

Aldercar Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112555
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325631
Inspection date	18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Colin Henderson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	153
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Page
Headteacher	Mrs Gayle Shiels
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Godkin Drive Langley Mill Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG16 4GL
Telephone number	01773713428
Fax number	01773713428

Age group	3–7
Inspection date	18 June 2009
Inspection number	325631

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: current achievement; the quality of teaching and learning, particularly the challenging activities for higher-attainers; the care, guidance and support to encourage pupils to become more independent learners; the management roles of key staff; and the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with them, the staff, parents and governors, and an analysis of school documents and parental questionnaires.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. Pupils come from a broad range of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is broadly average. The number from minority ethnic backgrounds is low and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average for a school of this size. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has an Enhanced Resource Facility (ERF) for children who are deaf or hearing-impaired. The school holds several national awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The numerous positive comments given by pupils and parents, for example - 'a happy vibrant school' and 'they really do take every child into consideration and make sure their needs are met' - clearly show how highly this school is valued. Aspects of its work are outstanding, particularly the way in which staff care, support and guide each individual.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher is supported well by a good team of staff and governors and very effective links with parents and local-community agencies. They have created a caring ethos in which everyone is valued and included fully in the school's programme. The way in which pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported and encouraged to participate and contribute to the school community is exemplary. Pupils who have weaknesses in their social and emotional development are given excellent guidance through the 'sunshine group'. As a result, pupils gain in self-confidence and learn to value and respect each other. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding and reflect the school's excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are eager to learn and their attendance is good. Older pupils look out for the younger ones, for example, through their role as 'mini-leaders'. All pupils use basic sign language to ensure that everyone in the ERF is included fully and enjoys school. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are keen to meet teachers' high expectations and to gain recognition, for example, through the 'gold book' assembly.

Pupils' achievement is good, and boys and girls achieve equally well. Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and this is built on successfully in Years 1 and 2. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and participate enthusiastically in the good range of interesting, practical learning activities. Teaching is good and, occasionally, outstanding. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that activities match the range of different learning needs. They use resources such as interactive whiteboards effectively to capture pupils' interest. Many use questions very successfully to extend pupils' knowledge, particularly that of higher attainers. All pupils benefit from the excellent support and guidance that help them to improve their work. Those who find learning difficult make excellent progress towards their targets because of the very effective support given by teachers and knowledgeable teaching assistants. The school uses regular assessments to track carefully the progress of each pupil and to identify and support those who are not achieving as well as they should. As a result, standards of attainment are improving, particularly in writing.

By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above average in writing and mathematics. It is often well above average in reading because of the good teaching, the helpful support from parents and the improved reading resources. A recent focus on investigational skills in science has raised standards to above nationally expected levels. Standards are above national expectations in physical education as the school gives a strong focus to encouraging pupils to be physically active, for example through 'take 10' sessions and a good range of sporting clubs. Pupils know their learning targets and are keen to achieve them. They respond positively to the helpful guidance and detailed marking given by their teachers. They are becoming increasingly independent in their learning as they gain a better understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to improve. For example, their use of the 'traffic light' system to assess themselves on how well they think they have achieved is becoming more consistent. This helps teachers to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and maintain effective progress.

The outstanding headteacher provides infectious and purposeful leadership focused strongly on improving the school. She has managed very successfully a difficult period of long-term staff absence to ensure that the school continues to provide a good-quality education so that pupils achieve well. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The effective team approach includes all members of the school community. The leadership and management are very effective in meeting wider community needs. For example, they provided a 'Keeping up with the kids' course to help parents improve their own skills and give them a better insight into their children's learning. Parents value the accessibility of the headteacher and the opportunities they have to contribute their ideas and opinions. The school has worked hard to develop effective links with parents, for example through the work of the family-resource worker. Governors are supportive and more actively involved in evaluating and improving the school than at the last inspection. They ensure that staff and pupils benefit from a safe and secure working environment. The headteacher and her newly established leadership team are extending the use of the effective tracking and evaluation procedures to improve pupils' performance in subjects other than English and mathematics. For example, they are making better progress in science. Although close tracking and support are improving progress, the involvement of key staff in focusing rigorously on pupils' achievement is not consistently established in all subjects, mainly as a result of staff changes.

