

Albert Pritchard Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103906
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	336188
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn Winter
Headteacher	Jane Burns
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons and seven teachers. Meetings were held with governors, parents, pupils and a range of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at governors' minutes, policies, safeguarding arrangements and pupils' work. In addition, 42 parental questionnaires were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well the school promotes the achievement of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of target setting
- the impact of the thematic approach to the curriculum, especially on pupils' use of information and communication technology
- the impact of the federation on the school
- whether the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding.

Information about the school

This is a broadly average sized infant and nursery school. It is part of a 'hard federation' with a local junior school. Both schools share the same headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average, although an above average proportion has a first language other than English. The school has a number of designated places for children with autism and a broadly average number of others with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school has awards for being a Healthy School, Investors in People, Inclusion, a Basic Skills Quality Mark and also has an International School Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The school has been through significant changes since the last inspection, chiefly through becoming part of a 'hard federation' with a junior school. These changes have supported a number of significant improvements to the leadership and to the provision. Pupils' progress is improving rapidly especially among children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school is now providing pupils with an outstanding quality of education.

The changes to the structure of the leadership and the extensive use of devolved leadership throughout the staff have resulted in much tighter focus on monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, the outcomes of the pupils and the success of the teaching. The governing body is very deeply involved in this process and they hold the school to account and provide good levels of challenge and support. These changes to the leadership have resulted in much more detailed and effective self-evaluation and the production of practical and challenging but realistic target setting. Because of this, and because of the other significant improvements since the last inspection, the school has an outstanding capacity to continue improving and to sustain and build on the improvements already made.

Children often start at the school with very low levels of knowledge and skills compared to those expected. The excellent practice found in the Nursery and Reception classes helps children make outstanding progress during their first two years. Currently this progress is also evident in the achievement in Year 1, which supports the picture of improving provision and rising standards. Even so, the current standards in Year 2 remain as they have over recent years at a broadly average level. This represents good and for some of the pupils, especially those with significant special educational needs and/or disabilities, excellent progress towards some challenging targets. This is especially true in reading and to a lesser extent in mathematics. The school has not yet been as successful with writing, where not enough pupils reach the higher levels. In addition, neatness and presentation of pupils' work is poorer than it should be in all subjects. The school has recognised that pupils find writing challenging because of limitations in their speaking and listening skills and has taken steps to develop these further. When first hand experiences are used to inspire pupils' writing the outcomes are of much better quality, as happened during a dragon topic, for example. However, the school creates a very positive learning ethos and pupils' behaviour is outstanding and supports their learning extremely effectively. By the time they leave at the end of Year 2, pupils are well prepared to be good learners in the future. Pupils' skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum remain an area for improvement. The school is aware that it needs to become a more important part of

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the teachers' lesson planning.

The success of the school is based on the strong leadership of the headteacher over a number of years, alongside the current strong senior leadership team. A range of excellent partnerships with a variety of local organisations and other schools has been created and this is having an extremely positive impact on the pupils' learning. For example, the transition to the junior school has been greatly improved since the formation of the federation. Another example is in the outstanding way the school works with a range of agencies to support the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The good progress made by pupils is due to the excellent quality of teaching they are receiving. All of the teaching observed during the inspection was at least good and some was outstanding. Teachers provide pupils with work that is intended to match their prior attainment and this is largely successful. Teachers' skills in assessment and in using the results of this to plan lessons and set targets for children are much improved since the last inspection and are now outstanding. Teachers ensure pupils' outstanding personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through a wide range of activities, including music, art and design, and a good cross-curricular thematic approach to the curriculum. All of these aspects contribute to pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe and of how they can make a positive contribution to the school and wider community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - ensuring more pupils reach the higher levels
 - providing more first hand experiences to inspire them
 - providing more opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills
 - improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills.
- Further develop pupils' skills in information and communication technology by widening the range of resources and making better use of those available.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The pupils' work observed during the inspection showed that although overall attainment remains at a broadly average level it is improving. The progress made in Year 1 this year has been exceptional, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, this progress is not yet fully consistent across the school so more remains to be done to raise attainment further. The basic literacy and numeracy skills are helping prepare pupils for the next stage in their education, although they are less confident in developing their skills with new technology. Writing skills remain the weaker aspect and the school is aware of the need to improve pupils' skills through a range of different activities. The small proportion with English as an additional language makes good progress from their starting points. The progress made by pupils with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding and the result of carefully targeted and well delivered support on a one-to-one or small group basis. Very high quality work in art and design is evident throughout the school.

Pupils' outstanding behaviour supports their learning and achievement very effectively. The school correctly places a high importance on pupils' personal and social development in all aspects, resulting in opportunities for them to develop their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Attendance remains at a satisfactory level despite the school's best efforts to encourage parents to ensure their children attend regularly. The school's data highlight clear cases where pupils' achievement has rocketed once they begin to attend more regularly. Pupils love taking responsibility and have a wide range of opportunities to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Since the last inspection the school has developed and improved its assessment procedures to an excellent level and the resulting rapid improvement in pupils' progress

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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is evident. The marking of pupils' work in literacy and numeracy is of a high standard and helps pupils know what they need to do to move forward. Excellent use of praise as a boost to pupils' self-esteem is evident and work is often levelled and targets for improvement made clear to pupils. Groups of pupils are well organised and most have work provided at an appropriate level, although there are a few occasions when more able pupils are insufficiently challenged. Teachers plan lessons in great detail and they try to find activities that pupils enjoy. For example, in one outstanding lesson the teacher used a puppet to keep pupils' interested and focused in a challenging literacy task. Relationships are a real strength in this school and this is true of all adults who work in the classrooms. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding, particularly due to excellent interventions and small group of one-to-one work. Teachers make good use of other adults to help the learning of these pupils and this supports their excellent progress.

