

Alexandra Junior School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 102468 |
| Local Authority | Hounslow |
| Inspection number | 286387 |
| Inspection dates | 11–12 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Peter Thrussell |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 347 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Shejal Shah |
| Headteacher | Mrs Heather Sullivan |
| Date of previous school inspection | 27 May 2002 |
| School address | Denbigh Road Hounslow TW3 4DU |
| Telephone number | 020 8570 6826 |
| Fax number | 020 8572 5286 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Alexandra Junior is a large school which serves a culturally rich and diverse urban community. A very high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and have home languages other than English. Around a fifth, slightly higher than average, are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is just below average. More pupils than would normally be expected have joined or left the school beyond the starting year. About half of the teachers have joined the school in the last two years. The school is part of an Education Action Zone.

Key for inspection grades

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Alexandra Junior is a good school with several outstanding features. Under the very committed and determined leadership of the headteacher, the school provides an outstanding level of care for its pupils and promotes both their excellent personal development and good academic achievement. The headteacher, well supported by her two deputies, has developed a strong leadership team. The school has maintained a good level of teaching and learning despite considerable recent staff changes. Teaching is carefully monitored and any necessary support provided. This is often through the year group teams that regularly meet together to discuss pupils' progress and to plan and prepare lessons. The leadership team has also reviewed and developed an outstanding curriculum that adds tremendous interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning.

The school works very closely and effectively with parents and other schools and agencies to promote pupils' education, well-being and safety. The high numbers of pupils who join the school beyond the starting year are quickly integrated into the life and work of the school. The school assesses and monitors the progress of these pupils and other groups very carefully, ensuring that all achieve equally well in their learning and personal development. Pupils enjoy everything about school. They particularly enjoy 'Big Write' opportunities, where they use and extend their writing skills. 'Flipping Friday' is another occasion recalled with pleasure, where pupils usefully draw together the different strands of mathematics instead of 'flipping from one to the other'. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. They readily take on responsibilities and are very proud to become school councillors. The council were pleased that their suggestion for an outside classroom was taken on board. Pupils are extremely keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and much appreciate the lunchtime salad bar and availability of fruit and milk at breaktimes. They know that the many sporting opportunities available encourage them to keep physically fit. These personal qualities fully contribute to the good progress made by pupils.

Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6 standards are average. Teachers use assessment information well to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Some weaknesses have been identified and effective action taken. In mathematics, a focus on problem solving has contributed to improved standards especially among the more able pupils. Teachers have been trained to identify the small steps pupils need to take to improve their writing. These steps are now given as targets for pupils. Boys especially are keen to achieve these and other targets set for them. These successes together with improvement since the last inspection show that the school has good capacity for further improvement. Pupils listen attentively in lessons. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss and evaluate their work as a class. This restricts their understanding and further development of vocabulary and spoken language skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils, as a class, to discuss what they are learning and how well they think they have done in lessons

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards by the end of Year 6 are average. Pupils achieve well given their starting points in Year 3. Good assessment and monitoring procedures ensure that pupils make good progress