Pupils are clearly proud of their school. They have a strong sense of belonging and contributing to the school and local communities. For example, they put forward their ideas through the school council and work closely with local community organisations. Their understanding of communities in other parts of the world, for example, in an African village or in Japan, is enhanced through their involvement in the 'One World Week' project and strong links with a local language college. All learners have an excellent understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles, reflecting the school's Activemark, Healthy School status, Health Heartbeat and Anti-Bullying awards. The preparation for their future economic well-being is developed well through the work of the 'green club', which improves pupils' understanding of environmental issues. Pupils' awareness of business and commerce is promoted by growing and selling produce from their own garden.

The school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness. It has made good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in improving pupils' attendance. It is well placed to enable the headteacher, together with her new management team, staff and governors, to continue to improve the quality of education and pupils' achievement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding below those expected at this age. Speech and language skills are particularly weak. All children make effective progress because teaching is of a consistently good standard in both the Nursery and Reception classes, enabling children to start Year 1 in line with expectations of children of this age. Children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Nursery staff form strong relationships with families right from the start, enabling children to settle quickly. The close links successfully instil the importance of regular attendance and encourage parents and carers to become fully involved in their children's learning. Teachers and teaching assistants show exceptionally high levels of care, ensuring that children flourish both academically and socially. Their safety and welfare permeate every aspect of work and lead to outstanding personal development. All children are included fully. Those who need

extra support or who find learning difficult receive excellent individual attention, enabling them to participate fully and enjoy success. Children care very much about each other and love coming to school.

Staff work effectively as a team, organising a well-balanced range of learning opportunities in the classroom and outdoors. However, the lack of a covered area, and difficulties with free access for some Reception Year children, sometimes restrict opportunities to develop and extend skills. Exciting activities engage children's interest and make learning thoroughly enjoyable. Staff seize on every opportunity to develop children's language skills. Impressively detailed assessment information is used effectively to match future work to children's individual needs. The newly appointed Early Years Foundation Stage leader has made a good start by implementing new initiatives and providing greater stability and consistency.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop further the involvement of key staff in checking how well pupils are achieving and in identifying areas for school improvement.
- Improve the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to enable all Nursery and Reception Year children to extend fully their skills and knowledge.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Aldercar Infant School, Langley Mill, NG16 4GL

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you about what you do in school, looking at your work and watching you learn. You clearly enjoy school and, together with your parents, you think that it is a good school - we agree.

We were pleased to see how well you get on together and how proud you are of your school. It was delightful to see how everyone cares for each other, especially those of you who are deaf or have hearing impairments. Your behaviour is excellent and this means that teachers can get on with the job of helping you learn. It was interesting to talk to school councillors about how they are helping to improve the school. I would like to say a special thanks to the group of Year 2 pupils who told me about life at Aldercar Infant School, how you play well together and try hard to make your work better.

You told us that you learn a lot in school and enjoy your work, especially the interesting activities that your teachers organise for you and the good range of clubs. You are all making good progress in your lessons. This is because your teachers make lessons interesting and you try hard to do what is asked of you. Mrs Shiels and her staff are trying to help you learn as well as possible and are keeping careful checks on your progress. We have asked them to improve the outdoor learning area for those of you in Nursery and in the Reception Year so that you have even more opportunities to learn. We have also asked the teachers who are responsible for particular subjects to see where they can help you to achieve even better.

Thank you again for helping us to find out about your school, and I hope that you will continue to be happy and to work hard.

Yours faithfully

Colin Henderson

Lead inspector