



# Albany Village Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 131036  
**Local Authority** Sunderland  
**Inspection number** 293693  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ann Wallis

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Crossgill
<b>School category</b>	Community		Albany, Washington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Tyne and Wear, NE37 1UA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 2193650
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	287	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 219 3655
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Simon Tate
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janice Dowson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7–8 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 293693
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Albany Village Primary is a larger than average school with a 45 part-time place Nursery. Most of the pupils come from the west side of the town of Washington. The school roll is falling steadily because the numbers of young children in the area are declining. There are no pupils whose first language is not English. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and of pupils eligible for free school meals are both above average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Albany Village Primary is a satisfactory school with some good features. The steady and experienced leadership of the headteacher and governing body has ensured that, after a period of considerable turbulence, the school's staffing is now stable, teaching is improving and standards are rising. Parents are very supportive of the school and comment positively on the good care their children receive, on the quality of teaching and on the approachability of staff.

The safety and well-being of every pupil are at the heart of the school's work.

Pupils know about healthy eating and other essential safety factors. They make a positive contribution to the school community and, by developing adequate literacy and numeracy skills, they are in a secure position to move on to the next stage of their education. Pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they are given are strengths of the school. Most pupils behave well, attend school regularly and enjoy learning. The school has a very inclusive ethos and is successful in ensuring that all pupils, including those whose behaviour is very challenging and those who are vulnerable, achieve as well as their peers.

Standards fluctuate from year to year but overall are below average. In 2006, results for Year 6 pupils showed a drop in standards, particularly in mathematics and science. However, pupils' achievement was satisfactory overall given their starting points and capabilities.

Children enter the school with skills, which are below those expected for children of their age. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children's progress accelerates as they move from the Nursery to the Reception class and is good overall in the Foundation Stage. Although some attain nationally expected standards, overall attainment is slightly below average. Pupils' progress slows as they move through the rest of the school but remains satisfactory overall.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Good lessons were seen during the inspection, and there were some good features in most lessons. However, there are weaknesses in some lessons that prevent pupils from making the best progress they could and teaching is not yet consistently good enough to raise standards across the school. In some mixed-age classes, pupils have a very wide range of capabilities, which makes it particularly challenging for teachers to match work to their needs; when this is not done effectively, pupils do not always achieve the best they can. Newly appointed teachers have strengthened the quality of teaching and their expertise is appreciated by pupils and their parents. One parent commented on 'the new ideas' they bring to the school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good across the school.

- Improve the arrangements for the management of teaching and learning in mixed-age classes.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement from the time they enter the Nursery class to the time they leave school is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because they receive constructive help from teachers and teaching assistants.

From below average starting points, pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage to reach standards which are closer to national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to reach standards which are just below the national average when they leave Year 6. Results in national tests and assessments have fluctuated considerably over the last two years. The 2005 test results for Year 2 pupils were significantly below average but improved in 2006. There were particular improvements in writing and in the standards reached by higher attaining pupils. The school had recognised these as areas of weakness and the steps taken to improve them have been effective.

In 2005, pupils in Year 6 reached standards which were close to the national average overall and they achieved particularly well in mathematics. In contrast, unvalidated data for 2006 shows that results dropped in mathematics and science and pupils' achievement, given their capabilities and starting points, was lower, though satisfactory, than that of the previous year.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school; their attendance is average. They get on well together and behave well in lessons. The behaviour of a few pupils at lunch time can become boisterous and worrying for some pupils. However, pupils are confident that any problems, including bullying, will be quickly dealt with by staff. Pupils enjoy their learning and speak with enthusiasm about the visits they make and the interesting things they learn in lessons. The school council gives pupils the opportunity to make their voice heard and they were proud to play a part in selecting a new headteacher. Older pupils relish the opportunity to take part in assembly and to organise equipment so that things run smoothly. Many pupils comment that they would welcome more opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school community. Inspectors are in no doubt that the vast majority of pupils demonstrate the qualities needed to shoulder responsibility.

