

Albany Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131036
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	341086
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	251
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Tate
Headteacher	Miss Christine Brown
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Crossgill Albany Washington NE37 1UA
Telephone number	0191 2193650
Fax number	0191 2193655
Email address	albany.village.primary@schools.sunderland.gov.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and analysed questionnaire responses from parents. The team also looked at the pupils' progress data, the school improvement plan, school policies and procedures and scrutinised pupils' work. They discussed with the School Improvement Partner the local authority's view of the school following the recently completed supported self-evaluation.

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

- the current achievement, progress and attainment of pupils, especially more able pupils in mathematics and science, to determine whether or not teaching has high enough expectations and presents sufficient challenge and pace
- the achievement and attainment of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in maintaining a sharp enough focus on improving the quality of learning in order to eradicate the legacy of underachievement and underperformance, and in demonstrating the capacity to sustain improvements.

Information about the school

Albany Village is a larger than average primary school situated to the west of the town of Washington in Tyne and Wear. Almost all the pupils are from a White British background and speak English as a first language. A higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. An average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although very few have a statement of special educational needs. In the last two years, a much higher number than average have left or joined the school at other than the usual time. Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Nursery and Reception class.

The school holds the Activemark, International and Healthy School's awards and runs a weekly Toddlers Club. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post just over two years.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and attainment in Years 1 to 6 and in the quality of teaching.

Despite some improvements due to the effective strategies established by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, pupils' attainment and their rate of progress are inadequate. Standards remain too low in English, mathematics and science. Progress made by pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, has been too slow. This is because expectations of what pupils can achieve have not been high enough and tasks not well enough matched to their abilities, interests and talents. However, the school's data about pupils' progress and evidence from lesson observations indicate that the declining trend in attainment has been arrested and that initiatives are beginning to accelerate pupils' progress.

Overall, teaching is inadequate. Recent improvements in the level of challenge in lessons were observed, particularly when tasks and demands were tailored to match pupils' abilities and interests. This is the result of better use of assessment, more interesting and relevant learning, and probing questioning which extends thinking and skills. Consequently, progress is beginning to accelerate. However, levels of challenge and expectation are variable. The quality of teachers' marking and their use of the assessment of pupils' progress are inadequate. Although improving, assessment information is not used consistently by teachers to adapt planning and to inform the next steps in pupils' learning. The stronger emphasis on literacy enables pupils to practise their skills across the curriculum, but there are not enough occasions for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems.

Much of the pupils' personal development is good because the senior leaders have created an optimistic climate for learning, characterised by good relationships and encouragement. Pupils' considerable enjoyment of school life is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils are proud of their school council's contribution which has imaginatively helped the school to improve. Good opportunities are organised to contribute to local community events and festivals, for example, carol singing at a nearby care home. Pupils also find out about the diversity that exists in national and global communities.

The senior leaders provide determined leadership as they tackle underachievement and

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inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. After a period of some instability, staffing is more settled. The school's self-evaluation has correctly identified weaknesses in achievement, attainment, provision and the inadequate value for money that is provided. Senior leaders have made effective use of partnerships, for example sharing best practice with a nearby school facing similar difficulties, to boost ambition and to model what needs to be done. The approaches adopted are strengthening teamwork and having a positive impact on the school. This, together with the positive ethos, improvements in behaviour and the clear signs of a more effective focus on achievement in lessons, demonstrates that capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and standards in Years 1 to 6 for all pupils in English, mathematics and science by:
 - ensuring pupils apply their skills consistently to tackle practical problems
 - making certain all activities are challenging and provide opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, investigate, explain and verify their methods and techniques.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and the support provided for pupils in lessons by:
 - planning lessons with a clear focus on how different pupils will learn and be supported
 - sharpening the use of the available assessment information in lesson planning and in identifying the next steps in pupils' learning
 - ensuring that all pupils fully participate in lessons and learn actively.
- Improve the quality and range of thought-provoking activities outdoors for Reception children so that they develop enquiring minds.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils' achievement is inadequate and their attainment is too low. Since the previous inspection, pupils' progress has been too slow in English, mathematics and science. School targets are now more challenging as a result of the rigorous checking system that has been put in place. Reliable data about the current progress of Year 6 pupils indicate that most are on track to make the progress they should and reach the more challenging targets set for them. However, the demands made of pupils can be uneven in lessons. This means that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the gifted and talented, do not consistently fulfil their potential.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they display positive, considerate attitudes and sensible conduct. In their active playtimes, most pupils are responsible and safety conscious. They participate enthusiastically in a range of sports and team games. Pupils are aware of the benefits of adopting a balanced diet and keeping fit. They are keen to make the

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school a better place to learn and they value having a say in decision making. Pupils are confident that bullying is very infrequent and say that staff are usually on hand to share a worry or concern. Pupils listen to advice and respond positively. The result is a happy, friendly and positive climate in which they can enjoy school life. The school works hard to promote regular attendance and staff are effectively challenging absence and promoting good punctuality. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and provide a firm focus on mutual respect and right and wrong, successfully supporting pupils' personal development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Concerted efforts to tackle inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are starting to have an impact. During the inspection all teaching observed was satisfactory, although its quality is inadequate overall in view of pupils' underachievement over time. Developing strengths in teaching are the good relationships, the more effective use of information about pupils' progress to plan learning, heightened expectations and linking subjects together in an interesting way. Where lessons are more challenging, tasks actively

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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engage pupils to think for themselves and apply their skills logically. Where teaching is weaker, work is too easy and does not consistently encourage independent thinking. The slower progress pupils make in many lessons is the result of teaching which does not capture their interest or challenge their thinking enough. This is apparent in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for and always included in appropriate activities. However, there is no systematic challenge in their learning; consequently, they make the same inadequate progress as their classmates. Robust assessment and checks on pupils' progress are firmly in place, but the information is not consistently used by staff to provide a relentless focus on improving pupils' overall achievement.

