

Alexandra Junior School

Denbigh Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 4DU

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress is variable between classes and not enough pupils attain the higher levels in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 2, especially boys and those pupils supported through the pupil premium funding.
- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across all classes and there is not enough outstanding teaching in the school.
- Often teachers do not use the knowledge they have about pupils' abilities to set tasks that will provide enough challenge and they do not check frequently enough during lessons how well pupils are learning.
- In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and pupils who can do harder work or work independently are given the same tasks as others, or have to sit and listen to things they already know.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently inform pupils how to improve their work in order to move to the next level in their learning.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Plans for school improvement do not provide clear enough criteria for measuring success.
- Leaders monitor teaching regularly. However, they focus too much on what teachers are doing rather on what groups of pupils are learning.
- Most leaders are new to their post of responsibility and, as such, have not had time yet to play a full part in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their area of responsibility.
- Some parents and carers are unfamiliar with the membership of the leadership team, including the governors. Opportunities for them to engage are, as yet, too few.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved, especially in writing.
- The interim acting headteacher has communicated a clear vision supported by all staff and governors.
- Pupils enjoy their time at school, get on well together and understand how to keep safe.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons or parts of lessons. Four of these were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors examined 25 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, talked to a group of parents before school and took account of a recent school questionnaire. They also took account of the views of staff expressed in 19 questionnaires.
- Discussions were held with representatives from the local authority's advisory service, the Chair and another member of the Governing Body, and members of the school staff.
- Inspectors examined pupils' progress data and other school documentation including the minutes of governors' meetings and safeguarding information.
- A formal discussion was held with a group of pupils. Inspectors also talked to pupils at break and lunchtimes as well as in lessons.

Inspection team

Barbara Firth, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Philip Littlejohn	Additional Inspector
Joyce Lydford	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Alexandra Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic heritages. Almost all speak English as an additional language.
- Higher than average proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported through school action and school action plus. Currently there are no pupils with a statement of special education needs.
- Just over one seventh of the pupils are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional funding given to schools for children in specific groups including those in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals. At Alexandra Junior School the pupils eligible for the pupil premium are those known to be entitled to free school meals, and this proportion is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has experienced a great deal of turbulence in staffing and governance since the last inspection. Since December 2012, in addition to the current interim headteacher who has been in post since February 2013, the school also had an executive headteacher for a short period of time. In September 2013, the senior leadership team was strengthened with the addition of a substantive deputy headteacher and an inclusion manager. Half the teachers are in their second year of teaching or are newly qualified teachers (NQT).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers check pupils' understanding more regularly throughout lessons so that they can amend and adjust tasks to ensure that the pace of learning is brisk for all pupils
 - teachers use the knowledge they have about pupils' abilities to provide tasks that stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities
 - opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning and to work independently, including investigations and problem solving in mathematics, are increased
 - teachers' feedback in marking consistently provides clear next steps in learning and that pupils are expected to respond and practise their skills to bring about rapid improvement in their work.
- Improve the rates of progress so that more pupils attain higher levels in all subjects, especially boys and those pupils supported through the pupil premium funding by ensuring that:
 - teachers have high expectations for all pupils
 - pupils are quickly engaged actively in their learning and do not waste time going over what they already know
 - pupils have increased opportunities to write at length, and for a purpose, and read materials that extend their skills in all subjects.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels and accelerate the pace of school improvement by:
 - developing the skills of those leaders new to their particular responsibilities to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
 - ensuring that planning accelerates improvement by being sharply focused on what groups of pupils need to do to improve, with tight deadlines and measurable indicators of success, so that all leaders can evaluate actions and demonstrate success to staff and governors
 - ensuring that when evaluating the quality of teaching, the focus is as much on what different

