



Alvaston Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112743
LEA City of Derby LEA
Inspection number 279005
Inspection dates 16 March 2006 to 17 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Edwards LI

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Elvaston Lane
School category	Community		DE24 0PU
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01332 571 321
Number on roll	343	Fax number	01332 571 321
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Paul Mellor
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Sue Penglase

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a junior school, of above average size that serves the suburb of Alvaston on the outskirts of Derby. Most of the children live locally. The girls and boys are taught in twelve classes. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage and come from homes where English is the first language. The range of socio-economic circumstances is broad. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above that of most schools. The school houses an Enhanced Resource Facility that caters for 22 pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

This school is failing to provide a satisfactory standard of education. Standards in literacy, numeracy and science are well below average and reflect poor achievement. This is because the quality of teaching is not good enough in too many classes, particularly in Years 3, 4 and 5. In lesson planning, too little attention is paid to what the pupils know, understand and can do. Furthermore, whilst new monitoring procedures are in place, they are yet to have an impact on progress. Subject leadership is inadequate as there is too little emphasis on how well the pupils are learning and on whether or not they are making sufficient progress. Most of the pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. Attendance rates are good. However, many pupils lose interest in learning because too much of the teaching is dull. The headteacher and her deputy recognise that achievement is inadequate and they have identified some of the causes. However, the impact of the sweeping changes that are necessary to raise achievement, such as the rigorous use of assessment data when planning lessons, has been blunted by a culture that is resistant to change. The school's capacity to improve has been overestimated by the headteacher, and is inadequate. The quality of teaching and learning remains inadequate and subject leaders have failed to ensure that the pupils are achieving their best. The governors have developed their expertise in monitoring the work of the school and have helped to balance the school's budget. However, because achievement and standards are too low, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money. In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science by making better use of assessment.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, through better planning and challenge, so that lessons are inspiring and engage the pupils more fully.
- Develop the leadership roles of the subject leaders to establish rigorous monitoring procedures with a clear focus on raising achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Inspection findings support the school's judgement that standards and achievement are inadequate. Results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science in recent years reflect a widening gap between what the pupils are expected to achieve and their actual performance. Although the pupils start in Year 3 with broadly average attainment, standards are well below average in Year 6. The school sets the pupils by ability in each year group for English and mathematics but teachers have not been rigorous enough when planning lessons to ensure that the pupils make good progress.

Too much has been left to catch up in Year 6. Although the pupils enjoy their education, far too many lessons make little academic demand on them. This results in inadequate achievement by all groups of pupils in the mainstream classes. Those pupils who attend the Enhanced Resource Unit make satisfactory progress towards their learning objectives. The school does not meet its targets because too much of the work set lacks challenge and too many lessons fail to motivate the pupils. Assessment data is not used effectively by teachers and subject leaders have lacked a clear focus on standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils behave well around school and in lessons and are polite and helpful. They understand what kind of behaviour is acceptable. There are good relationships in most classrooms, setting a suitable atmosphere in lessons. When the teaching is dull the pupils continue to behave satisfactorily, although they tend to fuss and chatter as their attention wanes. There is satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The school has suitable arrangements to take the views of pupils through the school council, which has been involved in the recent initiatives to emphasise a healthy lifestyle. The pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to stay safe but there are too few opportunities for them to develop their initiative and independence in lessons. When they have the opportunity, most pupils work well together and are responsible. Although older pupils are taking a more pronounced role in organising events in school, there are too few opportunities for them to make a contribution to the wider community. The pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall. Pupils report that they enjoy some of their lessons but not all, because they are not always interesting. Attendance is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate overall, although the school believes it to be better. Teaching is often good in Year 6 but comes too late to enable pupils to make up for their underachievement in previous years. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often too low and lessons are uninspiring and move too slowly. Where teachers' explanations are unclear, pupils are left confused and struggle to understand what is expected of them. Good lessons have clear objectives, move at a good pace and are planned to ensure pupils are actively involved and are challenged yet supported. Consequently pupils show good levels of interest and are motivated to learn. Recently introduced assessment procedures are robust and clearly identify what pupils can do. However, not all teachers are using this information well enough to ensure that the work they plan for pupils is accurately matched to their needs. As a result, in many lessons pupils make little or no progress and do not achieve as well as they should. In some classes, pupils' self-assessment and teachers' marking are used