Senior leaders have recognised some shortcomings in the overall satisfactory curriculum. For example, they are at an early stage in developing imaginative links between subjects and skills. Currently, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical and scientific skills across the curriculum. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum; for example, the Water Safety Team and Walk Wise helped prepare pupils to manage risk. Links with Rwanda give pupils glimpses into the diverse cultures in the world. The curriculum makes good provision for personal development; for example, older pupils gain valuable experiences taking responsibility and showing initiative on their residential trip to the Lake District.

The quality of care is good and emotional well-being is fostered well. This is appreciated by parents. Staff enjoy good relationships with parents who are increasingly involved in their children's learning, often as a result of the school's successful family learning initiatives. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are potentially vulnerable are thoughtfully cared for and included in all activities. However, their support and guidance too often lacks a sharp enough focus on the different ways of learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, articulates a clear vision for school improvement. A strength in senior leadership is the determination to eliminate underachievement. This vision is shared by most of the staff. Painstaking approaches are used to deal with the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, the rate of pupils' progress is showing signs of improvement. Team-working skills

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are being fostered and professional development well targeted. A committed and supportive governing body is beginning to hold the leaders to account by asking more pertinent questions. Their understanding of their role and responsibilities is secure. The influence of subject leaders is being strengthened. The staff are developing systematically the crucial skills of observing, assessing and regularly checking pupils' progress against targets. The school works hard to keep parents informed of their children's progress and the ease with which staff can be approached is recognised in questionnaire responses. Senior leaders' focus on improving the richness of learning is beginning to raise the achievement of all groups of pupils. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion with close local and wider community relations. All safeguarding and child protection procedures are robust, secure and meet statutory requirements. The school promotes inclusion well, illustrated by the harmonious, happy atmosphere, but recognises that pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
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	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry to Nursery, children's skills are below those expected for their age, with some arriving with weak language skills. Children settle quickly and confidently and make speedy progress developing their independence and personal skills. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Behaviour is good and all children follow routines well, for example, listening to each other and sharing toys and equipment. Children are encouraged to think for themselves but they are not given enough opportunities to instigate their own learning and develop inquisitive minds.

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Consequently, exploratory and investigative skills are not developed consistently. There is a sound focus on speaking and listening but questioning does not always engage or challenge children enough. Nursery children take good advantage of the free access to an interesting and developing outdoor area. However, Reception children have no direct outdoor access and this limits the quality of their learning overall. Most children make satisfactory progress. By the time they leave Reception, the vast majority of children are working towards the levels expected for their age. Children practise very good hygiene habits after outdoor play, toilet visits and before eating snacks. The provision is competently led and managed and staff work hard as a team. Staff have an effective knowledge of individual children's needs and use observation and assessment efficiently to build steadily on skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

In responses to the inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents were extremely positive about the school. Parents appreciate the care and consideration given to their children. Parents express confidence that any concerns are listened to carefully and acted upon appropriately. The school received a lot of praise for the enjoyment it provides for their children. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the management of unacceptable behaviour. While the inspectors recognise that a few individual pupils show some occasional immature behaviour, they judge the management of behaviour to be effective. Pupils displayed good behaviour characterised by considerate, sensible attitudes in calm, orderly lessons and responsible, safe conduct at playtimes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Albany Village Primary 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 103 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 251 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	44	51	50	1	1	4	4
The school keeps my child safe	48	47	47	46	3	3	5	5
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	28	59	57	7	7	6	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	30	63	61	5	5	4	4
The teaching is good at this school	34	33	60	58	4	4	4	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	28	61	59	7	7	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	35	60	58	2	2	4	4
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)	25	24	64	62	4	4	4	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	28	63	61	5	5	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	29	54	52	10	10	6	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	25	62	60	8	8	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	34	33	61	59	3	3	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	39	54	52	4	4	4	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.



13 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Albany Village Primary School, Washington, NE37 1UA

Thank you for being so friendly, helpful and polite when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time at Albany Village particularly the conversations we had with you.

I would like to tell you some of the good things we found about your school.

- The school staff work hard to make certain you are happy in school.
- You obviously enjoy school a lot and this is reflected in your good attendance.
- You know how to stay safe and to keep fit and active so that you remain healthy.
- The school enjoys good relationships with your parents and there are good partnerships with other schools and support agencies.
- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are determined to continue to improve your school.

Although Albany Village is getting better, I still think it needs to make some further important improvements. I have, therefore, given it a 'notice to improve' which means that another inspector will come to check how things are going.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help you make a lot more progress and reach higher standards in Years 1 to 6, especially in English, mathematics and science
- improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and your learning to make certain that all of you achieve as well as you possibly can
- make arrangements for the Reception children to be able to learn outside.

You can all play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection. We hope the school will keep on building on its strengths.

Very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector

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