

Albany Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131036
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	360194
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Farrow HMI

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	258
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 Tyne and Wear NE37 1UA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Fifteen lessons were observed and nine teachers seen; meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, representatives of the governing body and a school improvement officer from Sunderland local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including safeguarding policies, the school's and local authority's actions plans for improvement, assessment information regarding the current standards and progress of pupils, and governing body challenge reports. Inspection questionnaires from 77 parents and carers, 15 staff and 116 pupils were also analysed.

- The impact of actions taken to raise attainment and hasten the rate of pupils' progress.
- The impact of actions to improve the quality of teaching and use of assessment information.
- The impact of improvements made in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Albany Village is a slightly larger-than-average sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and, although remaining well-below average, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritage is increasing. A much higher-than-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average; currently none of these pupils has a statement of special educational needs.

At the time of the last inspection in November 2009, the school was given a notice to improve because of weaknesses in pupils' achievement and attainment and in the quality of teaching. In June 2010 the school received a monitoring visit from one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and was judged to be making good progress in tackling those weaknesses. Since the last inspection there have been a number of staff changes.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. School leaders, including the governing body, took rapid and concerted action to tackle the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Current evidence indicates that the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning from their generally lower-than-expected levels of ability on entry into the school; some make good progress. The proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining Level 4 or above in mathematics improved from well below average in 2009 to average in 2010 and, although attainment in English was below average, results improved by around 10 percentage points. This reflects satisfactory improvement since November 2009, when pupils' attainment and progress were inadequate.

Cohesive, energetic teamwork between senior and middle leaders and the governing body, together with a relentless focus on improvement, has sustained the good aspects of the school's work and improved those that were inadequate and a number that were previously satisfactory. For example, a better focus on narrowing the gap between pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils ensures they now make similar progress to their peers. This has contributed to an improvement in leaders' effectiveness in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Indeed, staff take every step possible to ensure all pupils can make the most of all the school has to offer. This includes developing new activities such as the successful 'Rise and Shine' club which enables vulnerable pupils, previously reluctant pupils, or 'late attenders' to get to school early and enjoy a healthy and sociable start to their day. Good support from local authority officers has helped leaders to improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Outcomes, the quality of provision and leadership and management of the Early Years setting are all good.

Transformation of the curriculum, the use of assessment information and the quality of teaching has been pivotal in improving pupils' progress, behaviour and enjoyment in lessons but it is too early to see their full impact in raised attainment by the end of Year 6. However, current assessments show the school is on track to achieve its challenging 2011 targets. Teaching is satisfactory; much is good but leaders know it needs to be consistently good to ensure all pupils make good progress and to fully tackle previous underachievement. Teachers plan lessons rigorously, with different activities matched to pupils' varying levels of ability. Sometimes, teachers do not follow their plans and then pupils all do the same work. When this happens, pupils' progress is satisfactory rather than good, especially for pupils of higher ability. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, providing them with detailed information on how they are doing. However, information to help pupils know what to do next is not always clear or linked to their individual targets for improvement and therefore not always appropriate or challenging enough.

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Senior leaders, staff and the governing body have been energised by the challenges they faced following the last inspection. All are working together successfully in their quest for improvement. Middle managers thrive on their increased roles of responsibility. They say they are fully accountable and value both the continuing professional development opportunities afforded to them and their leadership roles in training, coaching and sharing good practice across the team. They particularly value the regular meetings to review pupils' progress and the rigorous challenge provided by well-informed link governors attached to their subjects. The school has moved forward swiftly over the past year and its dependence on the good, intensive support from the local authority has diminished to a normal entitlement through an increasingly confident, self-reliant school team. Accurate self-evaluation involves staff and the governing body. All have a clear understanding of what is working well and what should be better. Detailed plans, including individual middle leaders' plans, are drawn from this evaluation and checked vigorously. As a result of the recent improvements evident, the satisfactory progress pupils are making, and the drive and enthusiasm across the school, leaders have satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Hasten pupils' progress in lessons, particularly for higher-ability pupils, and further raise attainment, especially in English, across the school by:
 - ensuring teachers' planning is consistently translated into practice so that lessons are always pitched to meet the individual needs of pupils
 - making sure marking which informs pupils what to do next is accurately linked to pupils' individual, challenging targets for improvement.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Inspection evidence from lesson observations and book scrutiny, and leaders' accurate assessments about pupils' progress and outcomes from their lesson monitoring, show that pupils are now making faster progress in lessons and achieving satisfactorily. There has been good improvement in pupils' progress in mathematics and it now equals that found nationally. Strategies developed over the past year, including careful identification of the individual needs of pupils, more effective use of individual and group interventions, regular assessment of pupils' work, and improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum, lie at the heart of the better progress in lessons.

Pupils' improving attendance, good behaviour and attitudes to learning pay testimony to their stated enjoyment of school. A minority of pupils expressed concern about behaviour in their inspection questionnaires. Nevertheless, lessons are orderly and pupils manage their behaviour successfully. They are caring and supportive of each other and work equally well in pairs, groups or independently. They say they like being able to have 'golden time' as a reward for their good behaviour. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of what constitutes safe practices, and are taught well about risks to their own safety. They report that bullying is rare and say that if an incident

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does occur, once an adult is informed, it is quickly tackled. Pupils also have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and actively do so. They appreciate the range of sporting activities available after school. They particularly value their role in developing the healthy school tuck shop.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Vibrant displays across the school provide a snapshot of the range of opportunities they have to develop a sense of awe and wonder and their good understanding of the diversity of cultures within their own region and across the world. Pupils' improving basic skills, personal qualities, team working and developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills, alongside effective transitions into Nursery and eventually into secondary school, ensure they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

All teaching is characterised by good relationships, pupils' good attitudes, and successful deployment of adults who support targeted groups of pupils well. Good lessons are well planned to meet individual needs, including those of higher ability. Pupils respond to teachers' questioning confidently and articulately. Such attributes and teachers' good subject knowledge ensure some pupils make good progress. However, in satisfactory lessons, although planning is detailed and recognises the different abilities of pupils, teachers do not always take account of this information and instead teach the same

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material to the whole class. As a result, some pupils, especially the more able, make satisfactory rather than good progress. Marking and oral feedback to pupils is regular, helping them to know how well they are doing but not always what they need to do next to achieve their challenging targets.