- groups of pupils are learning as on what the teacher is doing
 - leaders, including governors, finding ways to engage more frequently with parents and carers to achieve improved outcomes for pupils.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels in all subjects, especially more-able pupils, boys and those pupils supported by the pupil premium funding. Teachers do not expect enough of these pupils or plan work to challenge them to think hard.
- Although by the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils making expected progress is at least in line with the national average, there is inconsistency in the amount of progress they make across the school and in different subjects.
- Progress in writing is at least good and in the 2013 national tests, at the end of Year 6, standards were well above the national average. However, only a third of boys as compared to half of girls attained the higher level. Overall, boys' attainment in writing was 10 months behind that of girls.
- In 2013, progress in reading across the school varied from being outstanding in Year 3 to inadequate in Year 6. Although the standards attained in reading at the end of Year 6 were broadly the same as the national average, only a third of boys and a third of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding attained the higher level as compared to half of their peers.
- Standards in mathematics are also improving over time and are broadly the same as the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make at least similar progress to their peers in all subjects because of the support they receive.
- Pupil premium funding is used well for extra staffing, one-to-one tuition, group support and resources and is helping to accelerate pupils' progress. As a result, pupils' attainment is better than that of similar pupils nationally and the gap in attainment has narrowed in school. In 2013, the attainment of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was approximately three months behind their peers in reading and two months in writing. The largest gap was in mathematics where pupils were 15 months behind their peers and fewer pupils achieved the higher level as compared to their peers in both reading and mathematics.
- Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs have not made the progress expected of them in recent years. This is because they were not carefully identified or provided with appropriate support. However, current school data show that since September, as a result of the introduction of well thought through and appropriate interventions and support, these pupils are now making at least expected progress, and in some cases accelerated progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Many teachers are new to teaching and are still developing their skills. There are, however, examples of good and outstanding teaching in the school which can be used to model good practice.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. When planning their lessons teachers do not always make best use of the information provided for them about pupils' progress. Consequently, more-able pupils sometimes waste time carrying out work they already can do before getting on to more challenging tasks. Additionally, in some lessons, even higher-level work does not stretch them enough. For these pupils, in particular boys and those pupils supported by the pupil premium funding, the pace of learning and the progress they make slow.
- In most lessons teachers do not check the progress pupils are making with their learning often enough. As a result, pupils lose concentration because they find the work too easy or they do not understand clearly enough what they have to do.
- Teachers do not provide enough structured opportunities for pupils to write at length and independently or read more challenging materials in subjects other than in literacy. Consequently pupils, and especially boys, do not put as much effort into their reading and

writing in other subjects.

- Although pupils' work is marked frequently, the quality of marking is not consistently good across the school. The feedback given to pupils on how to improve their work does not always provide clear advice and next steps so that pupils can improve their learning. Pupils are beginning to respond to teachers' comments, but this is not the case in all classes, and there is little evidence of pupils taking responsibility for their learning by marking their own or other pupils' work.
- Until recently, additional support for those pupils identified as disabled and those with special educational needs was not effective. Since September 2013, the leadership of the school has refined their identification and provided appropriate training and support for support staff. As a result these pupils now receive effective support individually, in groups and in class. Their progress is now carefully and regularly checked so that work is planned to build on what they already know. The school was able to share information about these pupils' progress and show that since September their progress is at least as good as their peers, and in some cases it is accelerated. Observations by inspectors during the inspection confirmed that the provision was now having a positive impact on achievement.
- In the good lessons, teachers effectively question pupils and ask searching questions that allow pupils to reflect, they plan work that meets the needs of all pupils and ensure that resources are readily available to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a good Year 6 literacy lesson in which pupils were working independently and in groups on a range of reading activities, the pupils were expected to find out for themselves if they were stuck on a word that they did not understand by using dictionaries that were readily available, with the teacher providing support as and when appropriate.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because pupils are not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. While many concentrate well in lessons, when teachers talk for too long or when they do not provide activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities, the attention of some pupils is not held and this leads to a minority of pupils becoming restless or unreceptive in lessons.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, as demonstrated by their above-average attendance.
- The new behaviour policy is implemented consistently across the school. Pupils are rewarded and designated as 'superheroes' for demonstrating positive attributes such as being polite, friendly and helpful. Pupils willingly take on a range of roles of responsibility around the school, including being members of the school council and road safety officers.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents and carers agree that they are safe. Pupils demonstrated to inspectors that they know how to keep safe in a range of situations and especially when using the internet.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that instances are rare but when they do occur they are dealt with appropriately and quickly. A few parents and carers raised concerns about how the school deals with instances of bullying. The school behaviour logs confirm the pupils' view that the school responds appropriately to any incident.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Actions to improve achievement have been too recent and therefore not yet effective in accelerating the progress in reading, writing and mathematics of the more-able learners, especially for boys and pupils supported through the pupil premium funding. In addition, most leaders are new to their responsibilities and as yet have not had time to play their part and impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school has improved the rigour and frequency with which it monitors the quality of teaching

