

The Alton School

Danebury Avenue, Roehampton, London SW15 4PD

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has taken decisive action to tackle the areas which needed improvement. The school now provides a good standard of education.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of what the school does well and what could be even better. This means the school is well placed to improve further.
- The early years is led well. A greater proportion of children achieve a good level of development than is the case nationally. This includes children from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Leaders are quick to identify and tackle weaker teaching. However, staff do not have sufficient opportunities to share and learn from effective practice within the school. This has reduced the overall impact of leaders' work to strengthen teaching.
- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. This includes pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are particularly well developed. This is because teachers model language effectively and expect pupils to explain their ideas using grammatically accurate sentences.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well in the phonics screening check. In 2015 and 2016, pupils' attainment was above the national average.
- Pupils of all ages enjoy reading. They understand how reading helps them find out new information and develop their vocabulary. However, teachers do not consistently challenge the most able readers to explain their ideas in greater depth. This can slow the progress they make.
- In writing, teachers provide pupils with clear guidance on how to be successful. This ensures that pupils enjoy writing and are keen to practise their skills in different subjects.
- The mathematics curriculum is well designed so that pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their calculation skills. However, the progress of pupils with low attainment is inconsistent. This is because teachers do not always plan learning that builds on what these pupils already know or can do.
- Pupils in the designated special provision make good progress. This is because staff plan learning that is well matched to their needs.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and behave well. They are considerate and respectful to each other and adults.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - staff have more opportunities to share and learn from effective practice within the school
 - teachers develop their planning in mathematics to adapt the learning so that it fully meets the needs of pupils with low attainment
 - in reading, teachers have consistently high expectations of the most able pupils so that a greater proportion achieve the high standard by the end of key stage 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked with determination to improve all aspects of the school. Despite many staff changes, she has remained focused on improving the quality of education the school provides.
- Governors appointed several leaders at the start of the school year. The headteacher has ensured that these leaders share her high expectations and are clear about their roles. Consequently, leaders work together effectively to improve the quality of teaching and raise aspirations for pupils' achievement. Their capacity to secure further improvement is strong.
- Senior leaders have taken effective action to ensure that, over time, the quality of teaching is good. They have introduced more rigorous systems to monitor how well pupils learn in lessons. Middle leaders, including those that have been appointed recently, play an active role in this monitoring. Examples of this include regular visits to classrooms and frequent scrutiny of pupils' books. As a result, leaders at all levels are quick to identify and tackle aspects of teaching that need improvement.
- Leaders provide staff with regular training and guidance to ensure that pupils learn well and make good progress. Staff appreciate how this support has helped them improve their practice. However, leaders agree that they have provided insufficient opportunities for staff to share and learn from effective practice within the school. This has reduced the impact of leaders' work to strengthen the quality of teaching.
- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have introduced new procedures for checking how well pupils achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders meet teachers regularly to set and review aspirational targets for pupils' achievement. As a result, leaders and staff are quick to put in place additional support for pupils who are not on track to achieve their targets. This means pupils are making more rapid progress than they have done in the past.
- The leader for inclusion is passionate about making sure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities develop positive attitudes to their learning and achieve well. This includes pupils who access the school's designated resource provision. High-quality teaching and well-targeted additional support have ensured that these pupils enjoy school and make progress that is in line with their peers.
- Leaders make effective use of the school's pupil premium funding. Pupils benefit from personalised support to help them achieve their targets. Examples of this include small-group teaching sessions and additional support in class from experienced teachers. As a result, the majority of disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers nationally.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The values of respect and tolerance are actively promoted throughout the curriculum. Consequently, pupils have a clear sense of their individual rights and responsibilities but are also sensitive to the views of others. As one pupil told inspectors: 'You need to respect others, even if you don't think the same way as them.'
- The primary sport premium funding is spent effectively. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities, including swimming, dance and gymnastics. High-quality physical

education teaching has enabled pupils to develop positive attitudes towards sport. They understand how taking part in physical activity contributes to a healthy lifestyle.

