

# Alfred Street Junior School, Rushden

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121857
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340029
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Hall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	186
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Tye
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Kidney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Alfred Street Rushden Northamptonshire
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed learning in each of the six classes, and where pupils were grouped by ability in mathematics and English. Inspectors visited 17 lessons and observed the work of nine teachers. The inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including: tracking of pupils' progress, school development plans, and records of meetings of the governing body. Samples of pupils' recent work and documents regarding safeguarding were evaluated. Questionnaires from 59 parents and carers, 173 pupils and 23 staff were scrutinised.

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

- girls' current achievement and that of more-able pupils, especially in mathematics and science
- whether assessment information is used well enough to provide consistently challenging work for all groups of pupils
- whether leaders and managers have successfully adapted self-evaluation and monitoring practices in changing circumstances to enable the school to improve.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A few from minority ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above that seen in most schools, with these pupils having a range of learning, physical and communication difficulties. The number of pupils attending the school has fallen since the previous inspection. The school is taking part in discussions concerning the proposed amalgamation of local schools. It holds Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

**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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils say they like coming to school, think that they have lots of friends and enjoy sports activities and visits. Parents and carers are generally pleased with the quality of support provided, with one noting: 'They are particularly caring and get involved in community and different local experiences.' Pupils behave well, are mostly polite and get on well together. They have a good understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils enter the school with average skills for their age. Most make satisfactory, but inconsistent, progress as they move through the school. By the age of 11, attainment is largely average, but not enough pupils achieve the higher levels in their work. Attainment is lower in mathematics and science than in reading and writing because pupils lack speedy recall of the ways they have been taught to use numbers, limiting how they can solve mathematical problems. Currently, all groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily and there is little difference in the performance of boys and girls.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff clearly identify to pupils what they are to learn and manage lessons effectively so that activities are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. While the school now has suitable means to check and track the progress pupils make, the information from such assessments is not always used as well as it could be to provide a consistently high level of challenge for all groups. Curriculum planning is satisfactory, and there is a good range of after-school activities to support learning. Progress and attainment in information and communication technology are limited by the number and availability of computers for pupils to use to support learning. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory; when pupils need extra help, it is provided.

The last three years have been a difficult period for the school. Numbers of pupils have fallen significantly, resulting in a reduction in staffing. Long-term staff absence has been significant. Temporary arrangements have impacted adversely on the quality of educational provision and on pupils' progress. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory because, during the last year, it has worked very closely with the local authority to improve the quality of education and outcomes for pupils and, consequently, both are now satisfactory. Leadership is also now satisfactory. Many improvements have been made to practices and procedures, although some changes are at an early stage of development and are not yet fully embedded in the work of the school. Self-evaluation has improved and is satisfactory, but the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work lack rigour in identifying all areas where further improvement should be focused. Governors fully understand the need for the school to improve further.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils achieve well by:
  - checking that all pupils, especially those of higher ability, are provided with consistently challenging work
  - developing pupils' speedy recall of the ways they are taught to use numbers so that they can confidently carry out problem-solving activities
  - increasing the number and use of computers to support learning across the curriculum.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better by making sure that all teachers make full use of assessment information to set tasks that match pupils' different abilities.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - ensuring that senior staff rigorously monitor all aspects of the work of the school in order to identify where further development is required
  - extending the programme of focused visits by governors to ensure they are well informed at first hand of strengths and weaknesses in provision.
- About 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**

Since the last inspection, attainment has fallen. It was particularly low in 2009 when girls' performance was weak. The school reacted well to the challenge, and pupils' current work and inspectors' lesson observations confirm the accuracy of the school's assessment analysis that better progress is being made. More girls are currently attaining the higher levels than boys but there is scope for further improvement for all more-able pupils. Progress is at least satisfactory and, occasionally, but not yet consistently, good in English. Most pupils successfully produce different types of writing. For example, in Year 6, higher-attaining pupils analysed different pieces of text with confidence and decided which writing was the most effective and why. Pupils in Year 5 were able to identify the key events in the poem 'The Highwayman' and produced a storyboard to record key events in sequence. The few pupils who use English as an additional language learn the language well and can access the whole curriculum.

Attainment in mathematics and science is lower than in English because not all pupils are able to recall and readily apply the knowledge and information they need to work out problems speedily. Nevertheless, pupils' learning and achievement in mathematics and science are satisfactory. For example, lower attainers showed they could multiply decimals with increasing confidence. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with particular difficulties in communication and those with physical impairments, achieve as well as others. Teaching assistants make a valued

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contribution to supporting the progress of these pupils.