effectively to accelerate learning but this good practice is not consistent throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Changes to curriculum planning have sought to ensure pupils develop their knowledge and skills year-on-year. This planning is in the early stages of implementation and has not yet had a positive impact on standards or achievement. Pupils are given few opportunities to use the knowledge and skills learned in one subject to support their learning in another because links between subjects are rarely made by teachers. The school has implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies. However, they are not being used consistently well by all teachers to support pupils' learning. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, together with the range of after-school activities, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils say they particularly like lessons where they are encouraged to be active and given opportunities to work together. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is effective and ensures pupils develop good levels of self-esteem and feel able to keep themselves safe. The school provides satisfactory support overall for pupils with learning difficulties.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school takes good care of its pupils. Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear and understood by all staff. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that they are taught how to keep themselves safe. The school works very closely with outside agencies to provide some pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties with the support they need to develop a positive attitude to learning. These pupils, who work in the Enhanced Resource Facility or with the school's counsellor or learning mentor, receive well-targeted support that enables them to achieve their individual goals. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning through, for example, the school's successful Family Learning Programme. The support and guidance provided for the majority of pupils, including some pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties, is satisfactory. The pupils in the mainstream classes do not receive a consistent experience, because some teachers match the work better to their ability than others. Pupils are not always aware of how well they are doing or what they need to do next to improve and so the progress they make is often not as good as it should be. Arrangements to ensure pupils transfer into the school and onto the next stage of their education are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The leadership and management of the school are inadequate. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has a clear vision for school improvement and

has both the competence for, and the commitment to, raising standards. Although the headteacher's view of the school is over-generous in its evaluation, she has a good understanding of the barriers to learning and to the school's future development. Much has been done to raise the self-esteem of the pupils and to improve their behaviour, but she has yet to persuade all of her colleagues of the need for change. Many necessary initiatives to improve working practices have met with resistance and this has blunted their impact. Furthermore, the work of the subject leaders in key areas lacks the rigour to ensure that the pupils are achieving their best. This limits the school's capacity to improve. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Although there have been improvements to the provision for ICT and the school has clearer tracking and assessment procedures, standards have continued to fall in English, mathematics and science. This is because the quality of teaching is not good enough to meet the needs of the pupils. The governing body carries out its duties satisfactorily. It now has a clear business structure and has developed closer links with the school. It is beginning to monitor performance more effectively and recognises where improvements need to be made.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I really enjoyed my visit to your school recently. The other inspectors and I were particularly pleased that we were able to see all of your classes and that we could have so many conversations with you. I can understand why most of you enjoy being at Alvaston Junior School. Your headteacher is determined to make sure that your school is much better in the future. She knows that your work could be so much better in English, mathematics and science and she is trying hard to make that happen. The staff are thoughtful and make a good job of looking after you. They plan many extra activities, especially school visits, to make your school interesting and to help you develop a healthy lifestyle. In fact, there are several things that make your school special. Here are some of them: - You clearly try to do your best to learn in lessons and are working hard. - Everybody understands how to look after each other and you behave well. - Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. However, there are important things that must be done to make your school much better. The school's work will need to be checked very regularly in the future to make sure that it is making the necessary improvements in the following areas: - Firstly, I know that you can do much better with your work, and I am asking your teachers to make sure that your lessons are more interesting more often. - I am asking your teachers to plan lessons more carefully, especially in English, maths and science, to make sure that the work is neither too hard nor too easy. - I am asking your headteacher and the senior staff to check that your progress is as good as it can be all the way through the school.