

Alvaston Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112744
Local Authority	City of Derby
Inspection number	338006
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Dorothy Bathgate HMI

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	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Wynn
Headteacher	Jean Walden
Date of previous school inspection	3 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's safeguarding procedures, the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, minutes of governors meetings, the work pupils were doing and the questionnaires completed by 69 parents.

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

- the progress made by all groups of pupils from their starting points
- the impact of the school's work to raise attainment in mathematics
- the extent to which the curriculum is modified to meet the needs of all groups of pupils
- the school's capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

The school is bigger than most Infant and Nursery schools and draws pupils mainly from the local community. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and three Reception classes. Almost one third of children who join the school in the Reception year have not attended the Nursery and come from a wide variety of other local providers.

The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Activemark and the Intermediate International Schools' 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

This is an outstanding school where all pupils achieve extremely well because of the vibrant, stimulating and challenging atmosphere in which children learn. Parents and pupils appreciate the high quality care and exciting learning opportunities. The headteacher has successfully cultivated a 'can do' culture where all groups of pupils are encouraged to succeed and realise their full potential. All staff and governors share her vision, drive and determination to succeed. Leadership and management are outstanding and there is a strong commitment to provide children with the best education possible. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. As one parent commented, summing up the views of many, 'Alvaston Infant School is a wonderful school and has brought my child from a rather shy personality to a confident, independent one.'

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, flourish from the moment they enter the school. By the time they leave in Year 2, they reach consistently well above average standards in reading and writing, and above average standards in mathematics. This represents outstanding achievement considering their exceptionally low starting points. The results of teacher assessment in 2009, the current work of pupils in Year 2 and scrutiny of assessment data, indicate that standards in mathematics are rising rapidly to match those of reading and writing. The school recognises that in order to raise standards further it needs to engage parents more fully as valued partners in children's learning. The energetic and enthusiastic approach of staff inspires high levels of motivation from pupils. Consequently, pupils respond well to the many exciting tasks set for them and make excellent progress in lessons. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that children make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils feel highly valued because of the excellent relationships which exist at all levels. Their superb behaviour is underpinned by outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An innovative and well devised curriculum, which effectively challenges pupils' creativity and thinking, makes an outstanding contribution to their excellent achievement and high standards.

The success of the school is due to the effectiveness of the headteacher, governors and senior management team, who work tirelessly to provide clear and visionary educational direction for the school. The school's excellent track record of maintaining high standards, its strong shared vision and its meticulous organisation, demonstrate its outstanding capacity to continue to move forward.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards further through developing closer links with families, as valued partners in their children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The school gives high priority to developing children's self-confidence and self-esteem in a secure, friendly and happy environment. Children say they enjoy school because 'everything is fun'. This is reflected in their above average attendance. Consequently, they do well in their work, thrive and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Excellent relationships at all levels contribute to a very positive climate for learning. Pupils take a pride in their work and are constantly excited by the rich variety of activities that are carefully planned for them. Purposeful activities ensure that children develop a secure understanding of what they are learning, and why. No opportunity for learning is missed. For example, during a Year 1 numeracy session the children were challenged to think about another name for the spacemen they were counting and in the Nursery children counted how many 'Superstar' children had received stickers. Consequently, the children's behaviour and attitudes are exemplary and contribute much to their outstanding achievement. Pupils' current work, as well as the teacher assessments for 2009, shows that their overall attainment is above average. The progress pupils make in relation to their capabilities is outstanding. This includes boys, as a result of new school strategies which have been very effective in raising boys' interest and enthusiasm. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well because of their sharply focused, precise individual educational plans, the rigorous monitoring of their progress and the expertise of dedicated support staff. Children's emotional well-being is promoted extremely well and they feel very safe and well cared for. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Their diligence in hand washing, as well as their keenness to eat fruit at playtimes and to take part in physical activities, shows their very good awareness of hygiene, diet and exercise.

Children's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness contributes extremely positively to the strong sense of community within the school. Assembly times are exceptionally well led and children demonstrate thoughtful and considerate responses to opportunities for prayer and reflection. Relationships between children and staff are built on mutual respect and trust. Children are given many opportunities to reflect on their world and to consider their responses to current global issues. Pupils participate in a rich variety of community and cultural activities, including fund-raising. Children benefit from well established links with a school in India and correspond regularly through letters and sending photographs. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are currently developing links with a school in New Zealand. These opportunities effectively promote an excellent understanding of cultural difference.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

An exciting, rich, relevant and well devised play based curriculum is at the very heart of the school's work. A themed or story-based cross-curricular approach enables staff to plan more creatively and flexibly, based on children's interests. This provides pupils with good opportunities to take more responsibility for their learning. Learning for a purpose has a high priority, as well as opportunities for practical first hand experiences and this prepares children well for their future adult lives. Children demonstrate excellent information and communication technology skills through confidently using laptops, interactive whiteboards and a wide range of software to support their learning. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities, clubs, visitors and visits help children to develop confidence and self-esteem, as well as develop new interests and skills.

