

# Alfred Street Junior School, Rushden

Alfred Street, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 9YS

## Inspection dates

27–28 June 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Although leaders have taken steps to improve the school, they have not acted quickly enough to fully address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is too variable to secure consistently good outcomes for all pupils.
- While teachers have received training to help them improve, guidance has not always been precise enough or frequent enough to secure good teaching.
- Teachers do not consistently have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, not all pupils reach their full potential, especially those who are most able.
- Teachers do not assess pupils' work with enough accuracy. This means that they do not always plan lessons at the right level of challenge to enable all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Not all teachers in charge of subjects other than English and mathematics are making a contribution to drive school improvements forward quickly enough.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to develop writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.

### The school has the following strengths

- Recent improvements to teaching, learning and assessment indicate that the school has the capacity to improve.
- Governance is much improved. There is clear evidence to show that governors hold leaders to account for underperformance. They provide support and challenge. They know the school well.
- Changes to the way leadership responsibilities have been shared out have enabled senior leaders to make effective contributions to school improvement.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust so that pupils are kept safe. Pupils are happy in school and feel well cared for.
- The curriculum is enhanced by interesting trips and activities and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

## Full report

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - continuing to embed and develop the recent improvements to leadership to ensure that the pace of change quickens
  - ensuring that all subject leaders monitor their areas of responsibility to improve the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes for all pupils
  - providing all staff with effective professional development that is sharply focused on their individual needs to ensure that standards continue to rise.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that teachers have consistently high expectations of what all pupils could and should achieve, especially the most able
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their skills in writing and mathematics through other subjects
  - making effective use of assessment information to provide work that accurately meets the needs of all groups of pupils across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have been too slow to address all of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Consequently, not all of the recent improvements have been embedded. This has hampered the school's progress towards securing good quality teaching and learning and good outcomes for pupils.
- Until recently, leaders' and governors' expectations of what pupils could and should achieve were too low. As a result, pupils have not made enough progress from their starting points.
- While the school development plan identifies key priorities for improvement, it is not yet precise enough. Consequently, actions for improvement are too broad and lack specific detail to provide clear direction for staff.
- In the past, leaders have not monitored and checked on the progress of individual pupils well enough. Therefore, underachievement often went unrecognised and unaddressed by leaders. Changes to the way that current pupils are tracked has positively impacted on pupil progress. This has led to improvements since the last inspection and is more evident in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- The impact that leaders make on improving the quality of teaching and learning is variable. This is because support and training has been lacking until quite recently and has not been sharply focused on what teachers need to do to improve.
- Leaders had not monitored the impact of the pupil premium funding well enough. Consequently, it was not used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils made the progress of which they are capable. This includes the most able disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have reviewed provision for these pupils and additional support provided is much more closely matched to their needs. Better checks are made on the progress these pupils are making. Recently, pupil premium funding is being spent to better effect.
- The roles of subject leaders are underdeveloped. Subject leaders are not yet fully involved in making checks on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils in leaders' areas of responsibility.
- Leadership roles are now being effectively shared among senior leaders. The deputy and assistant headteachers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They make effective contributions to school development plans that have led to improvements in teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils. However, improvements remain inconsistent.
- The recently appointed special educational needs coordinator is effective at improving provision and raising standards for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She has a secure knowledge and understanding of the needs of individual pupils and, as a result, she guides teachers to provide tailored support for these pupils. In addition, she monitors the impact of additional funding to ensure that it is used effectively.
- The curriculum is broad and enhanced by school trips, special theme days and a variety

of extra-curricular clubs. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to attend a residential visit to the Isle of Wight and Year 3 pupils enjoyed their 'Stone Age Day'. However, the curriculum lacks planned opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in writing and mathematics in other subjects. Furthermore, it frequently lacks challenge for the most able pupils.

- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Inspectors observed an assembly about forgiveness and family. Pupils understood the moral of the story and reflected on their own ability to forgive, through prayer.
- The additional use of the primary school physical education and sports funding is used well to provide pupils with opportunities to attend a range of after-school clubs and participate in competitive sport. Teachers have received training to improve the teaching of physical education. However, the impact of this training has not yet been fully evaluated.

### **Governance of the school**

- The local authority's effective intervention has provided guidance and challenge that has done much to help governors address previous weaknesses in leadership and governance. As a result, governors have raised their expectations of the standards all pupils should achieve and are better able to hold leaders to account for poor performance.
- A review of governance was undertaken, which provided clear direction for the governing body. Following the review, governors have taken effective action, such as the appointment of a special educational needs coordinator and nomination of a link governor for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Because of this action, governors have a secure understanding of the use and impact of the additional funding for these pupils and subsequently hold leaders to account for pupil performance.
- The governing body now has high aspirations for the school and is working with great determination to ensure that it plays an effective role in supporting and monitoring the school's improvements.
- Governors have a clear and detailed view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are well placed to challenge leaders. Because of this, they are now helping the school to improve.
- School performance information is now accessible to the governing body. As a result of this, governors are much better placed to ask challenging questions about the performance of key groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. They check how additional funding is being used to support these pupils and are knowledgeable about its impact.

