

Arno Vale Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122509
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340162
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bruce Cameron
Headteacher	Chris Blount
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one of whom focused on safeguarding. They observed eight teachers as they visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors attended assembly and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and the Chair of Governors. They looked at pupils' books and a wide range of documentation including school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 64 parents and carers, 100 pupils and 22 members of staff were analysed.

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

- the attainment of girls at the end of Year 6 and the trend in performance in science
- the quality of the challenge that teachers provide to secure good progress
- the impact of leadership and management on the quality of teaching and learning and how effectively middle leaders monitor and evaluate school performance, linked to action to drive improvement.

Information about the school

This is an average sized junior school with more girls than boys on roll. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or with English as an additional language are below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained recognition for its work in several areas and has achieved Gold Healthy School status and Football Association Charter status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Arno Vale Junior School provides a good education for its pupils. The caring and supportive environment ensures that this is a very harmonious community and one in which pupils relish opportunities to take on extra responsibilities. They behave well, are respectful of their peers, adults and visitors and learn to respect the customs and beliefs of others. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance to their health of diet and fitness and take full advantage of the many additional activities, sports and clubs provided. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and their enjoyment of school life is reflected in their responses to the pupils' questionnaire and their excellent rates of attendance. Pupils show an increasing capacity to work independently. These strong features contribute significantly to pupils' good progress, high achievement and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents and carers are very supportive and appreciate the quality of education that the school provides. As one said, 'My child is happy, wants to go to school, is motivated and keen to learn, a reflection of a committed and caring staff'.

Pupils' good progress arises from much good teaching and pupils' own hard work and enthusiasm for learning. Consequently, work in lessons reflects the high attainment levels seen in the school's Year 6 national test results in English, mathematics and science for the last three years. Although boys outperformed girls in the most recent tests, inspection evidence shows that both groups achieve equally well. A more creative curriculum is being introduced in which subjects are linked in innovative ways. Writing is improving because of the emphasis placed on the development of these skills in the planning of curriculum themes. The curriculum has yet to be audited to ensure that pupils are provided with an appropriate range of learning experiences in all subjects, particularly in science where test results, although high, show a recent downward trend. While there are notable strengths in teaching, it is not consistently good in all aspects and progress is stronger in some classes than others, and is not even through each year group. This is because, in some lessons, expectations are not sufficiently high and the work set is not challenging enough for all groups of pupils. Progress is also stronger in lessons where teachers use skilful questioning to check, probe and extend pupils' understanding. Although there is much good practice in the marking of pupils' work, teachers' marking does not always provide clear guidance on the level of the work and what pupils must do in order to take the next steps in learning.

The school has good capacity for further improvement, in part because everyone shares the headteacher's ambitions for pupils. New leadership roles are developing and governors make a considerable contribution to the school's future. Rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work provide senior leaders with an accurate

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view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they set the right priorities for improvement. Challenging targets are set and the effective use of assessment information to check on pupils' progress enables well-focused support to be provided where needed. This has a positive impact on standards and is particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for vulnerable pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching good or better by ensuring that
 - teachers' expectations are consistently high and that learning tasks are appropriately challenging for pupils at all attainment levels
 - more effective questioning techniques to develop pupils' thinking and reasoning skills are a feature of all lessons
 - the marking of pupils' work provides clear guidance on the progress they are making towards their targets and their next steps in learning.
- Ensure that the recently introduced themed approach to the curriculum includes appropriate coverage of all subjects, particularly science.

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

Observations of lessons show how pupils' good behaviour makes a significant contribution to their high achievement. Almost all work hard and respond well to interesting and challenging activities. As a result, the high standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are matched by well above average standards in other subjects. In assembly, pupils sing enthusiastically, tunefully and with confidence. Pupils' good progress is affirmed by their performance during lessons and by the quality of the work in their books. The new topic approach is helping them to become more independent as they plan their work and apply their computer skills to research for information on areas they are studying. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because support is well focused on their identified needs.

