

Alvaston Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112743
Local Authority	Derby City
Inspection number	382256
Inspection dates	15-16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Roy Bowers HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	294
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Wynn
Headteacher	Parmjeet Dosanjh
Date of previous school inspection	24-25 February 2010
School address	Elvaston Lane Alvaston Derby
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Age group	4-11
Inspection date(s)	15-16 November 2011
Inspection number	376963

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Fourteen lessons were observed taught by 12 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, parents and carers, groups of pupils, senior managers and curriculum leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's plans for improvement, assessment information, lesson plans and the school's monitoring information. Parental questionnaires were not distributed as part of this inspection.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent has the school securely strengthened the quality of teaching throughout the school?
- Has the school successfully accelerated the progress of all groups of pupils?
- Are monitoring and evaluation of the school's work sufficiently rigorous to demonstrate that the school has capacity to sustain improvement?

Information about the school

The school is slightly larger-than-the-average primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and a small number have behavioural, emotional and social needs. The percentage of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage are well below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has the International Schools award and Healthy Schools status. Within the school building, there is a local authority specially resourced provision for special educational needs that caters for 16 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All of these pupils have moderate learning and/or physical needs.

When the school was inspected in February 2010 it was deemed to require special measures. Since that time, Her Majesty's inspector made four visits to evaluate progress. There have been several staff changes since the last inspection. During the past year, the school has been led by an acting headteacher.

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(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Alvaston Junior school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Since the last inspection, the combined efforts of senior leaders have strengthened all aspects of provision, especially the quality of teaching. Lessons are calm and orderly, and relationships between adults and pupils are mutually respectful and caring. Pupils' good understanding of how to live healthy life-styles is demonstrated through their willingness to eat nutritious foods and take the opportunities offered by the school to gain plenty of exercise. They say that they enjoy coming to school and feel very safe and secure. Pupils' progress is now satisfactory in all year groups and some pupils are achieving well. The local authority specially resourced unit provides a caring and nurturing environment for the pupils who attend. The unit staff keep a close check on how well pupils are doing and adapt provision according to pupils' needs.

Pupils' attainment in all subjects and year groups is improving. Standards in reading are now average throughout the school. In mathematics, because of the legacy of inconsistencies in provision, older pupils still have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and standards at the end of Year 6 remain low. Standards in mathematics in other year groups are close to average. Although standards in writing have improved, they remain low in all year groups, mainly due to the boys' poor writing skills. These low standards in writing are mainly because all pupils do not write often enough and, especially boys, are not regularly stimulated to write about topics which captivate their interest and imagination. In some writing lessons, boys lose motivation because the pace of learning is too slow.

The quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall and some is outstanding. Teachers have a better understanding of how to use assessment information and their expectations of pupils' learning and progress are much higher. The work given to most pupils is pitched accurately so that their needs are met. However, there is not a greater proportion of good and outstanding teaching because, in some lessons, the work given to the more-able pupils does not provide sufficient challenge and a few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities pupils are not guided carefully enough through small learning steps. Consequently, few pupils attain levels above those expected for their age and the progress of a small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slower than other groups of pupils.

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Since the last inspection, senior leaders have grown in confidence and have developed their skills to match their increased expectations of themselves, other staff and pupils. The school has successfully addressed its weaknesses through more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school, especially the quality of teaching. Senior leaders have implemented strong systems to evaluate the progress made by classes and different groups of pupils. However, some tracking data is not accurate, and does not enable senior leaders to have a full understanding of pupils' progress. Nevertheless, the whole range of monitoring and evaluation systems used by senior leaders enable them to have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and plan for further improvement. Middle leaders have started to evaluate the strengths and areas for improvement in their own specialist areas, and have written plans for improvement. However, their monitoring and evaluation skills are at the early stages of development and their plans for improvement do not focus sharply enough on improving pupils' outcomes. The governing body discharges its statutory duties and has sufficient information to hold the school to account. The improvements made to date and strong monitoring and evaluation systems show that the school now has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics and writing and increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - all pupils write often and, especially boys, are regularly stimulated to write about topics which captivate their interest and stimulate their imagination
 - in writing lessons, the pace of learning is swift enough to maintain boys' motivation
 - in all lessons, the more-able pupils are given work which provides sufficient challenge and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are guided through small learning steps.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - middle leaders fully develop their monitoring and evaluation skills and their plans for improvement focus more sharply on pupils' outcomes
 - tracking data is accurate and enables senior leaders to have a full understanding of pupils' progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Although pupils' attainment at the end of Key stage 2 remains low, this masks the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. In all year groups, the progress of all groups of pupils is accelerating and standards are rising because pupils' learning in lessons is now much better. Targeted interventions, such as