### **Safeguarding**

- The governing body is aware of its safeguarding duties and ensures that the school has robust policies and procedures in place that meet requirements. As a result, the arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- All staff understand their responsibilities and duty to keep pupils safe. Procedures for reporting and recording concerns about individual pupils are thorough. The designated safeguarding leads ensure that concerns are followed up with an appropriate degree of rigour and urgency.
- All staff and governors receive regular safeguarding training that is detailed and in line with current safeguarding concerns. Newly appointed staff receive safeguarding training as part of their induction plan. Consequently, staff are attentive and remain vigilant.
- Leaders make detailed checks to ensure that all staff employed to work in the school are suitable to work with children. A number of leaders and governors have undertaken the safer recruitment training.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Over this academic year, improvements to teaching, learning and assessment have resulted in the proportion of good teaching rising across the school. However, the quality of teaching and learning is still too variable.
- Teaching does not consistently meet the learning needs of all pupils, nor challenge them enough to deepen their thinking and develop their knowledge. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough and, consequently, pupils are not yet reaching their full potential.
- Assessment is not used well enough to help pupils learn. Sometimes teachers do not ensure that tasks are set at the correct level and pupils are not always moved on quickly enough when they have achieved a skill. As a result, pupils do not make rapid gains in their learning. In addition, in lessons that lack challenge, some pupils' interest wanes, and this occasionally leads to instances of low-level disruption.
- Where teaching is stronger, pupils can clearly articulate their learning and they have a secure understanding of what they need to do to be successful. Conversely, where this is not the case, pupils lack a clear idea of what they are learning and this slows their progress.
- Occasionally, pupils who find learning difficult are too heavily supported. As a result, they are unable to work on their own. However, teachers mostly deploy teaching assistants well to ensure that pupils make better progress. Inspectors observed teaching assistants explaining learning to pupils well and using questioning to encourage pupils to think for themselves.
- The teaching of reading has been a priority for the school. As a result, pupils read with confidence, fluency and understanding. Teachers provide pupils with a variety of texts in lessons that are at the correct level, thus enabling pupils to access learning. Although pupils have been taught a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words, they lack secure phonics knowledge. This can slow down their reading and hamper their ability to spell new words.
- Teachers have a better understanding of how to teach mathematics. They provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills and problem-solving skills. However, there are not yet sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply and extend

their skills in mathematics and in other subjects.

- Teachers' subject knowledge of spelling patterns, punctuation and grammar is secure and this is evident in pupils' writing. However, pupils lack the opportunity to write at length, particularly in subjects other than English, and this slows down their progress.
- Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting to engage and enthuse pupils. For example, inspectors observed a Year 6 lesson about the play *Oliver Twist*. The classroom was set out as a 'court' and pupils discussed and debated whether the character of Fagin was guilty as charged. Pupils demonstrated the ability to articulate their thinking and provide reasoned arguments to support their views.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. The large majority of parents, who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, feel that their child is happy, safe and well looked after in school. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that their teachers help them with any problems they might have.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of different situations. Pupils can explain the different ways to keep safe. This includes staying safe online and near water.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take. They said that incidents of bullying are rare, but if they do occur, they are confident that their teachers deal with this effectively.
- In most cases, pupils work hard, listen carefully and concentrate in lessons. They are good at working with each other and sharing their views and opinions. However, in the minority of classes, pupils lose concentration and become easily distracted. This is because teachers' presentation of learning, at times, lacks challenge.
- Pupils take appropriate pride in their work and in their school. They keep the school very clean and tidy, complete their work neatly and wear their uniform smartly.

Pupils are encouraged to exercise and stay healthy. Pupils who inspectors met explained the different ways to stay healthy. The school has a healthy tuck shop to promote healthy eating and pupils have a good understanding of what makes a healthy diet.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The school is a happy, calm and friendly environment. Pupils are notably polite and well-mannered to staff, each other and to visitors.
- Incidents of disruption to learning caused by poor behaviour are rare. Leaders and teachers have clear expectations and a common and consistent approach in relation to behaviour management.
- The school has effective procedures to assure that pupils arrive at school on time and

attend regularly. Consequently, rates of attendance are improving and this includes those pupils who are disadvantaged.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Published information on pupils' attainment and progress shows that, historically, pupils have made insufficient progress from their different starting points. There are positive signs of improvement this year, but pupils currently are not making consistently good progress throughout the school.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not challenged consistently well enough. Subsequently, insufficient pupils reach the higher standards. The progress they make across the school, and in different subjects, is variable. The proportion of pupils who achieved highly at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 was below the national average.
- The progress of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving, but remains inconsistent. Some pupils have made good progress from their starting points, but others have not done as well as they could have.
- Close scrutiny of the work in pupils' books shows that those pupils who are disadvantaged are working at a similar standard to non-disadvantaged pupils. This confirms the recent improvements to the use and monitoring of the additional pupil premium funding.
- Current school performance information, observations of learning and the evaluation of pupils' written work confirm that recent improvements by leaders have had an impact on outcomes for pupils. This is more notable in Years 3, 4 and 5. Pupils in Year 6 have had less time to catch up and therefore standards require further improvement.
- Standards are higher in English, mathematics, history and geography than in other subjects. Work is not always differentiated to meet pupils' needs, although this is better in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Consequently, pupils make less progress than they are capable of across the school and across subjects.

## School details

Unique reference number	121857
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10031172

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brenda Hunt
Headteacher	John Kidney
Telephone number	01933 353 762
Website	<a href="http://www.alfredstreetjunior.org">www.alfredstreetjunior.org</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:bursar@alfredstreet.northants-ecl.gov.uk">bursar@alfredstreet.northants-ecl.gov.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	16–17 April 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Alfred Street Junior School is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than the national average.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is higher than the national average.
- The overall percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is around 10%. This is slightly lower than the national average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.



- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results for 2015 and 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons. Two lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspection team looked at pupils' books and the school's own performance information to evaluate the progress pupils are making in different subjects across the school.
- Inspectors undertook a range of other school activities, including observations of assemblies, the breakfast club, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils in meetings, during lessons and informally at break times. They listened to a selection of pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school improvement plan, its self-evaluation and the school's report on its use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Inspectors also considered information relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors looked at systems used to manage the performance of staff and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and considered the responses made through the Ofsted free-text service. Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Helen Richardson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Phil Unsworth

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017