Pupils show respect for others and for cultural differences. They are inquisitive and curious as shown, for example, in the current Year 5 work on Africa. Pupils are very considerate towards each other and say they are happy in school because they trust their teachers and are confident that any concerns shared with adults will be quickly sorted out. Pupils feel they have been taught to think carefully about how to deal with risky situations. For example, pupils are aware of the dangers when using the internet and the steps they should take to keep themselves safe. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community and speak enthusiastically of their responsibilities, including being on the school council, the Eco-team or acting as monitors. Such experiences, together with high attendance and their very good key literacy and numeracy skills, ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Good relationships characterise all teaching and these form the basis of successful class management. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils and valuable use is made of interactive whiteboards to stimulate interest and reinforce learning. The more effective use of assessment information to identify the precise difficulties faced by pupils and to track their progress is contributing to the maintenance of high standards. This is also beneficial for the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the most effective lessons, assessment information is also used well to guide the planning of learning tasks. However, in some lessons, learning tasks are not well matched to pupils' different abilities. Consequently, some pupils are given work that is too easy and this slows the progress they make. While pupils' work is marked regularly, marking is not consistent in guiding them to improve their work.

The school is in the early stages of introducing a themed curriculum to make closer links between different subjects. There are good opportunities in music for pupils to learn to play an instrument. Pupils learn French and there are plentiful opportunities for

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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competitive sport. The curriculum is enriched by visitors to school, trips to the locality and residential visits which add to pupils' enjoyment in learning. Participation rates are good in the variety of after-school clubs, many of which are provided through the school's good links with outside specialists.

The good care, guidance and support staff provide is appreciated by both parents and pupils. Pupils are well known by staff and all are valued as individuals. High levels of attendance are promoted and the school works with a range of external agencies to provide effective support for pupils who may be particularly vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Because the headteacher, staff and governors work closely together, successful action has been taken to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Underpinning pupils' good progress is the rigorous monitoring of the work of the school and, in particular, the use of pupil performance information to track pupils' progress towards challenging targets. The drive for continued improvement is fully supported by all staff. Subject coordinators are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring the quality of provision and performance in their areas of responsibility. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. There are no significant gaps in attainment between any groups of pupils and all are fully included in all the school has to offer. Staff and governors ensure there are good systems for safeguarding pupils' welfare, safety and security. The governing body is well led, has a clear understanding of the school's qualities and is fully involved in planning for the school's future. It provides support and challenge for the school in equal measure. Staff work well with outside agencies, families and carers to help pupils progress well. Based on a clear understanding of the community and the context within which the school works, the promotion of community cohesion is good. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to increase their understanding of more diverse communities, both within the United Kingdom and beyond.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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	
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parent and carers say that staff keep their children safe and that their children enjoy school. A number also comment positively about the support provided for pupils who have particular needs. A small number felt that their children were not making enough progress. The inspection team looked carefully at this aspect and found that while pupils are making good progress overall, there is unevenness in progress because the work set in some lessons is too easy. Small numbers also felt that the school does not help parents and carers support their children's learning, deal with unacceptable behaviour well enough or take account of parents' and carers' suggestions. Inspectors found that the school provides many opportunities to help parents and carers support pupils' learning, deals well with unacceptable behaviour and has good approaches to consult with parents and carers and, where appropriate, to act on their suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Arno Vale Junior 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	45	32	50	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	48	30	47	3	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	28	40	63	3	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	27	37	58	8	13	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	33	38	59	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	25	36	56	9	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	23	45	70	2	3	1	2
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)	14	22	43	67	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	28	38	59	6	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	25	41	64	6	9	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	22	38	59	8	13	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	20	31	37	58	5	8	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	42	33	52	3	5	1	2

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.



10 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arno Vale Junior School, Nottingham, NG5 4JF

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you what we found out. On behalf of the team I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and making our visit one that we will remember for a long time. We have told your teachers how helpful and polite you all were. It was good to hear how much you enjoy school.

We agree with you and your parents that this is a good school and one that is helping you to do very well. This is seen in the good progress that you make as you move through the school. Your good behaviour in lessons is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. This is one of the reasons why you are doing well. We have asked your teachers to help you to do even better by making sure that the tasks you do in lessons really stretch all of you and to check your understanding as lessons proceed. Your teachers also spend a lot of time marking your work and we have asked that when they do this they all give you clear guidance on what you have to do to take the next steps in learning. You can help by making sure that you try hard to follow the advice you are given.

There is a really friendly and positive atmosphere in the school. A new curriculum is being introduced and we have asked the school to make sure that this fully meets your needs and gives particular attention to the development of your knowledge and understanding of science. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and after-school activities that broaden your experiences.

You know that all the staff take good care of you and work hard to keep you safe and healthy. Your headteacher leads the school well and, together with the governors, makes sure that you make the most of your time there. You are key players in the school's success and, having met you, we know you will all want to continue to play your part in helping it to be even better.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas

Lead inspector

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