A topic-based curriculum has been successfully developed to excite and interest pupils and promote their thinking, independence and enquiry skills. It also helps to extend the teaching of basic skills in other subject areas and promotes learning within a context that is purposeful and has meaning to pupils. For example, more use of the local environment is stimulating pupils' interest in, and appreciation of, their own community. The curriculum is increasingly becoming a strength of the school, supporting pupils' better progress and their improving attendance. It is enriched well by a range of well-attended, inclusive after-school activities and a plethora of visits out of and visitors into school. Staff provide a warm, welcoming and nurturing atmosphere across the school; they know pupils well and care for them successfully. The support of a wide range of partners and agencies has been secured to support pupils and their families, especially those facing temporary or other challenges in their lives.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

A strong, common sense of purpose permeates the school and underpins the recent, rapid improvements. Leadership and management of teaching and learning have been enhanced through the development of a strong team of middle leaders and their increasingly successful role, alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher, in leading change and monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Leadership has also been strengthened by swift developments within governance, which is now good. The governing body provides strong challenge and support to school leaders as well as making sure they meet all their statutory duties well. The good safeguarding arrangements evident at the time of the last inspection remain robust. Pupils' safety and well-being are paramount and actions are monitored tenaciously. Governing body link roles are particularly strong. Regular meetings with subject leaders and robust half-termly reports based on pupils' progress ensure that link governors have a clear understanding of progress in all subjects. This information is shared at full governing body meetings and challenged appropriately.

Leaders constantly seek out ways of improving communication and partnership with parents and carers. For example, they have developed half-termly meetings to share information with parents and carers. These include reports on their child's progress

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towards their individual targets. Leaders also provide a half-termly synopsis of the topic for the next half-term to help parents and carers support their child's learning. Community cohesion is well-promoted. There are strong links with the local community and pupils are given a wide range of experiences which enable them to appreciate the diversity of cultures across Britain and globally, particularly through their work as an International school.

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
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Improvements since the last inspection have made a positive difference to children's achievements and, in summer 2010, these were at least in line and sometimes above that found nationally. This represented good progress from the children's low starting points.

Strong partnerships with parents and carers and an emphasis on children's interests through a topic-based approach create a very positive atmosphere for children's learning and enable them to have fun while they learn. The topic-led curriculum provides a cohesive approach and this successfully extends across all areas of learning, both indoors and in the much improved outdoor area. Adults play a major role in supporting children through their good use of questioning and use of very detailed assessment that captures children's achievements successfully and which then helps them to plan what they may like to do next. Positive relationships between adults and children help children to become friendly, inquisitive and independent learners. They play equally well by themselves or with their friends.

Leadership is good and all staff work well together as a team. The provision of high-quality professional development opportunities make a significant impact on their work and staff constantly seek out ways to ensure all aspects of provision help children achieve their best and make the most of their time in the setting.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Around 30% of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. The majority were positive about their child's experiences in the school. A few made additional comments, some positive and others more negative. A very few had concerns regarding the number of supply teachers. The headteacher agreed that following the last inspection there were a number of staffing difficulties. She reported that staffing has stabilised and there are now fewer occasions where supply teachers are used. No other significant themes emerged from individual concerns and these were fed back to the headteacher where the confidentiality of the parent or carer would not be compromised. The headteacher indicated that these issues would be tackled immediately.

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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 258 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	45	35	45	4	5	3	4
The school keeps my child safe	35	45	39	51	2	3	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	30	48	62	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	38	35	45	11	14	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	27	35	41	53	8	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	30	46	60	8	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	31	47	61	5	6	1	1
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	21	47	61	7	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	29	41	53	11	14	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	34	34	44	11	14	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	26	44	57	9	12	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	30	40	52	8	10	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	31	42	55	9	12	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



11 February 2011

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for making me and the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school recently. It was a pleasure meeting you and we were impressed with your friendliness, helpfulness and good behaviour. We were pleased to see you working well together in lessons and when out of the class. The school has improved quickly since the time of the last inspection, just over a year ago, and now provides you with a satisfactory education. This is because the headteacher, staff and the governing body have made a lot of changes and improvements to the way things are done. This has helped to maintain the already good aspects of the school's work, improve those that were inadequate and a number that were previously satisfactory.

We agree with some of you when you said the way you are taught in lessons is much more interesting, through the topic work and the style of teaching. This is making a difference to your enjoyment of school and your attendance. Teachers now mostly use the information they have about how well you are doing to set different work that meets your levels of ability. This means more of you are able to make good progress in your lessons. Occasionally, teachers give all of you the same work and this results in some of you only making satisfactory progress. We have asked the headteacher to improve this feature. Your books show that your work is always marked and teachers let you know how well you are doing through the green writing they add. Sometimes the comments do not help you know what you need to do next because they are not related to the challenging targets you have to improve. We have also asked the headteacher to improve this aspect.

I hope you continue to enjoy your time at Albany and wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow

Her Majesty's Inspector

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