throughout the school in meeting the challenging end-of-year targets set for them. Pupils with learning difficulties and those at an early stage of learning English do equally well due to the very good support they receive. Where weaknesses have been identified, for example in boys' writing and in mathematics, particularly of more able pupils, effective action has been taken. Consequently progress in these areas has improved and is now good. There has been particular success in science through practical, investigative work, which has prompted the school to adopt a similar approach in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Their attendance is excellent and they love coming to school because, as they remarked, 'We have good teachers and good opportunities to learn and meet friends.' Pupils' behaviour in and around school is very good. Some exclusions in the current year were due to a bullying incident. This was of necessity quickly dealt with. All of the pupils involved were well supported and are again playing a full part in school life. Pupils feel very safe and know that they can talk to staff if they have any personal concerns. All pupils get on very well together and there is a high level of racial harmony. They are extremely knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles. The school council is well established and plays a highly active part through its various sub-committees. Pupils show concern towards those who are less fortunate than themselves and raise funds for a number of charities. This level of personal development, along with their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepares pupils very well for their future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, so enabling all pupils to achieve well. Lesson planning is good and makes full use of assessments to match work to the needs of pupils of different ability. Teachers endeavour not to make lesson introductions too long, so providing adequate time for pupils to work at their different tasks. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards, which has a positive visual impact and engages pupils in their learning. There is a positive working atmosphere in classrooms and pupils are not afraid to ask for help if they are stuck. They work well together, spontaneously helping each other. Teaching assistants work well along side teachers, providing good support for the pupils they are working with. There are opportunities for paired discussion through talk partners. However, whole class opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills are not always taken. Introductions and conclusions to lessons do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to reason and explain their thinking, or to talk about how well they have done in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets the academic and personal needs of all pupils, including the gifted and talented, very well. The school has received many national awards for its curriculum strengths, such as the Healthy Schools Award and Artsmark for provision in dance, drama, music and art. French is taught throughout the school. The school successfully promotes

learning across subjects. Very good provision for ICT adds an exciting dimension to learning. Increased opportunities for writing across the curriculum are already having a positive impact on standards. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the opportunities to participate in an outstanding range of enrichment activities. They make a large number of educational trips to places such as Hampton Court, museums and theatres, which bring learning to life. Their self-confidence and teamwork are also promoted successfully through opportunities for Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils to go on residential visits. Participation in special curriculum weeks, such as in art and French add further interest and excitement. The school offers a wide range of clubs that a large number of pupils enjoy. Very good links with a secondary school and local clubs provide a wide range of coaching for different sports which contribute much to pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. The school has a very strong commitment to caring, which is reflected in the very good arrangements for safeguarding pupils. An excellent computerised system keeps a meticulous record of first aid incidents. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils' personal needs very well. Pupils say they feel really well looked after. Systems to promote good behaviour are effective. Very good support for vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and those who have limited English, enables them to achieve as well as their classmates. The school has very good assessment procedures and carefully monitors pupils' progress. Consequently, should pupils not be achieving well enough, the school is very quick to find the right support to get them back on track. Targets are set for pupils to work towards. They understand that these give them something to aim for and are designed to help them improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher sets an extremely clear direction for the school which is shared by all staff. The school carefully monitors and accurately evaluates its work, identifying appropriate areas for action. This has led to improvements in standards and maintained a good quality of teaching during a time of considerable staff changes. The school improvement plan, however, does not always show how its actions are to be measured, particularly in relation to achievement and standards. Governors are well involved in the life and work of the school and have a good understanding of its performance. The school has very good links with other local schools through the Education Action Zone, which provides further opportunities to enhance and enrich pupils' learning. Links with the adjoining infant school are satisfactory. Opportunities are not yet being taken to jointly consider how well pupils are doing by Year 2, in order to clarify the starting points for their learning in Year 3. There are good links with parents who are expected and encouraged to take a full part in their children's learning. There is a small minority of parents, however, who feel that the school does not always listen to its opinions, and that it is too inflexible in its application of rules and policies. The inspection found that the majority of parents appreciate what the school does. One parent stated, 'I feel strongly that the school is well led and managed as policies are clear and the same rules apply to everyone'.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alexandra Junior School, Hounslow, TW3 4DU

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke to many of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Alexandra Junior School is a good school. It has some outstanding features.

We liked these things the most.

- The school encourages you all to do your very best in lessons and expects you to make good use of computers.
- You all behave very well and enjoy all the things you do. I'm sorry we didn't get to see a 'Big Write' or a 'Flipping Friday'.
- You understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- The school listens to you all and acts on your suggestions. The school council is doing a great job.
- The school looks after you extremely well and helps those of you who have any particular difficulties.
- The school provides you with many exciting things to do, including all the clubs, the visits and special events.
- Your headteacher and deputies are doing a very good job.

We have asked the school to work on this now.

It should provide you with more opportunities to talk, as a class, about what you are learning and how well you think you are doing.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell Lead Inspector