- Parents are supportive of the school's work to ensure their child enjoys school and learns well. However, a few parents expressed concerns that they do not always feel well informed about their child's education. Leaders recognise this and have put in place improvements.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well and share the high expectations of the headteacher. They are committed to improving the school further.
- Since the previous inspection, governors have taken clear action to strengthen the impact of their work. This includes organising an external review of the effectiveness of governance. As a result, governors have the skills and information they need to hold senior leaders to account more robustly. This has made a significant contribution to ensuring that the quality of education at the school is now good.
- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has held termly meetings with the school. This has supported leaders and governors in identifying appropriate priorities for improvement and measuring the impact of their actions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that procedures to promote pupils' safety and well-being are robust. Staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities related to keeping pupils safe. They have an in-depth understanding of the different factors that represent a risk to pupils' welfare. This includes pupils who may be vulnerable to female genital mutilation or from abuse that occurs online. Consequently, staff are vigilant and report concerns immediately.
- The designated safeguarding leads have a thorough knowledge of individual pupils. They work effectively with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support or protection. Where necessary, leaders are willing to challenge decisions made by other agencies so that pupils and families receive the right level of help and guidance.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching over time has improved considerably and is now good.
- Teachers organise the classroom to support pupils' learning. Examples of this include pupils using dictionaries to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words or using classroom displays to help them improve their work.
- The school's 'Excellent Learners' approach is helping pupils understand and develop the skills they need to achieve well. This was seen to good effect in a Year 2 mathematics lesson. Pupils were able to explain how discussing and sharing ideas with their partner

had helped them find the correct answer to a calculation.

- Pupils' communication skills are well developed. They are confident sharing their ideas with each other and adults. This is because teachers model language precisely and expect pupils to speak in grammatically accurate sentences using subject specific terms.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective because pupils have regular opportunities to practise basic calculation skills and use these to reason mathematically. However, teachers do not consistently adapt the learning so that it is at the right level for pupils with low attainment. Teachers sometimes move these pupils on to new activities without completely clarifying misconceptions or correcting mistakes. As a result, these pupils do not always develop a secure understanding of some basic mathematical concepts.
- In writing, teachers provide pupils with clear, precise guidance on how to be successful. This includes helping pupils use their grammar skills to improve and edit their work. Teachers also plan exciting opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in different subjects, including science and history. Consequently, pupils approach their writing with confidence and produce work that is of high quality. A particularly effective example of this was seen in Year 6, where pupils used their scientific knowledge of blood cells to write lively and engaging diary extracts.
- Leaders have implemented a new approach to the teaching of reading across the school. Pupils are now reading more demanding texts to widen their vocabulary, particularly in key stage 2. Teachers also plan frequent opportunities for pupils to summarise and draw conclusions from what they have read. Although in its early stages, this approach is already speeding up the rates of progress made by pupils with low and middle attainment. However, school information shows that the most able pupils have yet to benefit clearly from this approach. This is because teachers do not consistently expect these pupils to provide sufficiently detailed answers even though they are capable of doing so. Leaders are aware of this and are providing teachers with effective guidance to ensure that the teaching of reading consistently challenges all ability groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel well cared for and safe in school. They told inspectors that staff listen to their concerns and do their best to help them if they have a problem. Parents also told inspectors that they were happy with the school's work to promote pupils' safety and well-being.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in a range of situations such as crossing the road. They are aware of different strategies they can employ to help them use the internet sensibly and safely.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different types of bullying, including incidents that occur online. Pupils told inspectors that bullying in the school is rare and unacceptable.

As one pupil put it, 'We do not allow bullies in this school'.

- In lessons, pupils cooperate well together and support each other with their learning. During lesson observations, inspectors observed numerous examples of pupils praising and encouraging their peers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to learn and do their best in lessons. They listen well and respond quickly to instructions. However, when the learning is not precisely matched to the needs of all ability groups in the class, some pupils can lose interest in their learning. Nevertheless, overall, time in lessons is used productively. As one pupil told inspectors: 'If someone is silly, the teachers always sort it out so we still learn lots.'
- Pupils behave sensibly and considerately around the school. They report that incidents of poor behaviour are rare and dealt with quickly by staff. Parents are also pleased with the school's work to promote consistently high standards of behaviour.
- At playtimes, pupils take part in a variety of structured activities, including football, hockey and skipping. Adults model these activities effectively. This helps pupils develop the social skills they need to play together well. Pupils are rightly proud of their behaviour at playtimes. One pupil told inspectors: 'It's nice to be out here because we all take turns and look after each other.'
- The attendance of all groups of pupils is broadly in line with the national average. A small number of pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Where this is the case, leaders have built strong partnerships with families and external agencies. Consequently, the attendance of these pupils is improving rapidly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- The school's current assessment information shows that pupils across all year groups are making good progress from their starting points. This matches the work inspectors saw in pupils' books. However, not all ability groups make consistently good progress over time. This is the case for the most able pupils in reading and for those with low attainment in mathematics. Leaders are well aware of these differences and are taking clear action to address this.
- In key stage 2, pupils from all groups read fluently and confidently. They are proud of their reading skills and understand how reading regularly helps them learn well. One pupil told inspectors: 'I like reading because it helps me learn new words and find out things I didn't know.' This comment was typical of pupils' positive attitudes to reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils from all ability groups receive well-focused additional support in reading, writing and mathematics. Examples of this include personalised tuition and small-group teaching. Consequently, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is at least in line with others, both in the school and nationally.
- In the early years and key stage 1, effective phonics teaching has ensured pupils