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booster groups and small group support for pupils who have specific gaps in their learning, are effective in improving pupils’ achievement. Pupils in the local authority specially resourced unit are cared for well by the staff and make satisfactory academic progress. In lessons, pupils respond exceptionally well when the activities stimulate their imagination and the work given provides the right degree of challenge. During the inspection, there were many examples seen of pupils helping their peers to understand and complete the work given. Pupils get on well with each other and show a level of independence that is appropriate for their age. Most pupils behave well, but when the pace of learning in lessons is slow or activities are not exciting, some pupils become disinterested and inattentive.

Most pupils are polite and well-mannered and show good attitudes to their learning. They show consideration for others through their interactions in school and their involvement in charity work. Pupils are proud of their contributions to the school and to local communities through activities such as supporting church events and singing at the local aged residents’ homes.

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	4
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

In lessons, strong relationships between teachers and pupils help create a positive climate for learning. The work undertaken by the school to help teachers focus their planning on pupils’ learning and not just on the activities is having a positive impact. Teachers are much clearer about what they want most groups of pupils to learn and plan appropriate activities to support pupils’ learning. However, teachers are less

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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clear about the learning needs of the more-able pupils and a few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, the work is not as well-matched to the needs of these pupils as to others. Marking and target-setting have improved significantly over the past year. Targets are used well to focus pupils on their learning needs and marking in some classes is excellent, giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve. In most lessons, pupils assess their own work and that of others. When pupils are clear about the assessment criteria, they do this exceptionally well. Where teaching assistants are given clear guidance on how to promote pupils' learning, they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' knowledge and understanding of personal safety and how to lead a healthy life-style. Pupils are encouraged to bring healthy snacks and to walk or cycle to school. Extra-curricular activities and visits to places of interest help broaden pupils' experiences. The number of opportunities that pupils have to practise their writing skills in subjects other than literacy has improved since the last inspection, but pupils still do not write often enough.

The caring ethos of the school is evident in all the school's interactions between staff and pupils. The school's liaison with external agencies and work with the school's learning mentor provide support for pupils who are experiencing social and emotional difficulties.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are developing strongly. The acting headteacher communicates high expectations to staff about the quality of teaching. Staff work hard to improve their own practice and improve outcomes for pupils. The determination of senior leaders to improve the school and their relentless endeavour to develop their own leadership skills have been major factors in improving provision and establishing a secure base for further improvement.

Robust processes for monitoring and evaluating provision play a key role in leaders' understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The governing body has become much more involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. A recent governing body analysis of parents' and carers' opinions of the school provides helpful information about strengths and areas for further improvement.

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Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully gained the confidence and support of the local community. Links with all local communities have developed well and have contributed to the school’s satisfactory promotion of community cohesion. The school has plans to extend these links to communities of different faiths and cultures outside the local area. The school is inclusive and there is no discrimination. However, weaknesses in matching tasks and activities to the needs of some of the pupils make the effectiveness of the school's promotion of equal opportunities satisfactory overall. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. All staff have received relevant safeguarding training and risk assessments are in place.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents’ and carers’ questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so. The few parents and carers with whom the inspectors talked during the inspection were pleased with their children’s experiences at school and felt that the school had improved significantly from the last full inspection.

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



15 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alvaston Junior School, Derby

Thank you for making our recent visit to your school such a pleasant experience. We appreciated meeting with you, visiting your lessons and hearing what you thought about the school. We were pleased to find that you enjoy coming to school and have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

I have enjoyed my four visits to your school and have been very pleased with the changes that have been made. During this last visit we saw some outstanding teaching. We were very impressed with most of the teachers' marking and the way some of you use your targets to help you improve.

Your school is now satisfactory and most of you are now making at least satisfactory progress. We want the headteacher and governing body to improve the school and have asked them to make sure that:

- all of you write more often and teachers find topics for you to write about that are interesting and exciting
- those of you who are already doing well are given work which is even more challenging
- those of you who find learning difficult are guided a little more in lessons
- some of those teachers who have special responsibilities in your school look even more carefully at how well you are all learning in lessons and make sure that you continue to improve.

You can all help the school improve even further by continuing to work hard, especially with your writing. We shall take away many good memories about your school and have very much enjoyed the time we have spent with you. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours sincerely

Roy Bowers
Her Majesty's Inspector

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