

St Alban's CE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106937
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	377495
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Joanna Sharpe

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Pyecroft
Headteacher	Alison Adair
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by nine teachers. Inspectors met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, school policies, the developing excellence plan, self-evaluation documents, minutes of meetings of the governing body, pupils' progress and attainment data. Inspectors considered questionnaires from 83 parents and carers as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- The quality of teaching and the curriculum and its influence on all pupils' progress.
- The role of leaders and managers in effectively embedding ambition and driving improvement.
- The standards of provision and attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

St Alban's is an averaged-sized primary school. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has been awarded the Good Practice Award 2011 which promotes healthy lifestyles. The headteacher, previously the school's deputy headteacher, has been in post since September 2011. The new deputy headteacher was previously part of the senior leadership team at the school.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Pupils at the school flourish both academically and in their personal development. Adults in the school demonstrate outstanding care and guidance for every pupil. Action as a result of the rigorous tracking of progress ensures all pupils reach their potential in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding at all times. Pupils treat each other with respect and are very courteous to their peers and adults.

Teaching in the school is outstanding and leads to pupils' outstanding achievement. All adults are highly skilled at questioning pupils to extend their learning and deepen their levels of understanding. Feedback to pupils on how well they are doing and marking of their work are immediate and constructive, enabling pupils to move on quickly in their learning. The curriculum in the school is outstanding. Pupils enjoy a rich and varied curriculum which provides them with memorable experiences. Very good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) and the outdoors to add interest to learning. Pupils enjoy practical outdoor science activities. Those pupils from Year 4 upwards gain further skills in all areas of the curriculum and develop strong team-building skills through a varied range of residential trips.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress. Exceptional care is provided by adults to ensure children quickly settle into their new surroundings. Children are provided with an exciting range of stimulating activities which are clearly targeted at pupils' needs. The indoor activities are very carefully planned to move learning on extremely well. Outside, children have a wide variety of activities to enjoy in a rich environment but they are not always as tightly focused on promoting high outcomes as those provided indoors.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. All leaders and managers work as an extremely cohesive team to sustain and improve standards. Attainment in English and mathematics is high at the end of Year 6 as it has been for a number of years. The leadership team has improved attainment in all key stages of the school since the last inspection. The school's self-evaluation is extremely rigorous and sets high standards in all areas of the school's development. The school does not rest on its laurels and sets ambitious targets for improvement. The governing body has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaker areas. It sets high challenges for senior leaders and holds the school to account rigorously. The school

has been highly successful in building on its previous strengths and, as a result, it has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensure learning outside is of the same high quality as learning inside by:
 - providing sharply focused activities at all times.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The majority of children enter the Nursery with skills that are, overall, below those expected for their age. By the time pupils leave Year 6 their attainment is high. The school goes to exceptional lengths to ensure that all groups of pupils make outstanding progress and attain highly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress and usually exceed the levels of attainment reached by their peers nationally. Learning activities are very well planned from exciting starting points to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm, resulting in them making exemplary progress. An example is when pupils produced vivid and highly creative art work following a visit to a farm and were immediately given direction and challenge through the introduction of speech bubbles. Programmes of support, such as booster classes and one-to-one sessions, are highly effective in helping pupils who are not making as much progress as other pupils. Targeted support and close links with the local secondary school promote very high attainment for the gifted and talented and more-able pupils. Attendance is high with no instances of persistent absence, which reflects pupils' enjoyment of learning. The school has worked well with parents and carers to lessen the occasional instances when pupils are taken out of school for family holidays.

