

Aldercar Infant and Nursery School

Godkin Drive, Langley Mill, Nottingham, NG16 4GL

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress, often from very low starting points. When they leave Year 2 they achieve above the levels expected for their age in English and mathematics.
- Children of Nursery and Reception age get off to an excellent start because staff have such strong understanding of how best to promote learning, and do so very well indeed.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants inspire pupils and build on their natural curiosity about the world. Teachers almost always pitch the work at exactly the right level for every pupil.
- Pupils always try their best. Their behaviour is outstanding, and this makes the school an exceedingly safe and purposeful place of learning, where pupils thrive.
- The school's carefully designed teaching programmes provide pupils with many excellent opportunities to develop their reading, writing and numeracy skills by applying them in other subjects.
- Pupils who are deaf, and those who are disabled or who have other special educational needs are very well taught and fully included in the life of the school. Consequently, they make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in literacy and mathematics.
- The governors, the headteacher and her leadership team have managed staff performance extremely well so that teaching and pupils' achievement have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Leaders use the information they have about pupils' achievements very carefully to check the achievement of different groups, including pupils entitled to the pupil premium. Very well targeted and highly effective interventions are swiftly put into place should any pupil be in danger of falling behind.
- The school's emphasis on 'respect' informs all it does and this, together with the excellent role models staff provide, encourages pupils to think very carefully about how others feel and about their own actions. Consequently their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, over half of which were observed jointly with the school's headteacher or Early years Foundation Stage leader. In addition inspectors made several short visits to other lessons.
- All classes and teachers were observed, including lessons in the facility for deaf pupils. A sign language interpreter accompanied inspectors for part of the inspection.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body and the local authority, as well as the senior leadership team and middle managers.
- Inspectors took account of 17 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and individual letters from parents, as well as 18 staff questionnaires. The inspectors also met with parents as they attended school events or collected their children.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, discussed their work with them and talked with groups of pupils, including pupils who are supported by the enhanced resource facility.
- They scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's procedures for keeping pupils' safe, its improvement planning and its evaluation of its work. They examined the data that the school holds about pupils' progress, including their personal development, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Susan Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Sanderson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Aldercar Infant and Nursery School is a smaller-than-average-sized infant school.
- Twenty six pupils attend its part-time Nursery in the morning and a further 26 in the afternoons. There are five other classes, including two Year 2 classes, one Reception class, one Year 1 class and a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs, is much higher than usual.
- An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The school manages specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. The Enhanced Resourced Facility for deaf and hearing impaired pupils (ERF) currently supports nine pupils. Staff working in the facility use spoken language, sign-supported English and British Sign Language, according to pupils' needs.
- The headteacher is currently seconded two days per week to support other schools within the local authority. An acting headteacher, who is also an assistant headteacher, takes over on these days.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils are challenged in all parts of lessons, and particularly when they are being taught directly by teachers whilst sitting all together on the carpet,
- Check that the school's new marking policy is consistently implemented by all staff so that pupils are clear about how to improve, and ensure that they always follow this advice in their subsequent work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Despite very low starting points on entry to the Nursery, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 has been consistently above that expected in English and mathematics. Although attainment will be slightly lower this year, because of even lower starting points, it will still be in line with, or slightly above, that expected.
- Children of Nursery and Reception age make much better than expected progress in all areas of learning because of the high quality teaching they receive. Many children have particular difficulties with language and communication when they first arrive. Staffs are expert at improving these skills through skilful questioning and the many different ways in which they encourage children to listen to each other and share ideas.
- This exceptional progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Excellent support for speaking and listening and for pupils' personal development underpins the outstanding progress pupils make in their reading and writing. Reading in particular is at the heart of everything the school does, and pupils say they love to read.
- Improvements in the ways phonics (the sounds that letters make) are taught have rapidly improved pupils' confidence in working out unfamiliar words and meanings. Although fewer pupils achieved the expected level in the 2012 national phonics assessment, an above average proportion will achieve the expected level this year. Even the weakest readers in Years 1 and 2 are developing these skills very well and have made accelerated progress.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics because staff promote these skills systematically and find many ways in which pupils can try out their skills in other subjects. Pupils are proud to show their teachers how quickly they can work out these problems.
- Music and rhyme are used very well to help older pupils develop their listening skills and self expression. Pupils joined in one musical phonics lesson with enthusiasm; others proudly performed their pirate story to their parents.
- The school has worked very hard to find programmes and resources that meet the needs of pupils with additional learning and behavioural needs and inspire them to learn. These pupils, including those who are deaf, make at least good and sometimes excellent progress because they are well supported by specialist staff and the work of the nurture group, and because the new themes followed within in the school curriculum capture their attention and interest.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make at least similar progress to their classmates. Often, they make better progress because of the highly effective ways in which the school has used this funding to promote their learning and interest. By the end of Year 2 their achievements are very close to their other classmates. They achieve almost identically in reading and are less than a term behind in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding throughout the school, and this enables pupils to make outstanding progress regardless of their starting points.
- Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are expert at promoting children's language and early

literacy skills. Activities are planned very creatively, for example, so that children learn to listen carefully.