Pupils get on well together. At lunchtimes, they enjoy activities on the playground and field with lots of enjoyment and few signs of friction. While some parents and carers think that there is bullying in school, there was minimal evidence to endorse this view during the inspection, and much evidence of high levels of concentration and good behaviour. Pupils particularly enjoy after-school activities and the success they achieve in local sporting activities. Pupils know what constitutes a healthy diet, although this is not always reflected in the best choices for packed lunches. The extent to which the pupils contribute to the school and wider community is satisfactory, with the choir and maypole dancers enjoying developing their skills. Attendance is carefully monitored but adversely affected by a small number of persistent absentees and holidays in term time. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to work together and develop their social skills but, as in many other aspects of school life, staff miss opportunities for pupils to gain new experiences.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<sup>1</sup> 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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While the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, several examples of good teaching were observed. All lessons are carefully planned and staff usually explain things well, often making effective use of interactive whiteboards to illustrate examples and set tasks. Usually there is a reasonable match of task to ability but, occasionally, the level of challenge is not high enough and more could be expected of individual pupils, including the more able. In these lessons, staff are not yet making consistently effective use of assessment information to ensure activities move pupils' learning to the next level. At times, the pace of lessons is too slow.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in the enrichment of learning. There is a good range of residential visits that pupils appreciate. The day-to-day curriculum is satisfactory and recent improvements have been made in science to provide more experimental and practical activities. For example, all Year 6 pupils were seen to work together to vary electrical circuits by adding further components.

Staff know and care well for pupils in lessons. Pupils who are struggling with their work are provided with extra help, which meets their needs and there is effective personal care for pupils. The serving of school lunches is rushed with little time to encourage pupils to try vegetables, salad or fruit. Lunchtime supervision and arrangements for first aid are not always pupil-friendly. The school works effectively with agencies to support pupils who are vulnerable. There is scope to extend the links with other partners, including the local infant schools, to develop a shared approach to assessment procedures.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The leadership of the school is satisfactory but has been an area of concern. Senior staff recognise that they have focused on the needs of the adults in a changing school situation, occasionally to the detriment of its pupils. Senior leaders recognised that help was needed and have worked hard in the last year to address the weaknesses in provision. A major concern still is that staff do not always rigorously monitor the effectiveness of all aspects of what is provided for pupils and simply continue long-standing systems and procedures. With effective external support, there have been considerable improvements in embedding ambition to improve among staff and pupils by, for example, developing the use and impact of assessment information, although practice is not consistent. Governors are supportive of the school. Currently, their

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programme of monitoring visits is not extensive enough to ensure that they are well informed at first hand of the work of the school, but plans are in place to increase their understanding of priorities.

Links with parents and carers are helpful to pupils' progress. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily, although only recently have the needs of higher-attaining pupils been fully recognised. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. There are appropriate checks on all who work in school, but staff are not always quick to respond to all concerns the pupils may voice. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. There are strong links with groups in the local community to support pupils' learning and personal development although links at a wider national and global level are much less well developed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are satisfied with educational provision for their children. Most think their children are kept safe. They think their children like the school and are happy there. One parent wrote, 'There are lots of trips out to local experiences and educational, interesting, fun visitors in. My daughter will be sorry to leave for senior school.' A few consider that 'the school does not push the pupils hard enough' and that homework is inconsistent. Several parents and carers would like more information about the work their children are doing and the progress made. Inspectors agree with most of the comments made by parents and carers other than the concerns about behaviour. Any perception of mis-behaviour



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appears to be based on a very small number of incidents that have been a source of discussion among the pupils, but do not reflect the good behaviour of the very large majority.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alfred Street Junior School, Rushden 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	36	38	64	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	53	28	47	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	32	35	59	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	37	34	58	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	44	30	51	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	31	34	58	6	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	31	37	63	3	5	0	0
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)	15	25	35	59	5	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	34	34	58	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	29	31	53	9	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	27	31	53	7	12	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	41	29	49	3	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	51	26	44	3	5	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 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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. 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



23 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alfred Street Junior School, Rushden, NN10 9YS

Thank you very much for making the inspection team welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to several of you, including those on the school council who were good at explaining what you all do. We also liked meeting several of you in lessons, at break and lunchtimes and when we attended assemblies. Thank you also for the questionnaire returns that you filled in for the inspection. These are some of the findings from the visit.

We think your school provides you with a satisfactory education. We were pleased to see how well most of you behave, both in lessons and when you are playing. We also think you enjoy lots of physical activities and understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The staff are working well together to make lots of improvements in how things are organised.

To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- make sure that teachers provide work that is hard enough for you all and that they help you to develop the confidence to solve mathematical problems and give you the chance to use computers more regularly
- make sure that staff use the information they have from checking your progress to set work that is challenging for you all
- make tighter checks on what happens in school so that staff know how to make more improvements and that governors - the people who help decide how your school is run - know more about what you are doing.

You can also help your school by trying hard all the time. Please think even more carefully about what you have in your packed lunches, and be sure you attend school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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