The lively and enthusiastic approach of staff, their consistently high expectations and detailed knowledge of individual pupils, results in excellent teaching and learning. Consequently, pupils make outstanding progress. A key strength is teachers' skill at diagnosing pupils' individual needs. They use the outcomes of assessment highly effectively to target their questioning. Marking is thorough and successfully guides and challenges pupils. Consequently, pupils are very clear about what to do to improve their work. All children are provided with excellent opportunities to demonstrate their skills of creativity and enquiry through problem solving activities and open ended investigations, with appropriate challenge for more able groups.

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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The 'Every Child Matters' agenda underpins the exceptionally high standards of care that the school provides for pupils. The school gives the highest priority to developing children's self-confidence and self-esteem in a secure, friendly, happy environment. This extremely caring ethos results in very happy children who thoroughly enjoy school life. The school works extremely well with a wide range of external support agencies. As a result, children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and other potentially vulnerable children, receive excellent support which enables them to get the best out of their learning. The highly successful work being carried out by the learning mentor is having a positive impact on those most vulnerable pupils, particularly on improving their self-esteem, confidence and behaviour. There are excellent procedures for introducing children to the Nursery and Reception classes and for ensuring their smooth transition into Key Stage 1 and on to local primary schools.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are outstanding because leaders effectively communicate ambition and have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who leads with expertise, compassion and tenacity. She is passionate about maximising the potential of every child in a structured and stimulating environment. All staff share her vision and consequently there is a clear, common purpose which permeates the life of the school. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is excellent. As a result, the school is highly successful in removing the barriers to learning for pupils, improving their life chances and in tackling discrimination. The school's processes for self-evaluation are robust and take into account the views of staff, governors and parents. Accurate self-evaluation leads to effective action being taken to remedy any identified weaknesses and the continuous raising of standards through sharply focussed school improvement planning. Governors are involved in all aspects of school life and fully understand their role in providing appropriate challenge, allowing no room for complacency.

Child protection, risk assessment and safeguarding requirements are robust and meet current statutory guidelines. The promotion of community cohesion is excellent because pupils develop a thorough understanding of the school community, as well as learning about national and global communities. The school's outstanding organisation, shared

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vision and consistent track record of maintaining good standards over time, demonstrate its outstanding capacity to continue to improve and move forward.

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those typically found in children of their age. The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding because the excellent teaching, care and curriculum enable children to make rapid progress. Children settle extremely well into the Nursery or Reception classes because of highly effective pre-school links with parents and other local providers. As a result, children get off to a flying start in their learning, particularly in developing their independence and confidence. All staff are enthusiastic, well organised and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn best. As a result, children are very well cared for, show positive attitudes to their work and have the confidence to initiate activities for themselves as well as to follow clearly established routines. They quickly learn to take turns, to share and to work together because these experiences are integrated into all their learning activities. Adults have excellent relationships with children and inspire confidence and success. The richness and variety of the curriculum provides these young children with constant pleasure, excitement and adventure. The outdoor area provides imaginative and safe areas in which children can play and learn.

Safeguarding procedures are secure and the children's welfare is promoted well. Staff continually assess how well children are achieving and use the information to plan further challenges. This means that by the start of Year 1, increasing numbers of

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children are approaching the levels expected for their age and they have made excellent progress from their very low starting points. Parents are kept informed and are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.

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

Parents are hugely supportive of the school. There is strong agreement that children enjoy coming to school, make good progress and that the school is well led and managed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alvaston Infant and Nursery 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 259 parents and carers registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	78	13	19	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	49	71	20	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	49	31	45	3	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	55	26	38	4	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	45	65	22	32	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	51	32	46	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	55	31	45	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)	32	46	30	43	1	1	6	9
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	57	27	39	1	1	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	39	38	55	0	0	4	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	36	40	58	0	0	4	6
The school is led and managed effectively	42	61	26	38	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	65	21	30	0	0	3	4

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



12 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Alvaston Infant & Nursery School, Derby, DE24 0PU

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I think your school is a happy and very exciting place in which to learn.

It was so good to see you all enjoying your learning and wanting to learn more. You are taught by enthusiastic and caring teachers who want you to achieve high standards. You are to be congratulated on the excellent progress you make and the above average standards you reach. I enjoyed listening to some of the children in Class 1 sharing their happy feelings after they had talked about the picture of the happy rabbit. I was just as excited as the children in Class 2 when they discovered their surprise, magic parcels, which were helping them with their learning. The astronauts in Class 5 certainly needed some help to find the total number of men who were blasting into space! You are all kept very busy with so many exciting jobs to do and no time is ever wasted. You are learning something new every minute of the day. Well done! I was particularly pleased to see the way in which you take time to reflect carefully in assembly on what has been said and for the caring way in which you respect each others' choices in prayer times. Those of you who sometimes find learning a bit difficult are extremely well supported by teaching assistants. Your behaviour is excellent both in lessons and in the playground. All the staff and governors take good care of you and you are also good at caring for each other. You told me how much you enjoy all the activities in the playground and understand that exercise, as well as fruit and vegetable snacks, are good for your growing bodies.

You told me that you think your school is a very special place. I agree with you! However, even outstanding schools can improve some things. Ms Walden is going to be talking to your parents and inviting them into school to see how they can work together with your teachers, to help you make even better progress with some of your work.

Your parents are rightly pleased that you attend such an excellent school. Keep up all the good work and always remember to do your best. Thank you again for making my visit such a happy one!

Dorothy Bathgate

Her Majesty's Inspector

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