



# Alvaston Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112744  
**Local Authority** City of Derby  
**Inspection number** 289392  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Geof Timms

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Elvaston Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Alvaston, Alvaston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7		Derby DE24 0PU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 571704
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	297	<b>Fax number</b>	01332 571704
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr S Milligan
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms J Walden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2003		

<b>Age group</b> 3–7	<b>Inspection dates</b> 22–23 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 289392
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is bigger than most of its type. It serves a mixed catchment area in the district of Alvaston to the east of Derby. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. There is a below average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. A small number have recently arrived in this country and speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. There is a range of attainment on entry to the school but overall it is below that typically expected. The school has a Healthy Schools award.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

One parent said, 'I'm proud my son attends Alvaston Infants School.' It is easy to see why so many parents are very positive because this is an outstanding school. The pupils make excellent progress as a result of some very effective teaching. The headteacher provides the school with outstanding leadership and has created an ethos where staff are unafraid to try new ideas and adapt their skills to new ways of working for the benefit of the pupils. The school provides excellent value for money.

Given the pupils' below average attainment on entry to the school, the above average standards at the end of Year 2 represent outstanding progress. The quality of the teaching and the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is excellent and children make especially good progress in their personal and social development, and in their reading and writing skills. Pupils in all classes achieve to a high level, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language and those who are more able. However, staff have recognised that some of the boys achieve less well than girls, particularly in reading and writing. Consequently, they have adapted some of the resources, the curriculum and teaching methods to address this. This work is beginning to have a positive impact but is not yet fully embedded in teachers' day-to-day practice.

Pupils really enjoy school. One liked numeracy because they did, 'Fun stuff with numbers.' Their personal development is outstanding and they have excellent attitudes towards school. Pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle has been called outstanding by parents and by those who assessed the school for a national award. They know how to keep safe and they make an exceptional contribution to community cohesion, partly through some very impressive charity work. Their good standards very effectively prepare them for their future education. The recent introduction of a school council has been an important step towards giving them more ownership of their school.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding, particularly in the way teachers and teaching assistants work together, and the use of multi-sensory areas in classes where very effective and imaginative learning takes place. The school has developed and improved the curriculum in a number of innovative ways and is well placed to develop a wider range of learning styles and skills in order to raise standards still further.

The leadership and management are outstanding and this is reflected in the strengths found throughout all aspects of the school's work. There is an ethos of continual improvement and a willingness to try new ideas within the supportive ethos that the headteacher has created. The school's self evaluation is accurate and honest. Staff and governors have the right priorities for further improvement. The excellent improvements made since the last inspection, especially in pupils' personal development and in the curriculum, show that there is both the desire and outstanding capacity to improve further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standard of boys' reading and writing by embedding, evaluating and developing further recent improvements to teaching and the curriculum.
- Follow up recent work on improving the curriculum by giving pupils a better understanding of learning styles providing them with a wider range of learning skills.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. When children start in the Nursery, some have levels of personal and social skills, communication skills and number skills that are below those normally expected. They make excellent progress in these basic skills throughout the Foundation Stage. By the time they join Year 1, the majority achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age and they are well prepared for future learning. This excellent progress continues through Years 1 and 2. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science that are above the national average. Boys' reading and writing has been recognised as weaker than girls' and so the school has already made a number of improvements to the curriculum and the teaching. These are beginning to have a positive impact on standards but need reviewing and evaluating to ensure they are fully embedded.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

This aspect is outstanding because it is such a strong focus for so much of the school's work. Although a weaker aspect of some children's attainment when they start school, the Nursery staff focus a lot of time and effort on successfully improving social and personal skills. This is very effective, as is evident in the Reception classes, where the social interaction is at a much higher level. This improvement continues throughout the school to a point where pupils' attitudes and their involvement in their learning are excellent. Attendance is above average and demonstrates how much the pupils enjoy being at the school. Parents agree with this view and one said of her daughter, 'She actually cries when she can't go to Nursery!' Behaviour is exceptionally good; pupils show great respect for each other and for adults. Their spiritual and cultural development has improved greatly since the last inspection and, together with their social and moral development, these are now outstanding.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