and tracks pupils' progress. However, the school has not used the information it has about underachieving groups, for example more-able boys and pupils supported through the pupil premium funding, as a focus when monitoring the quality of teaching. Consequently, their progress has not been as swift as it could be. Too often the focus has been on what the teacher is doing rather than on what the pupils are learning.

- The school is not able to currently ensure it is promoting equal opportunities well because some pupils do not make good enough progress and reach the higher levels which they are capable of.
- The majority of parents and carers say that they are well informed by the school; however, there is a significant minority who say they are not familiar with the leaders and managers of the school including the governors. Inspectors found that opportunities to engage with parents and carers are beginning to be developed and that more parents and carers are gaining in confidence in engaging with the school.
- The interim acting headteacher and the recently strengthened leadership team are strongly supported by governors and staff. Together they have made a rigorous evaluation of the school to provide an accurate picture of its performance and identify the right priorities.
- The school's development plan concentrates on those aspects most in need of improvement. It clearly shows what has to be done and who is responsible for each action. However, it does not include measurable and time limited success criteria and therefore limits the ability of leaders and managers to monitor the effectiveness of their actions.
- Teachers' performance is closely linked to their pay, the Teachers' Standards and priority areas of the school. Leaders have ensured that training is provided for teachers focused on both the school's priorities and individual needs. The school is working closely with local schools to ensure that less experienced staff, including newly qualified teachers and teaching assistants, have experience of outstanding practice.
- The local authority has provided effective intensive support since January 2013, with ongoing support for the leadership of the school to develop the quality of teaching. As the school improves the level of support is being reduced.
- The curriculum is developing to increasingly meet the needs of all pupils and it contributes well towards the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are links with other countries, such as Uganda, and the diversity of languages, cultures and religions represented in the school are all celebrated. However, it is not fully impacting as yet on high levels of achievement because it does not always provide extension opportunities for some groups of pupils in all subjects. The school is working closely with a local organisation to plan the use of the school's sports funding which will include a programme of after-school clubs and professional coaching to support pupils' development in physical education. This is still at the planning stage so, as yet, there is no evidence of impact.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very well organised and meet the latest requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is an experienced group of individuals who bring a good range of relevant skills to the school. Despite key members being new to the role, they are already fully aware of the issues at the school and are well equipped to ensure that progress is made. They have an accurate view of the school's performance and the quality of teaching and some members are familiar with the use of data. They have already contributed to strategic plans for improvement and evidence gathered during the inspection suggests that they provide both challenge and support. Training for safer recruitment and safeguarding has been undertaken. Governors are kept informed about the impact of the pupil premium funding and the plans for the use of the primary sports funding on pupils' achievement. They hold the interim headteacher to account through regular meetings and help to ensure that good decisions are made in allocating finances and rewarding teachers appropriately for their work. In addition, there are robust plans for the future performance management of a substantive headteacher. The governors are aware that their engagement with parents and carers is not as strong as it should be and have plans and actions in place to address this.

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102468
Local authority	Hounslow
Inspection number	425548

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Kaplin
Headteacher	Nick Hodgess
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 October 2011
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