion of pupils achieving a high score or working at a greater depth of understanding in 2017 was below that found nationally, especially for the most able disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils currently working at such a greater depth is not as high as it could be because the work set is not consistently challenging for those pupils capable of having their understanding stretched further.
- As a result of the effective and strategic use of the pupil premium funding, current disadvantaged pupils in each year group make good progress in English and mathematics, especially in key stage 1 where they outstrip their peers' performance. Over time, there has been a difference between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils nationally, but this is now diminishing quickly.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Staff make effective provision for these pupils through activities which are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Where needed, detailed individual support plans are in place, with challenging targets. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is largely good from their individual starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children are eager to explore and learn. They enjoy the opportunities provided to investigate and they learn happily together. Behaviour is good and most children are happy to share and take turns. Leaders are skilled in developing areas of provision to maximise learning opportunities for all children, based on accurate and ongoing assessments.

- The vast majority of children start the early years with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age, especially in reading and writing. As a result of good teaching and provision, careful observation and good questioning, children make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1. The proportion who reach a good level of development is just above average.
- The most able children in early years also make expected progress, but the proportion working above age-related expectations by the end of Reception is below that found nationally. Opportunities to provide challenging activities to move children's learning on quickly are sometimes missed.
- Adults observe children carefully and build upon their interests. They carefully support children's learning through prompts and skilful questioning and work alongside children during imaginative and creative play sessions.
- Activities and resources are chosen well to develop children's vocabulary and enrich their experiences. A tray of purple slime with hidden objects enabled children to investigate and explore. This had a marked impact on improving children's spoken language as they described what they were doing using words such as 'squishy', 'cold' and 'soft'. Other children outside described in detail how to cook imaginary potatoes and pie in the outdoor kitchen, using mud and stones.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and number are taught very effectively. In the sessions observed, children were able to draw and count single digit numbers. In a phonics session, Reception children accurately blended sounds to read the word 'witch', and some children were able to blend sounds to read whole sentences.
- The early years leader clearly understands the learning needs of young children and leads an effective team of adults who share the same passion and drive to see young children thrive. She has a clear understanding of the strengths in the early years and has identified key areas for improvement. Planned actions to stretch and challenge the most able children's knowledge and understanding still require further development.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are highly effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age and the very effective safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of statutory welfare requirements; children are safe and well supported. Judging by the confidence and fun with which children play and learn, children clearly feel very safe, secure and happy.

School details

Unique reference number	131036
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10037735

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Tate
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Brown
Telephone number	0191 219 3650
Website	www.albanyvillageprimary.org.uk
Email address	info@albanyvillageprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 October 2012

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. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium and the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are above the national averages.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school's part-time Nursery operates in the morning and afternoon. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, including lessons observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, an inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1 and 2 read, and reviewed a sample of pupils' work alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, senior leaders and members of the teaching staff. Inspectors also met the school administrative staff, a representative of the local authority and the school's external consultant. They also held meetings with a group of pupils from the school.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils, and the school's view on how well it is doing. Inspectors also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to performance management, safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the parental responses to the school's own questionnaire as there were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mark Nugent

Ofsted Inspector

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