There are no instances of racism or exclusions. Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They have a firm understanding of what constitutes unsafe situations and why they need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Pupils have a well-tuned perspective of their own safety. Even the youngest pupils in Key stage 1 are proud of how they are allowed to use real saws, as they have been guided to using them in a very safe way. Pupils behave extremely well at all times of the school day. They are respectful to each other and very polite and friendly to visitors. The very positive atmosphere and relationships within the school make the school a very welcoming environment for all. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to take part in enterprise projects with the local community, such as the Build it Challenge and Primary Young Enterprise. Residential visits, day trips, assemblies with visiting speakers and cross-curricular work promote strong personal development. Pupils discuss matters in a mature manner and resolve conflicts intelligently while valuing the opinion of others. Links with people from other cultures are strong and promote real interest in exploring other communities and discovering differences and similarities between people from other backgrounds. Pupils communicate with people from different cultures through the use of ICT.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

All staff have extremely high expectations for all their pupils and pupils are well motivated to realise these expectations. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and excellent questioning skills to further develop pupils' learning and understanding. Pupils are highly motivated and encouraged to learn through immediate and constructive feedback. At the end of lessons, pupils and teachers take the opportunity to evaluate the learning and understanding that have taken place. Teachers use effectively information from assessment to plan the next steps in learning. In a Year 3 lesson, when pupils were introduced to irregular and regular shapes, they assessed their own understanding and teachers' questioning assessed understanding further. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the opportunities to develop skills in a very active learning environment. Older pupils enjoyed being archaeologists for the afternoon; in a highly structured lesson pupils were challenged and extended in their learning. This also introduced mature discussions when pupils were considerate of the views of others which differed from their own opinions. The curriculum is exciting and varied and pupils acknowledge how stimulating lessons are. Pupils speak of how they enjoy problem solving in mathematics. ICT is very well used discretely in the computer suite and within lessons to assist learning.

Support for individuals is exceptional. Pupils' individual needs are identified early and personalised targets are given. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and higher-attaining pupils are given targeted support of an extremely high quality. This support takes a variety of forms such as extra clubs, booster classes, small group intervention classes or support within the class. All pupils know their targets and are well supported to achieve them. Plans for individual pupils with medical needs are very strong, highly personalised and updated regularly. Excellent links with other agencies, such as health practitioners, ensure the well-being of pupils is well met. One-to-one support is of an excellent quality. Pupils and their families are supported incredibly well through periods of emotional change. Effective

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

links with the local secondary school promote good transition arrangements. This year pupils transferred to their new secondary schools in June to help them settle and prepare for their learning before the new term started. The impact of this has been closely monitored and has found to be of positive value to the pupils involved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Although the headteacher and deputy headteacher are new to post, they have a firm knowledge of the school and its systems. The senior leadership team is highly knowledgeable and cohesive with a shared vision of highly ambitious targets for improvement of the school. The use of data is rigorous and thorough and highly effective in raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching. All members of the senior leadership team use data effectively to bring about improvement, such as the introduction of problem-solving workshops to improve attainment in mathematics. There is a strong emphasis on high attainment for all pupils and an emphasis on all reaching their full potential. Leaders and managers are not complacent and are already working with the local secondary school to ensure the needs of the higher-attaining pupils will be met later in the school year. All staff play an important part in driving attainment. Initiatives such as improving standards in punctuation have been shared with all staff, parents, carers and pupils with meetings, curriculum workshops, lesson activities and target setting. The immediate impact is monitored, evidenced and positive. Data are used highly effectively to ensure there are no instances of inequality. The governing body is highly effective in shaping the direction of the school, rigorous in self-review and proactive in its approach, such as developing induction and mentoring systems. Governors are highly trained and have a wide range of knowledge and skills to benefit the school in its development. Safeguarding is outstanding. All required policies are very firmly in place, updated regularly and are workable documents. Risk assessments are very well embedded and effective. Parents and carers are kept informed through a variety of ways such as newsletters, discussion evenings, workshops and a very informative website. The views of pupils, parents and carers are regularly sought through discussion and questionnaires, and used to shape policies and procedures as required, as in the case recently when the health and safety policy was revised to ensure that procedures take account of issues raised by parents and carers. The school proactively makes links with the local community, businesses, the church and the learning community to build on the strength of its community cohesion. It has links with the wider community through its contact with a family in Africa and missionaries in India. The school has clearly evaluated the impact of its work in the community and continues to build on successful links.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children of all abilities make outstanding progress from their starting points and this is an improving trend. By the start of Year 1, the attainment of the majority of children is above average. Their attainment is carefully analysed and any areas for development identified quickly. The quality of assessment is high and the analysis rigorous. When less well-developed areas have been identified, such as in writing, action is taken quickly and the improvement is stringently monitored. Much improvement in such areas is evident. Activities are very well planned to motivate and maintain the interest of children. Children were enthused when learning the new sound 'ch'; they explored artefacts beginning with 'ch' and then gathered other items beginning with 'ch' into Little Red Riding Hood's basket. Teaching was flexible to ensure that the needs of all children were fully met, sessions were shortened to allow for the needs of younger children and different adult-initiated activities organised for the more able. Adults are very knowledgeable and use this vast knowledge to plan activities promoting interest and further learning. Children enjoyed hunting for bones in the sand and writing their name in foam, as well as learning about growing in the outdoor garden. All of the activities and areas within the indoor classroom are highly focused to engage and stimulate children's development. In the outdoor learning environment, there is a wide range of activities to promote learning in all areas of the curriculum. Sometimes these activities are insufficiently well planned for and less sharply focused than they are in the indoor environment, such as the role play and play using bicycles.