The school has devised a good curriculum which very effectively meets the needs of the pupils. Imaginative cross-curricular links are made through a thematic approach and the topics chosen are imaginative and hold pupils' interests. Currently Year 2 pupils are very involved in learning about carnivals, for example, and this is having a very positive impact on their learning, especially on their creativity. The school is now working to extend its use of information and communication technology. Learning is supported by the excellent partnerships with parents and with a wide range of outside agencies. Outstanding care, guidance and support were provided by the school at the last inspection and this has been maintained. All adults demonstrate a very caring and supportive side, especially when dealing with those children who are most vulnerable or challenging. This high level of care is evident all through the school, from the start of the day in breakfast club through to the very well attended after school clubs. The links between the schools in the federation enhance this caring aspect of the school's work and have enabled the support given to families in challenging circumstances to be even more effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management of the school was a major strength at the last inspection. Since then, the formation of the federation and the work by the headteacher to bring together effectively two schools has provided a major boost to the expertise,

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knowledge, understanding and experience of all staff members. This work has resulted in an outstanding leadership model and team in the infant school. Leadership is clearly seen as something all staff are expected to provide and this is reflected in the 100% of staff who say they are proud to be members of staff at this school. The senior leadership team work extremely well together. They have contrasting strengths that complement each other well. The monitoring and evaluation, especially of teaching and learning are outstanding. Any areas of weakness are quickly and effectively dealt with through support, training and high expectations. The monitoring of pupils' progress using data is rigorous and is used effectively in setting challenging targets for improved attainment.

The governing body provides a good level of expertise and have worked hard during the last three years to take the school into the federation. They are very involved in the life of the school and of its strengths and areas for improvement. However, parents are not very well informed about the governing body or its role and this is something the school has plans to address. The governors are very effective in ensuring pupils are safe. Excellent and regularly monitored arrangements are in place to support any vulnerable pupils and to ensure all appropriate safeguarding requirements are met to a high level. There are excellent risk assessment systems. The school provides outstanding equal opportunities through its excellent inclusion work and particularly in supporting challenging pupils who have failed elsewhere or who have some significant learning or physical needs. Those recently arrived in the country also receive excellent support and this helps their good progress. The school works hard to promote community cohesion and is largely successful locally and within the school. A need to develop more links nationally and globally has been recognised.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

The work of the Nursery and Reception classes is extremely well led and managed by an excellent practitioner, whose expertise is recognised and used in other settings locally. All of the staff are extremely enthusiastic about working with children of this age. They plan an excellent range of activities to support children's learning. The school has the benefit of two extensive and well-resourced outdoor areas and the staff ensure these are used well to encourage children's learning through a wide range of play and teacher-led activities. Excellent cross-curricular links are made throughout the detailed planning. The activities create a high level of enthusiasm and enjoyment among the children and this helps develop excellent learning habits for later. In the Reception class, for example, the level of excitement and enthusiasm during a lesson exploring magnetism was outstanding and the children clearly extended their knowledge and understanding of scientific principles during that time. The teacher had planned an excellent mixture of adult-led and child-initiated tasks. Children's progress is assessed and tracked in excellent detail and the school's data show the excellent progress children make from the often very low levels they exhibit on starting in the Nursery. Consequently, their attainment has moved on a good deal by the time they enter Year 1, although it remains well below average at this point in relation to communication, language and literacy skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires were returned by about 17% of parents and carers. All of the parents who responded agreed that their children enjoyed school, that the school taught them to be safe and healthy, and they all said they were happy with their child's experience in the school. This is highlighted as well through the excellent partnerships with parents evident and the excellent curriculum information the school provides. Some parents were not convinced that the school helped prepare their children well enough for the next stage in their education or that their concerns and suggestions were listened to. However, the inspection evidence shows that pupils transfer very easily to the junior school since the federation was created and the school has extremely good relationship with the vast majority of the parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Albert Pritchard Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 250 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	48	22	52	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	69	13	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	55	17	40	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	52	18	43	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	64	14	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	45	20	48	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	50	21	50	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	38	19	45	3	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	43	24	57	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	45	20	48	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	33	23	55	3	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	18	43	21	50	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	57	18	43	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Albert Pritchard Infant School, Wednesbury, WS10 9QG

Thank you for the way you made us welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you, seeing your work, listening to the 'ECO' committee and hearing the choir in assembly.

We think you are very lucky because you go to an outstanding school. You are kept very safe and you know how to stay healthy. You love having jobs and responsibilities and you carry them out extremely well. We were especially pleased to see how well you all behave and this really does help you learn in the lessons.

We also found that the school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and the other staff. All of the adults give you so much care and look after you so well. When you are in the Nursery and Reception classes you get especially interesting and exciting things to do and you make excellent progress. Those of you who find learning harder are very well supported and looked after exceptionally well.

Even though the school is so good, we have asked the teachers to make it even better. We have asked them to find different ways to help you get even better at writing. You can help by taking more care with your writing and the neatness of your books. We have asked the school to help you get even better at using different sorts of new technology.

Thanks to you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Albert Pritchard and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector

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