- Teachers are skilful in supporting pupils' mathematical skills and in enabling them to work out problems for themselves. They make sure that pupils understand the many different ways that numbers can be made up but also use games to encourage pupils to practise their skills in mental mathematics, which pupils enjoy.
- Teaching programmes have been redesigned to incorporate pupils' own ideas, so that the new themes provide many opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and solve problems. Pupils say they are excited to find out what they will learn each morning.
- Pupils who are deaf are fully involved in all lessons because teachers plan very well to meet their needs and because of the high quality support from specialist staff. Teachers of the deaf provide high quality support for pupils' language development when these pupils are withdrawn to the quieter listening environment of the ERF base. This underpins their good or better progress in all subjects. The school is rightly reviewing the balance of withdrawal and in-class time for these pupils to ensure their language development is accelerated even further.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive the help that they need. They use technological and other equipment effectively, and adapt their lessons or put in place special programmes that ensure they achieve well.
- Teachers generally plan their lessons very carefully and work hard to meet the needs of all the pupils in their class. Occasionally, the work does not challenge everyone in all parts of the lesson. This happens, for example, when pupils all have the same work to do when sitting on the carpet; some finish long before others and do not have harder work to do.
- Most teachers use the school's new marking policy extremely well to help pupils understand what is good about what they have done and how they can improve it. However the policy is not yet consistently used by everyone, meaning some pupils are not always clear about their next steps in learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is never less than good and more often it is exemplary. They speak proudly about their work and their school and say that everyone is kind to them.
- Pupils themselves feel that behaviour is excellent at their school, saying that if someone is 'naughty' or 'silly', staff deal with it fairly and it never stops them learning. Parents, too, consider behaviour is very well managed, even where pupils are known to have additional challenges in behaviour because of their learning needs.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and parents agree. Bullying or other incidents rarely happen because the school promotes a 'respect curriculum' that openly discusses and celebrates everyone's uniqueness and difference. This encourages pupils to think very carefully about how they behave to others and about others' beliefs and ways of living. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe out of school and how to use the internet safely.
- Staff themselves model 'respect' and listening to others in everything they do; they give pupils

time to express their ideas, for example, and use the technology that supports children who are deaf, effectively. They reinforce the school's belief that everyone 'is a star' by celebrating pupils' learning and using the rewards system highly effectively to promote the behaviours the school values.

- Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and to see the difference their ideas make, for example in the new themes being explored in the curriculum or the ways in which their ideas are taken up and used in lessons. This promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well indeed.
- Pupils' attendance has improved rapidly because the school has been rigorous in pursuing this and explaining to parents the impact that poor attendance has on their child's achievement. Attendance has improved recently and is now above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The determined leadership of the headteacher and other managers and the governors has ensured that this school is now outstanding. They have created an environment in which pupils love to learn and parents feel that their child has every opportunity to do so.
- Highly effective management of teachers' performance, together with very well targeted training and support, have helped teaching become outstanding across the school.
- Rigorous collection and analysis of information about how pupils are doing, both academically and personally, ensure that every pupil's progress is checked and action swiftly taken if they are not making the expected progress.
- The headteacher's secondment to work for the local authority has been used both to gather ideas from other schools but also to develop the strengths of middle and senior leaders. This means the capacity of the school's leadership to make the school even better is excellent.
- Leaders know the school's strengths and areas for improvement extremely well and have very high expectations of themselves, the staff and pupils. They have worked extremely well with parents and with the local community to ensure pupils have many opportunities to apply and develop their learning further at home.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, those who are deaf and those who have special educational needs, benefit from the excellent leadership of these areas and from the excellent relationships the school has with outside agencies.
- The pupil premium is used highly effectively to provide extra staff, new ways of approaching phonics, the nurture group facility and reading materials that pupils say they really love. The school checks carefully that everyone has equality of opportunity and pupils say 'we are all the same, just sort of different, but that's good.'
- The local authority regards the school as 'light touch' because of its strengths but has provided good support to both governors and the leadership through its training opportunities and recommendations following visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are highly knowledgeable about the school and ambitious for it. They provide a high level of challenge for the leadership team, asking pertinent questions about why groups

are achieving as they are and how actions will benefit the school and improve pupils' progress. They oversee the school's finances very carefully, checking on how the use of the pupil premium is making a difference, for example. They have a good understanding of how targets are set for teachers and used to manage their performance, and check regularly that these are being met. They know how these should relate to any salary progression and are clear as to how they must oversee this. They are rigorous about checking that the school meets all safeguarding regulations and fulfils its responsibilities in relation to the Enhanced Resource Facility.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	112555
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	413404

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Watts
Headteacher	Gayle Shiels
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2009
Telephone number	01773 713428
Fax number	01773 713428
Email address	info@aldercar-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk

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