Pupils are becoming more aware of the importance of exercise, healthy snacks and lunches, and increasingly make healthy choices. The pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe through the effective programme for personal, social

and health education. Pupils are prepared adequately with the necessary skills for life in the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly. Most lessons are securely planned and teachers expect pupils to concentrate and to work hard. Pupils respond well to these expectations. They enjoy learning most, and make the best progress, when lessons are well paced and there is a variety of activities from which they can learn. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to maintain a good pace of learning in many lessons. Good relationships with pupils help teachers manage behaviour well, so that time is used well for learning.

In a few lessons, concentration dips because the pace is too slow or the work is either too difficult or too easy for some pupils and there are not enough chances to shine. Sometimes pupils sit listening for too long or they are set tasks which do not excite and motivate them. When this happens, learning is not as good as when pupils are enthusiastic about their tasks. The school has introduced good assessment systems to keep an eye on how well each pupil is doing. These are working well in giving a whole-school picture of pupils' progress. However, the information is not always used as well as it could be for lesson planning in every class. Where it is used effectively, pupils of different abilities progress at similar rates. When this is not the case, occasionally some groups of pupils do not make enough progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of all pupils. It has an appropriate focus on English and mathematics but also provides satisfactory breadth and variety to develop pupils' knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned with a good range of interesting activities, which prepare pupils well for their work in Year 1. The school recognises that subjects could be better linked together to provide more stimulating and enjoyable learning opportunities for pupils. A large number of pupils, including the most vulnerable, enjoy taking part in a range of extra-curricular artistic and sporting activities and in visiting places of interest. The school takes particular pride in both staff and pupils working together on artistic projects, such as the production of the attractive tiled mural, which now decorates the school wall.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has a rigorous approach to child protection that meets current government requirements. Pupils feel safe at school knowing they can access help quickly if they are troubled. Fire checks, equipment inspections and maintenance are carried out to expected timescales. Internet safety is addressed well and risk assessments for visits to places such as Washington Old Hall are methodically carried out. Healthy living is promoted well. Pupils are provided with water and they can choose a healthy lunch. They are encouraged to attend school sports clubs that lead to a recognised award.

Good provision is made for vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A successful bid for external funding has provided gifted and talented pupils with access to small group work where they achieve well. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their targets and of what they need to do to improve. This reflects the good quality of monitoring of pupils' progress the school carries out.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governance is good. Governors are committed and provide a good level of challenge and support to the school. The school has forged strong links with parents and outside agencies to support its work. Finances are well managed and the school has been successful in attracting extra funding, which has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Although subject leaders observe lessons and scrutinize pupils' work this monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently rigorous to raise the quality of all lessons to that of the best. The school's self-evaluation and development planning are satisfactory. In the light of the school's recent test results, the school judges itself in some respects more generously than inspectors do. Subject coordinators analyse test and assessment data well and are beginning to use this information to plan future learning but their roles can be further developed in order to raise pupils' achievement.

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has steered the school well through a period of staffing turbulence and falling rolls. The school has improved since the previous inspection. Under the new leadership of the present deputy headteacher it has a satisfactory capacity to improve further and to build upon the improvements in standards and teaching, which have already been achieved.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Albany Village Primary School

Crossgill

Albany

Washington

Tyne and Wear

NE37 1UA

7 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so helpful when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed our short time with you.

These are some of the things we found out about your school during our visit.

- Most of you behave well, enjoy school and work hard.
- Your teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.
- Your teachers and classroom helpers take good care of you and help you to become responsible, confident and caring people.

These are the things we have asked your school to do now.

- Help older pupils reach higher standards in their work, especially in mathematics and science.
- Make sure that all of your lessons are as good as the best ones.
- Improve the way you are all taught in classes with a mixture of older and younger pupils.

You can help your school improve even further by continuing to work hard and coming to school regularly.

Ann Wallis

Lead inspector