The quality of the teaching and learning is exceptionally high because teachers work very effectively with their teaching assistants to plan interesting and challenging activities that help the pupils make excellent progress. The changes that have recently taken place have meant that many staff have had to join new teams and make a fresh start in sharing good practice, attending training and leading subjects. This has been very successful, although teachers have recognised the need to introduce pupils to a wider range of learning skills to help them get the most from the changes made to the curriculum. All staff foster very positive relationships, which encourage pupils to take a full part in lessons. Pupils happily tell how well they feel teachers help them learn new things. An excellent variety of displays create stimulating and colourful places to learn. These include some particularly imaginative and effective ideas, such as the multi-sensory areas for encouraging writing. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is very effective in helping them improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

Curriculum provision is outstanding in meeting the needs of all groups of pupils. The excellent Foundation Stage curriculum enables children's own interests and learning styles to be taken into account in the very good teachers' planning. Much of the content of the curriculum throughout school is rooted in the local environment. It is, therefore, highly relevant and so captures the imagination of pupils. Visits to Elvaston Castle and visits from the Road Safety Team are just two of many ways that the curriculum is enriched, along with the impressive range of clubs. The adventurous and continually evolving themes encourage learners to pursue their own lines of enquiry within a well-planned framework. This has enabled teachers to meet learners' needs. For example, the 'classroom castles' and the prospect of eating chicken legs at a mediaeval banquet motivated all of the pupils in Year 1 but, especially the boys. Basic skills improve well because pupils enjoy their lessons and can see the need to learn.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school rightly regards the quality of its care, guidance and support as outstanding. Pupils' safety and welfare are paramount. They feel safe in school and are confident there are adults they can turn to if they are unhappy or worried. The school works hard to ensure every pupil thrives within this highly caring community. Support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and for those with English as an additional language is strong. A learning mentor provides very effective additional guidance for individual pupils. Excellent relationships with other schools and outside agencies successfully aid pupils' personal development. Systems for checking pupils' academic

progress are very good because they lead directly to interventions that provide any necessary extra support. By Year 2, pupils know what they need to do to improve and are highly motivated to achieve their targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are excellent in this highly inclusive school. There is a very strong culture of striving for improvement supported by continuous, accurate and honest self-evaluation. The headteacher makes an outstanding contribution to school development through her incisive understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and well-conceived improvement initiatives. She is supported effectively by senior staff and co-ordinators, despite several recent staff changes. The newly structured leadership team responds promptly when weaknesses appear and takes effective action. For example, the significant improvement in achievement last year was in part due a curriculum adjusted to appeal more to boys. The school is efficiently administered and the budget well spent in ways that promote pupils' learning. Governors are well led and discharge their duties effectively.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 January 2007

Dear Children

Alvaston Infant and Nursery School, Elvaston Lane, Alvaston, Derby, DE24 0PU

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school this week. We very much enjoyed being with you, watching you work and play, and being able to talk to you.

We especially enjoyed meeting the school council who told us a lot about what they liked about the school. That has helped us with our inspection and we found that a lot of the things you like are very good parts of the school's work.

We think your school is outstanding. This means that it is exceptionally well run, the teaching is excellent and you are learning lots of new things. You have excellent attitudes towards school and you told us how much you enjoy being there. We could see that from your smiles! Most of your parents said the same thing. You said you feel safe and that you have got an adult you could go to if you were unhappy or worried.

Best of all, you work very hard and because of this you make excellent progress and achieve good standards. You behave very well and this helps the teachers to teach you well and help you learn new things.

Because the school is so good there are not a lot of things it needs to do to improve. However, we think there are two ways in which your school can get even better. These are:

- The teachers need to show you new ways of learning that will help you solve problems and learn in different ways.
- The teachers need to carry on trying to help some of the boys make their reading and writing even better.

Thank you again for your help in looking at the work of your school. We think you are very lucky to be at such a good school. Enjoy your time there and keep working hard!

Geof Timms

Lead Inspector