The leadership and management of the provision are highly effective. Children are extremely well cared for. The extent to which adults ensure the new younger pupils settle into their new environment is exceptional. After just two weeks at school, attending during mornings only, relationships were strong and children were comfortable and happy in their new environment. Children's behaviour is outstanding at all times. They play together and cooperate well. New children quickly become aware of practices and expectations.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A minority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority were extremely positive about the school. Typical comments were, 'A wonderful school, every single teacher goes out of their way to make this school the best' and, 'One of the best schools I have ever seen'. The vast majority of parents and carers thought that their children enjoyed school, that the school keeps their children safe and that, overall, they are happy with their children's experience at school.

Inspectors also met parents and carers who commented very favourably about the school. A small number commented that they did not feel the school helped them to support their children's learning. These parents and carers also welcomed new initiatives, such as curriculum meetings. They were pleased that it appeared new leaders and managers were addressing this issue more thoroughly. A very small number of parents and carers commented on the lack of supervision at playtimes. Inspectors observed a number of break times and questioned pupils and found no evidence to suggest there was any lack of supervision. A small number of parents and carers made comments about unacceptable behaviour and bullying. Inspectors spoke to a number of pupils, informally and formally, and found that they did not consider inappropriate behaviour was a problem. All behaviour observed around the school and in lessons was exemplary. Inspectors also found that pupils played a very active part in addressing the issue of behaviour with the use of buddies, classroom charters and their very strong involvement in anti-bullying policies and activities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Alban's CE (Aided) 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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 235 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	70	24	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	70	22	27	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	47	41	49	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	60	24	29	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	63	31	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	55	31	37	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	45	44	53	2	2	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)	43	52	32	39	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	52	37	45	3	4	0	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	31	49	59	6	7	0	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	36	46	55	5	6	0	2
The school is led and managed effectively	41	49	38	46	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	67	26	31	1	1	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	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 is 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.



22 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Alban's CE (Aided) Primary School, Rotherham, S66 1EU

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We found your school to be a very happy and welcoming school and very much enjoyed talking to you. We found that your school provides you with an outstanding education.

We found that the school uses lots of information to track your progress carefully and makes sure that every single one of you is making the progress you should. The school quickly identifies if you do not fully understand your work and uses lots of different ways to help you. We also found that all the adults in the school really care about you. They make sure the very young children are happy and quickly settle, and they work very well with the secondary school to make sure you quickly settle into your next school. Staff also work with lots of other people outside school to make sure you have everything you need, and to make your curriculum exciting and relevant to life skills you need to develop. When we spoke to you, you were all very positive about your school. You told us how you enjoyed your lessons, especially science outside, residential trips and problem solving in mathematics. Thank you to all the pupils who completed questionnaires for us. Of all the questions we asked you the vast majority were positive. We found that you all work very hard and all of you, including the very youngest children, cooperate exceptionally well with your peers.

To make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and the governing body to make sure that the outdoor learning for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is as carefully organised as the learning indoors. Thank you for making us feel so welcome.

Yours sincerely

Joanna Sharpe
Lead inspector

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