develop the skills they need to read and write well. Pupils enjoy reading because they are confident using their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words. As a result, the proportion of pupils who achieve the required standard in the phonics screening check has risen rapidly over the last three years. In 2015 and in 2016, pupils' attainment was significantly above the national average. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds do better than other pupils nationally.

- Pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 1 has improved considerably. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who achieved the standard expected for their age was higher than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points.
- In 2016, the Year 6 cohort made good progress in writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils did as well as other pupils nationally. Consequently, pupils' attainment in the national assessments was broadly in line with the national averages for these subjects.
- In the 2016 reading test, the attainment of Year 6 pupils was below the national average. Fewer pupils achieved the high standard than was the case nationally. This is because their progress over time was variable. Leaders were disappointed with these outcomes and have responded quickly to strengthen the way reading is taught in key stage 2. Although these changes are starting to have an impact, leaders recognise the most able pupils need further challenge to ensure they achieve the standard of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Good

- High-quality teaching has ensured that children in the early years achieve well. By the time they leave Reception, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is above the national average. This means they are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Disadvantaged children do significantly better than other children nationally. For the last three years, the proportion of disadvantaged children who achieved a good level of development was above the national average. In 2016, all children from disadvantaged backgrounds achieved a good level of development.
- Leaders have implemented accurate systems to assess children's knowledge and understanding when they start school. Consequently, staff are clear about children's next steps and plan well-targeted learning that meets their needs and interests.
- Staff are skilled in supporting children to develop their communication and language skills. For example, children in the Nursery class listened carefully to a story about sharks. They were keen to join in with the story through actions and repeating important phrases. Adults checked that children understood all the vocabulary and challenged them to talk about the story in simple, accurate sentences.
- Adults provide children with clear models and explanations to help them develop and explore their ideas. An example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson where children were learning to recognise different shapes. The adult leading the activity modelled how to identify shapes using the terms 'vertices', 'sides' and 'faces'. Children were then able to use these terms accurately to describe different shapes they saw

around them.

- Children's behaviour in the early years is good. This is because adults have created a warm and secure learning environment where children understand what is expected of them. Children feel well cared for by adults and this gives them the confidence to try out new activities.
- Leaders have made the safety and well-being of children a priority. All statutory welfare and safeguarding requirements are met.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 101033 |
| Local authority | Wandsworth |
| Inspection number | 10019657 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 217 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Liz Stoyel |
| Headteacher | Ruth Hudson |
| Telephone number | 020 8876 8482 |
| Website | www.thealtonprimaryschool.co.uk/ |
| Email address | admin@thealton.wandsworth.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 27–28 November 2014 |

Information about this school

- The Alton School is an average-sized primary school.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school provides a designated special provision for pupils diagnosed with moderate learning difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is significantly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who leave and join the school over the course of an academic

year is higher than the national average.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is high.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons across the school. A range of subjects was observed, including English, mathematics, art, physical education and geography. The majority of observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and spoke to them about their attitudes to reading.
- A range of documentation related to the safety and welfare of pupils was scrutinised during the inspection. This included the school's single central record of pre-employment checks, procedures to support the most vulnerable pupils in the school and records of behaviour and attendance.
- The school's current plans for improvement and documentation related to the quality of teaching and learning were evaluated.
- Inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books to evaluate the achievement of the current pupils in the school. This was considered alongside the school's assessment information on the progress of pupils currently in the school.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school, both in the classroom and around the school site. Inspectors also spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders and middle leaders to evaluate the impact of their work. Inspectors also met a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of staff to review the support provided by leaders to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also spoke to staff informally over the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally before school. Inspectors also took account of the five responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Sarah Murphy-Dutton, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lou Anderson

Ofsted Inspector

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